

**EURO CRISIS...IDENTITY CRISIS?**  
**THE SINGLE CURRENCY AND EUROPEAN**  
**IDENTITIES IN GERMANY, IRELAND AND POLAND**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the effect of the Euro crisis on the construction of European identities in three case study countries – Germany, Ireland and Poland. Combining a social constructivist approach to European identities with the constructivist and discursive institutionalist literature on ideational change and crisis, it investigates the extent to which the crisis constituted a ‘critical juncture’ for European identity discourses. Through extensive qualitative frame analysis of political and media discourse at key moments of the crisis, it examines how European identities are constructed through the debates about the crisis. The central argument is that the Euro crisis has had little effect on European identities because actors construct the crisis in their respective national contexts. In doing this, they draw on existing identities and ideas which then ‘endogenises’ the crisis into the existing national discourses. Where identity change is possible, it is subtle rather than a dramatic shift. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the EU has remained completely unified. Because the crisis generally serves to reinforce, rather than challenge, existing identities, attachments to national sovereignty and old national stereotypes have created or reinforced divisions particularly between northern and southern Europe and core and periphery.

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>AfD</b>	Alternativ für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany)
<b>CDU</b>	Christlich Demokratische Union (Christian Democratic Union of Germany)
<b>CEE</b>	Central and Eastern Europe
<b>CSU</b>	Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern (Christian Social Union in Bavaria)
<b>DI</b>	Discursive Institutionalism
<b>ECB</b>	European Central Bank
<b>EFSD</b>	European Financial Stability Facility
<b>EMU</b>	Economic and Monetary Union
<b>ESM</b>	European Stability Mechanism
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAZ</b>	Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (Newspaper)
<b>FCC</b>	Federal Constitutional Court (Germany)
<b>FDP</b>	Freie Demokratische Partei (Free Democratic Party of Germany)
<b>GW</b>	Gazeta Wyborcza (Newspaper)
<b>HI</b>	Historical Institutionalism
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>RZ</b>	Rzeczpospolita (Newspaper)
<b>SGP</b>	Stability and Growth Pact
<b>SI</b>	Sociological Institutionalism
<b>SPD</b>	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
<b>SZ</b>	Süddeutsche Zeitung (Newspaper)

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### The Euro Crisis and Identity

*The single currency that emerged from the economic wreckage left by the European sovereign debt upheavals was significantly different from that planned by its protagonists. The construct seemed to be divided rather than united by diversity, fragmented into opposing blocs of creditor and debtor states, and condemned to years of costly and complex financial underpinning through the monetary equivalent of medical life-support machinery (Marsh, 2011:50).*

*The anxiety among EU pundits and policy-makers was that, if Maastricht were to founder, the whole question of the future of European integration would be in doubt and the EU would face a shattering crisis of identity and direction (Shore, 2000:99)*

In early 2010, Greece fell into a sovereign debt crisis which plunged the European Union (EU) into what has been described as the biggest crisis of its history. More than just an economic or currency crisis, the crisis has been considered by international scholars and commentators as a much wider crisis, such as a ‘political crisis’ and a ‘profound legitimacy crisis’ (Hall, 2014:1238), a ‘crisis of trust’ (Haughton, 2012b), a ‘crisis of identity’ (Siedentop, 2011) and a ‘crisis of institutions’ representing ‘the greatest challenge to the European Union since French President Charles de Gaulle walked out of the European Council in 1965’ (Hansen and Gordon, 2014:1199). It has been labelled a ‘1989 moment’ (Sarotte, 2010) or ‘an existential crisis not just for the EU, but for the notion of ‘Europe’ as a whole’ (Jones, 2012:54) and dubbed the ‘unravelling of the European project’ (Auer, 2012:82). Bastatin claims that the survival of the Euro is crucial because it is ‘the fragile crown of the European project of shared sovereignty’ (Bastasin, 2012:1). Moreover, Marsh argues that ‘crises tend to breed egotism among governments and peoples, not solidarity’ (2013:6). The crisis is also considered to have

presented a test of Europeans' willingness to act in solidarity with other Europeans and accept further sharing of sovereignty for the good of the community. The crisis has required a massive contribution of funds in the form of bailout programmes, sums which 'dwarfed, in real terms, the sums of money mobilized to repair Europe after the end of the World Wars I and II' (Marsh, 2011:47). Furthermore, there have been moves towards fiscal union through the Fiscal Compact<sup>1</sup> which have touched on fundamental questions of national sovereignty. In light of this, it has been claimed that the Euro 'threatens to destroy European unity by reinforcing latent animosities between its constituent nations' (Auer, 2012:60), where the crisis has weakened 'feelings of transnational solidarity (Auer, 2014:1). Marsh even talks of a 'spiral of discontent in some ways reminiscent of the atmosphere engendered by demands for reparations from defeated Germany after World War I...' (2011:49). As he notes in the quote above, the crisis has created divisions between creditor and debtor nations amid painful economic reforms (2011:50). Extending far beyond economics, then, the crisis has opened up questions about the purpose and meaning of the European project and the existence of European solidarity between member states.

However, the crisis has affected EU member states differently. In particular, the role of Germany has changed as a result of the crisis. Since the early days of European integration, Germany has been committed to 'reflexive multilateralism' (2011:72) on account of its Nazi past, marked by what Paterson calls a 'leadership avoidance reflex' (2011:58) in its relations with its neighbours. Germany was what Katzenstein describes as a 'tamed power' (1997), leading only as one half of the Franco-German alliance. Since the onset of the Euro crisis, however, Germany has had to take a central role in leading the continent out of the crisis on

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<sup>1</sup> The Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance (TSCG)

account of its economic strength. Paterson argues that it has become Europe's 'reluctant hegemon' (2011). Indeed, Germany 'now wields greater clout over European politics and economics than anybody else' (Marsh, 2013:2). As part of this, Angela Merkel has become arguably Europe's most important leader – the 'pivotal politician in Europe' (Marsh, 2013:7), named by Forbes as the 'most powerful woman in the world' in 2013 (Pop, 2013). This new role for Germany has, however, resulted in stereotyping of the Germans in the media across the EU, with images of the '*hässliche Deutschen*' (the 'ugly Germans') featuring in many reports of crisis policies. For example, the Greek press has been known to feature images Merkel as Hitler and German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble in SS uniform (see e.g. Heyer and Batzoglou, 2012). As a consequence, there are fears about the rise and spread of nationalism since the start of the crisis (Auer, 2012:56). Furthermore, it has also led to accusations that Germany has 'fallen out of love with Europe' (Proissl, 2010), that it has strengthened a process of 'normalisation' of Germany's European identity, where it has become less conscious of its past and more willing to assert its national interest.

The Euro crisis has therefore extended beyond the economic, political and institutional, also touching on fundamental issues of identity important for supporting policies that require a sense of European solidarity or willingness to share sovereignty (see e.g. Habermas, 2001; Cerutti, 2010; Schmidt, 2011a). However, such claims as noted above need to be considered in greater detail, using a more systematic theoretical and empirical base. Has there really been such a crisis in identities, and if so, how and why has this happened? Is the effect of the crisis the same across the EU, and between different actors? The central research questions of this thesis are therefore:

- To what extent has the Euro crisis affected the construction of European identities?

- How and why does the effect of the crisis differ between countries with different identities and experiences of the crisis?
- Following on from this, this thesis is also interested in whether the effect of the crisis on European identities differs between political and media discourse.

To answer these questions, this thesis understands European identities to be constructed through communication in the public sphere (see e.g. Risse, 2010; Lucarelli et al., 2011; Medrano, 2009). The theoretical framework combines a social constructivist approach to European identities which considers European identities to be ‘multiple’, taking the form of ‘Europeanised nation-state identities’ (see e.g. Marcussen et al., 1999; Risse, 2010; Risse and van de Steeg, 2014; Malmberg and Stråth, 2002; Checkel and Katzenstein, 2009; Díez Medrano, 2003) with constructivist and discursive institutionalist literature on crisis and ideational change (Hay, 1996; Schmidt, 2008; 2011b; 2014; Widmaier et al., 2007; Blyth, 2002) in order to investigate the extent to which a crisis can constitute a ‘critical juncture’ in European identity discourses. Using three case study countries – Germany, Ireland and Poland – this research draws on extensive qualitative frame analysis of political and media discourse at key moments in the first two years of the crisis. Through this, it gives an overview of the ways in which political and media actors construct European identities through the debates about the crisis and crisis policies. In so doing, it allows for a deeper understanding of the likelihood of identity change at a time of crisis, identifying the various constraining factors that ensure the continuity of European and national identities. The central argument of this thesis is that, contrary to expectations developed by the authors cited above, the Euro crisis has had little effect on European identity discourses because actors make sense of the crisis in their respective

national contexts. In doing this, they draw on existing identities and ideas which then ‘endogenises’ the crisis into the existing national discourses so that it becomes part of the identity it is expected to change. Where identity change is possible, it is incremental, where new ideas are incorporated into the existing identity discourses, resulting in subtle change rather than the dramatic shift that might be expected. These findings counter assumptions set out above that the crisis has fundamentally changed the European order. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the EU has remained completely unified during the course of the crisis. Because the crisis generally serves to reinforce, rather than challenge, existing identities, attachments to national sovereignty and old national stereotypes have created or reinforced divisions particularly between northern and southern Europe and what is perceived as core and periphery.

### **Why Does Identity Matter?**

*L’Europe se fera par la monnaie ou ne se fera pas*<sup>2</sup>. (Jacques Rueff, adviser to Charles de Gaulle, cited in Marsh, 2009:15)

*The euro gives the EU’s citizens a tangible symbol of their European identity* (European Commission, 2014).

In the minds of many of the architects and proponents of the single currency, the Euro was intended as an identity-building project from the beginning (Kaelberer, 2004:12). Money has long been associated with the formation of collective identity (Helleiner, 1998), through the notion of ‘one nation/one money’ associated with the Westphalian model of sovereign states (Cohen, 1998:14). National currencies encourages people to ‘feel themselves bound together as a single social unity’, something which helped governments achieve the necessary social cohesion for the development of nation states (Cohen, 1998:35). Helleiner identifies a variety of ways in which national currencies promote national identities, such as creating ‘collective

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<sup>2</sup> “Europe will be made through a currency, or it will not be made”

tradition and memory', and of being in a 'community of shared fate', by providing a 'common medium of communication', fostering a 'sense of popular sovereignty', and by creating a 'kind of quasi-religious faith' (1998:1430-1431). There has therefore been an important relationship between money and identity in particular since the development of the nation-state.

In this respect, the Euro has been one of many symbolic attempts by the EU to construct a European identity (Kaelberer, 2004:14). Former President of the European Central Bank, Wim Duisenberg, stated in 2002 that it is 'the first currency that has not only severed its link to gold, but also its link to the nation-state' (cited in Marsh, 2009:1). Agreed after the fall of the Berlin Wall, a European single currency was intended to 'bridge the past, the present and the future, healing social wounds, strengthening political bonds and reviving economic fortunes' (Marsh, 2011:5). Considered therefore the 'most important public symbol of European identity to date' (Shore, 2000:115), the imagery and symbols of Europe are intended to promote 'affective ties to Europe' (Kaelberer, 2004:12). The Euro banknotes and coins were designed for this purpose. The architectural images on the banknotes were to symbolise the theme of 'building Europe' and the development of the 'European construction', where EU elites saw themselves as the 'architects of the new Europe' (Shore, 2000:112). Furthermore, the images represent the construction of a European collective history by telling the 'story of progress' through an 'imagined classical ancestry' (Shore, 2000:114). The Euro was therefore always intended to construct European identity. However, Kaelberer argues that the 'relationship between money and collective identity is reciprocal', aiding in the construction of European identities on the one hand, at the same time as needing to rest on a sense of collective identity in order to be sustained (2004:2). The Euro crisis therefore begs the question: has sufficient European identity developed for the Euro to survive the crisis? If the Euro was an identity-building project, what happens at a time of crisis, almost 10 years after the introduction of Euro notes and coins? As

Nikolarea notes, ‘while supranational economic policies such as the EMU and the Euro can...function as a centripetal force creating a unified source of authority and an imaginary self (i.e. a European Other) – supranational politics function rather as a centrifugal force which, at times of crisis, destabilises the illusory, constructed European identity into multiple national and cultural identities’ (Nikolarea, 2007:147) These questions will be considered throughout this thesis.

Beyond the issue of currency, however, identity is also important more broadly for legitimising policy at an EU level and tackling the EU’s so-called ‘democratic deficit’. The debate about a democratic deficit emerged for the first time in the 1990s in the wake of the Maastricht Treaty (see e.g. Hix, 2008; Warleigh, 2003) and has been linked to the question of European identity since the German Constitutional Court ruled in 1993 that the Maastricht Treaty was deemed undemocratic due to the lack of a European *Volk* (Weiler et al., 1995:10). As Cederman argues, ‘there has to be a sense of community, a we-feeling, however ‘thinly’ expressed, for democracy to have any meaning’ (2001:145). In particular, identity is an integral aspect of an institution which facilitates shared decision-making and legitimises policy decisions. For elites, it will ‘make possible and influence shared political decisions’ (Cerutti, 2010:6), enabling political leaders to work together and agree on joint responses to political issues. For the wider population, a collective political identity provides the required legitimacy to accept decisions which will affect them, even when they may not agree. Identity and institutional legitimacy therefore cannot be separated; Schmidt argues that ‘whereas the former involves the development of people’s shared sense of constituting a political community, the latter relates to people’s sense that the political institutions of that community...conform to accepted and acceptable standards’ (2011a:16). Collective identity in a political community is therefore vital for acceptance of the decisions of those political institutions.

This link is likely to be even more important at times of crisis. Eder notes that this legitimising role of political identities functions ‘even at times when political institutions do not work well’ (2011:38). In the context of the Eurozone crisis, therefore, the extent to which European citizens are able to identify with EU institutions becomes of even greater importance at a time when they are implementing policies designed to ease or solve the crisis in the single currency. What the Eurozone crisis has brought into question is the extent to which European citizens are willing to ‘accept the redistributive effects of more ‘positive’ forms of integration’ (Castiglione, 2009:40). In his discussion of the need for a post-national civic identity at European level, Habermas argues that ‘positively coordinated redistribution policies must be borne by a Europe-wide democratic will-formation and thus cannot happen without a basis of solidarity’ (2001:99). He maintains that the social or civic solidarity experienced within nations ‘has to expand to include all citizens of the union, so that, for example, Swedes and Portuguese are willing to take responsibility for one another’ (2001:99). With difficult decisions currently affecting areas of ‘high politics’ such as the single currency, including reductions in the welfare state, large bailout funds, and greater sharing of sovereignty in economic and fiscal policy, a collective identity may prove crucial for providing the solidarity needed to maintain the European community. Whether Europeans see each other as part of the same political community is therefore of vital importance at moments of institutional crisis. Having outlined the reasons why the issue of European identity is important for the Euro crisis, the next section will outline the theoretical and empirical contribution of the thesis, before an outline of the main arguments and structure.

## **Theoretical and Empirical Contribution**

This thesis makes both a theoretical and empirical contribution, adding to bodies of literature on the institutionalisms and social constructivist approaches to identity, as well as to existing empirical data on European identity in three European countries: Germany, Ireland and Poland. It also relates the important question of identity to research on the Euro crisis, usually studied from a political or economic perspective. Firstly, this thesis makes a contribution to the theoretical literature on European identity by developing a better understanding of the processes of change and continuity at a time of crisis, a moment in time that institutionalists refer to as a ‘critical juncture’. So far, it is acknowledged that European identities can change at such times of ‘critical junctures’ (see e.g. Marcussen et al., 1999). However, the processes of change are little understood. The primary problem with the existing literature on identity and crisis is that they understand crises as exogenous shocks. Rather, crises have to be constructed by political and social actors so that they ‘resonate’ with the public (see e.g. Widmaier et al., 2007). Because of this, they tend to reflect existing identities rather than change them. This thesis therefore incorporates discursive and constructivist institutionalist understandings of ideational change with a social constructivist approach to European identity in order to explore the dynamics of identity change and continuity at a time of crisis in much greater detail than has been done before.

This thesis also makes a substantial contribution to the empirical body of knowledge on the Euro crisis and European identity by providing an in-depth comparison of three case study countries – Germany, Ireland and Poland. The Euro crisis is studied first and foremost from a political or political economy perspective either generally or with a single case study (see e.g. Hall, 2014; Donovan and Murphy, 2013; Featherstone, 2011; Pappas, 2014; Vasilopoulou et

al., 2014; Hay and Smith, 2013). There is also a growing body of work on the Euro crisis, the public sphere and support for European integration, such as, for example, support for economic governance (Kuhn and Stoeckel, 2014), the politicisation of European public spheres during the crisis (see e.g. Risse and van de Steeg, 2014; Hechinger, 2014), and an increasing number of studies of discourse and the crisis (see e.g. Boukala, 2014; Bickes et al., 2014; Kutter, 2014; Schmidt, 2014). However, this thesis is unique in that it is a comparative study with three case studies rarely studied in this combination in such a systematic way. The research crosses three languages, stretches from West to East, includes a founding EU member state, a newer and new member state, large and small states, Euro and non-Euro members and provides an analysis of data ranging from political discourse to articles from three leading newspapers in each case study country. On the one hand, Germany represents an important case study for European solidarity as the largest contributor to the EU bailout funds (Risse, 2013:15). On the other hand, Poland and Ireland are particularly understudied. As Risse notes of research into politicization of EU politics, ‘we can only speculate about Scandinavia and eastern Europe for lack of data’ (2014:12). There has been no systematic study of European identity in Poland or Ireland in the English language since the crisis. This thesis therefore makes an important contribution to the theoretical literature on discursive institutionalism and social constructivism, adding to our understanding of crisis and identity change, and a substantial empirical contribution to literature on European identity and the Euro crisis in Germany, Ireland and Poland.

### **Structure of the Thesis**

The structure of this thesis is as follows. Chapters 2 and 3 summarise the theory and research methods used. Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical framework of this thesis. It reviews the existing literature on European identity and crisis and how scholars have so far understood the processes

of change at a critical juncture. After justifying the broadly constructivist approach to identity as necessary for understanding identity change, it highlights particular problems with the existing literature, particularly the conceptualisation of crises as exogenous, external events. This chapter argues that crises are instead constructed by political and social actors in their respective national contexts. Because of this, understanding the processes of change and continuity requires a focus on discourse in the public sphere. This allows for an understanding of how identities are constructed through the language used in ‘communicative discourse’ about the crisis between elites and the media. It then outlines the way in which identities are likely to be reproduced in the construction of the crisis, through the meaning given to Europe and the construction of the ‘Other’. Finally, it provides an overview of existing European identity discourses on the three case study countries. Chapter 3 operationalises this framework, describing the research methods used. It starts with an explanation of the comparative case study approach and case study selection, outlining the different experiences of the crisis and the expectations for change in the three countries. It then explains the time periods and materials chosen and the method of data analysis, before finishing with an overview of the codebook developed through the course of the data analysis process.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present the empirical findings from each case study in turn. Chapter 4 argues that the crisis in Germany reflects both its post-war European identity and the incorporation of ordoliberal values into understandings of Europe ongoing since the early 1990s due to German elite efforts to legitimise EU measures to the public and the Federal Constitutional Court. While both German elites and media actors present the Euro crisis as a broad European crisis threatening the very project of European integration, the crisis has also seen the development of a particularly German flavour of European solidarity and the ‘good European’ based on an ‘ordoliberal ethic’ of economic discipline and individual responsibility. Hostility to Greece in

the conservative and populist press can be understood in this light – rather than signalling a strengthening of German national identity, this rather represents the development of a new Northern European identity from which Greece and other southern Europeans are excluded. The Ireland case study in Chapter 5 offers the opportunity to study the dynamics of identity construction in a country with a rather different experience of the crisis – one as a ‘debtor’ nation on the receiving end of European solidarity. The crisis is primarily constructed as an Irish crisis, touching on fundamental questions about Irish identity. Where the crisis is understood as a wider European crisis, it reflects the original motivations for Irish membership of the EU. Whereas crisis policies are debated in terms of European solidarity in Germany, in Ireland they are primarily debated in terms of the economy and the extent to which they serve Irish national sovereignty. In the conservative and populist press, this often results in anti-German sentiment and a strong perception that the smaller peripheral countries are being dominated by the larger core ones. Chapter 6 discusses the findings of the Polish case. It argues that the crisis debates in Poland primarily reflect the existing polarisation in Poland between those who view European and Polish identity as two sides of the same coin, and those who passionately defend Polish identity and sovereignty from Poland’s historical enemies in Europe, Russia and Germany. Debates about the crisis reflect a struggle over the meaning of sovereignty which then constrains the discourse of pro-European actors who reinforce the fears about Polish sovereignty.

Finally, Chapter 7 brings together the three case studies and considers the theoretical implications of the findings. It argues that, while the crisis is constructed in different ways in the three case study countries, the various constructions of the crisis reflect existing European and national identities in those countries because of the legitimisation strategies of different national actors. Despite the theoretical claims that identities can change at times of ‘critical

junctures', this means that the Euro crisis has had little effect on European identities because political and media actors draw on existing identities and ideas in order to make sense of the crisis and legitimise crisis policies, in so doing 'endogenising' the crisis into existing national discourses. It then outlines the variety of domestic constraints identified in the case study countries which limit the possibility of change, including the continued importance of national historical narratives, economic ideas and interests, and the pressures of party politics. Chapter 8 concludes the thesis, highlighting the theoretical contribution, the limitations of the study and avenues for possible future research, before finally reflecting on the wider implications of the findings.

## CHAPTER 2 – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: EUROPEAN IDENTITIES AT A TIME OF CRISIS

### Introduction

*'Identities...become salient and are fought over in particular historical moments, especially in times of crisis...Ever since the end of the cold war...Europe has been facing identity crises' (Risse, 2010:2).*

As outlined in Chapter 1, the Euro has been envisaged and seen in part as an identity-building project. The Eurozone crisis presents an opportunity to examine the identity dynamics connected with the Euro, in particular, the question of what happens when the currency is in crisis. The primary research question posed by this thesis therefore considers the extent to which a crisis of the Euro can lead to a crisis of identity. As a result, the thesis will also be able to comment on the extent to which the Euro is able to serve as an identity-building project at all. The aim of this chapter is to highlight the limitations in the European identity literature by showing how it is inadequate for dealing with 'postformative institutional change' (Hay, 2011:66). In the social constructivist literature on European identity it is argued that identities can change at times of crisis, a so-called 'critical juncture'. However, neither the identity literature nor the historical institutionalist (HI) literature on critical junctures is sufficient to understand the dynamics of identity change at such a time of crisis. The primary limitation can be attributed to the assumption that crises are necessarily exogenous events. Furthermore, the over-focus on structure and the original development of identity leads to a neglect of the role of, and constraints faced by, actors in their domestic contexts.

This thesis therefore seeks to develop a theoretical framework which integrates social constructivist approaches to European identity with discursive institutionalist (DI) conceptions

of ideational change, which are much better placed to deal with change. This chapter will show how we can expect that elites are constrained by their social and political context which limits opportunities for change, in so doing helping to understand the possibilities of identity change at a time of crisis. Firstly, it will show how European identities are ‘multiple’ and come in ‘national colours’ but that these are path-dependent, mostly open to change at times of so-called ‘critical junctures’. However, it shows how the existing literature on European identity and critical junctures are insufficient for understanding dynamics of change at a time of crisis, primarily because of the conceptualisation of a ‘critical juncture’ as an exogenous event, and insufficient attention to the constraints placed on actors in their domestic contexts. Secondly, then, it outlines how DI understandings of ideational change are useful for understanding the prospects for and dynamics of change, particularly with regard to how the crisis is constructed by social and political actors. Finally, it outlines the scope conditions for change and applies this to our existing understanding of the construction of European identity discourses. Overall, it will posit that dramatic change at a time of crisis is highly unlikely, and any change that does occur will be incremental. First, however, this chapter will briefly outline the move from essentialist to constructivist approaches to identity.

#### *From Essentialism to Constructivism*

As noted above, this thesis adopts a constructivist ontology in the study of identity. While there are different constructivist approaches to the study of identity formation, particularly regarding epistemology (Risse, 2009:145), these approaches differ starkly from the essentialist conceptualisations of identity that were widespread prior to the development of social constructivism. Essentialism views identity as largely unaffected by social context or structures (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006:17). With regards to political identity, an essentialist approach assumes that ‘each ethnic core produces a political identity more or less straightforwardly’

(Cederman, 2001:142). In his conception of national identity, Anthony Smith maintains that the 'pre-modern past' of national ethnic cultures 'serves to dignify the nation as well as to explain its mores and character' (1992:62). Smith dismisses the possibility of a supranational European identity on the basis that clear shared religious ties, a common history, a distinct geographical entity, and ethno-linguistic relationships are lacking. However, such ethnic notions of identity cannot account for the social processes involved in identity formation which allow for multiple identities not necessarily based on ethnicity. They view 'the relationship between European and national identities in zero-sum terms' (Risse, 2009:151), therefore precluding the possibility of multiple identities and preventing any role for social structures, such as institutions, in the formation of collective identities. As internal concepts based primarily on a fixed ethnic identity, moreover, they do not explain how or why non-Christian or non-white Europeans would come to identify with their national community or indeed with Europe, implying that first, second or even third generation migrants to a new country would not identify with the community in which they are born by virtue of their minority ethnic background.

As part of the 'constructivist turn' in political analysis (Checkel, 1998), constructivist approaches to identity overcome these problems by allowing for the influence of social and political factors in European identity formation. Social constructivism came to prominence in political science and international relations in the 1990s, when scholars started to focus on the role of international structures and institutions in shaping in particular state identities and interests (Wendt, 1992; 1994; see also Adler, 1997). These scholars understand that the 'building blocks of international reality are ideational as well as material; that ideational factors have normative as well as instrumental dimensions; that they express not only individual but also collective intentionality; and that the meaning and significance of ideational factors are not independent of time and place' (Ruggie, 1998:33; see also Christiansen et al., 1999). This

constructivist turn thus sparked research programmes focusing on the ‘impact of norms on actors’ identities, interests and behaviour’ as well as the ‘constructive power of language interrelated with rules that are inherent to a specific social context’ (Christiansen et al., 1999:535). As sociological institutionalism (SI), the ‘constructivist-inspired version of institutional research’ (Risse, 2009:158) (2009:158), social constructivism was applied to the study of European integration in order to provide a better understanding of the *process* of integration, that is, examining how and to what extent ‘a new polity is being constituted in Europe’ (Christiansen et al., 1999:537). As part of this, social constructivism was also applied to the development of actor identities and preferences in European institutions (Checkel, 1999).

Envisaging a greater role for politics in identities, therefore, constructivism severs the ‘unmitigated link between cultural raw material and political identities’ (Cederman, 2001:142) assumed by essentialism. Constructivists emphasise the role played by social and political structures such as the EU, national institutions and the public sphere in forming the identities of social actors (Risse, 2009:148). In so doing, they demonstrate the significance of rules, norms and social or political institutions in identity formation, that is, the institutional processes which maintain and reproduce identities (Cederman, 2001:147). Moreover, the attention given to social and political structures opens up the possibility of a greater understanding of identity change, raising the question of whether changing institutional contexts, such as at a time of crisis, may impact on these identities. The existing constructivist literature on European identity has, however, so far proved insufficient for conceptualising the prospects for change at a time of crisis. This chapter lays out a theoretical framework for conceptualising continuity and change of identities at a time of crisis in order to understand the potential effect of the Euro crisis for European identities. In the next section, I consider what the constructivist literature

on European identity and institutionalist literature says about change at a time of crisis and identify the gaps in the existing theoretical frameworks.

### **Identity Change and Crisis – The Problem With Critical Junctures**

As discussed, SI posits that European identities develop through interaction in European institutions. Spearheaded by March and Olsen (1998), SI explains best how actor identities in institutions change slowly over time. However, it is insufficient for dealing with the question of crisis. Following Hay, it helps to understand ‘institutional genesis at the expense of postformative institutional change’ (2011:66). Likewise, SI can help to understand the initial development of European identities, but falls down when explaining the dynamics of change at a time of crisis. While much of this research is focused on elite identities (see e.g. Checkel, 2003), European identities are also considered to develop in a Europeanised public sphere (Gerhards, 2000; Koopmans and Statham, 2010). Some scholars have looked at the Europeanization of mass-level identities (see e.g. Bruter, 2005; Fligstein, 2009). Bruter, for example, argues that institutions can influence European identity through news media and symbols (2005). In a large scale experimental study, he found that prolonged exposure to good and bad news, and symbols of the EU, were able to influence individuals’ European identity, constituting a kind of political socialisation (2005:31). Indeed, Bruter even suggests that at a time of crisis the upward trend towards a mass level Europeanised identity will nevertheless continue (2005:171). The development of European identity is therefore related to exposure to European integration, political communication and interaction in the EU polity. As people become aware of the influence or the ‘entitativity’ of the EU in their lives and engage in public deliberation of EU issues they come to identify more with the EU institutions (Risse, 2002:10; Herrmann and Brewer, 2004:14). Originating with Habermas’s notion of postnational identity

(2001), identity is understood to develop through politicised democratic deliberation in a European public sphere, seen to have a 'powerful formative effect, promoting a gradual evolution of political identities' (Follesdal and Hix, 2006:550). What is important for the development of this identity is therefore participation in contested public debate on EU politics in a European public sphere.

This process does not create a single European identity but instead results in 'Europeanised nation-state identities' where European identities come in 'national colours' (Marcussen et al., 1999; Risse, 2010). Local, national and supranational identities are not considered to be mutually exclusive; instead they exist alongside each other, allowing us to 'strongly identify with our region, our nation-state, and feel loyalty toward the EU' (Risse, 2010:23). This is what Risse terms the 'marble cake' concept of multiple identities, which suggest that identities blend together, making it 'very hard to separate out the various components of one's identity' (2010:25). Instead of European identity subsuming national identity, European identity can be incorporated into the national identity to create a Europeanised nation-state identity if the European identity 'resonates' with the existing national identity (Marcussen et al., 1999:13). According to Marcussen et al., norms, values and identities in a new institution will only become internalised or embedded in a particular context if they 'resonate with existing identity constructions embedded in national institutions and political cultures' (1999:617). Europeanisation of national identities is related to longer-standing, historical ideas about Europe (Malmberg and Stråth, 2002:13). This means that there are 'multiple Europes', multiple EUs and multiple understandings of what it means to be European which vary between member states (see also Schmidt, 2009). However, although identities are socially constructed, they are not necessarily easy to change. Because European identity is so interconnected with national identities, these identities are highly path-dependent. As argued by March and Olsen, 'identities,

resources, values, norms and rules guide action, but they are simultaneously shaped by the course of history' (1998:955). These path-dependent discourses then constrain the options of political leaders and other social actors to change or reconstruct identities, creating an 'institutional feedback effect' (Cederman, 2001:142-143). Development of and change to European identities is therefore complicated by the path-dependence of existing identities which create a feedback loop that constrain political actors.

Despite this stability, however, it is argued that identities can change at times of crisis, that they 'become salient and are fought over in particular historical moments' (Risse, 2010:2). It is argued that identities can change at times of 'critical junctures', a concept which was developed in historical institutionalism (HI), particularly the work of Pierson (2004). A critical juncture is considered an event or crisis which disrupts the path of institutional development and creates a situation when 'influences on political action are significantly relaxed for a relatively short period' (Capoccia and Kelemen, 2007:343). This pattern of institutional continuity and sudden change is known as 'punctuated equilibrium' (Krasner, 1984). With regards to identity, a critical juncture can destabilise existing European and national identities if a critical juncture does not 'resonate' with the existing identity (Marcussen et al., 1999:616). This creates an 'ideational vacuum' when 'previously held stable ideas no longer provide a base for problem-solving and policy-making' (Flockhart, 2005:259). At such moments, Risse argues, 'even deeply held beliefs and convictions can undergo profound and fast transformations' (2010:32). Given the path-dependence of discourses at a time of stability, the critical juncture opens up a wider variety of options for an institution than would have previously been available, by creating 'multiple paths of future development' (Horak, 2007:21). In so doing, it may allow actors, such as the political elite and mass media, to introduce new ideas, offering a 'window of opportunity' for actors to change and promote identities (Marcussen et al., 1999:629; Risse, 2010:100) .

Despite this, a critical juncture will not necessarily lead to change, nor will it always have the same effect in every context as Blyth maintains, 'simply making an existing institutional equilibrium unstable does not automatically create a new one' (2002:44). Rather, Capoccia and Kelemen argue that a critical juncture merely creates more options and greater opportunity for change, leading to 'structural fluidity and heightened contingency' (2007:352). The opportunity for change is seen to be limited in two ways – how the crisis is 'perceived' and the 'institutional legacies' already in place in different contexts. Following Marcussen et al., critical junctures are only critical junctures 'in so far as they are perceived and constructed as such', meaning that a crisis may actually reinforce rather than challenge identity depending on the social or political context (1999:630). Identities can change at these moments only when the crisis 'severely contradicts given identity constructions' (Risse et al., 1999:156). Furthermore, whether or not significant change emerges from the critical juncture is highly dependent on the context and to what Horak describes as 'institutional legacies', that is, norms and rules in place over a long period of time which are not entirely washed away in a period of crisis (2007:26). These existing 'legacies' may affect the extent to which a critical juncture can or will effect change. As Marcussen et al. note, elites introducing a new identity 'need to make these new ideas fit with pre-existing identity constructions embedded in political institutions and culture' (Marcussen et al., 1999:627). The ability of a critical juncture to lead to change is therefore limited by how they are perceived, and the existing institutional and identity contexts where they are taking place.

However, there are some problems with this literature which mean that the dynamics of change at a time of crisis are thus far inadequately understood. Primarily, this literature conceptualises a critical juncture as an 'exogenous' shock. According to Marcussen et al., critical junctures

constitute ‘perceived crisis situations occurring from complete policy failures, but also triggered by external events’ (1999:616). As Morin and Carta maintain, ‘for this ideational punctuated equilibrium model to be valid [...] one must assume that crises are exogenous shocks rather than endogenous’ (2014:124). However, we need to consider the manner in which crises are interpreted in political and social contexts in order to understand prospects for identity change. We know that a crisis must be *perceived* a crisis, but this still does not tell us much about the processes of identity change – what change is possible, and how any change occurs. The particular interpretations of the crisis, and how these interpretations clash or resonate with existing identities, determine whether identity change is likely and the form any changes might take. The construction of crisis is therefore important; as Hay argues, crises are ‘constituted in and through narrative’ (1996:254), they are ‘representations and hence ‘constructions’ of failure’ (1996:255). They are not, then, a ‘material’, ‘external’ crisis or failure, they are not “‘objective” phenomena; they have to be perceived and constructed in such a way that they actually challenge social identities’ (Risse, 2010:33). This means that crises ‘cannot be defined simply in terms of their material effects, but that agents’ intersubjective understandings must first give meaning to such material changes’ in the public sphere (Widmaier et al., 2007:748). For example, in their study of crisis discourse in Germany and France, Crespy and Schmidt find that the Euro crisis was framed in two main ways based on the dominant economic models in those countries – in terms of German ordoliberal concepts of austerity and competitiveness and French ‘statist liberal’ calls for growth, employment and financial market regulation (2014:10). The issue here is that, when the crisis is constructed by national actors, it ceases to be an ‘external event’ and instead becomes part of the identity or discourse it is expected to change. How, then, do we know when a crisis is ‘perceived’ in such a way that it challenges identities? Under what circumstances does a crisis ‘clash’ with identities? How do we know when it

clashes, and how does this differ between countries? This is dependent on the institutional contexts, actors and identities in the different national contexts.

Given that crises have to be constructed by political and social actors in the national contexts, this therefore warrants a focus on discourse in the public sphere, the actors involved in constructing the crisis, and the discursive processes involved in shaping these different understandings. This, in turn, will help to better understand the role of and consequences for identities. Currently, it is unclear under what circumstances new ideas might lead to identity change and what the dynamics are that prevent new ideas being introduced. Thinking about these issues can help us to understand how and why ideas about Europe and European policies change in some circumstances and not others (Flockhart, 2010:796). As Hay and Rosamond show in their research on the discourse of globalisation, there can be a whole host of conditions which impact on a particular discourse being adopted (2002:163). What is necessary, therefore, is to ‘consider the complex institutional and ideational mediations’ (2002:64) present in different contexts. It is helpful to consider the contexts in which crises are constructed, who is constructing them and for whom, and the extent to which these constructions resonate or are contested by the public. Drawing on DI concepts of ideational change can therefore be useful for understanding the discursive interactions that take place at times of crisis, for understanding how a crisis can reconstruct long-standing and path-dependent identity discourses (Schmidt, 2008:316).

### **Actors, the Public Sphere and ‘Communicative Discourse’**

This section argues that DI concepts can be applied to the study of European identity on the basis that an understanding of the processes of change at a time of crisis requires a greater focus

on actors and their language than SI allows for. Drawing on ideas from DI can therefore help us understand two things – the possible dynamics of postformative identity change at a time of crisis, and variation between contexts. Constituting an ‘agent-centered constructivist approach’ to crisis (Widmaier et al., 2007:756), this envisages a greater role for actors in the process of identity construction. Important for the development of European identity is the ‘effect of shared decisions in high political issues [...] that could generate political identity, along with communicative conditions’ (Cerutti, 2008:8). It is these ‘communicative conditions’ which must be examined in order to understand the effect of crisis on identities and the variations in change between contexts, because the effect of the crisis on European identities depends on the way in which the crisis is interpreted in the different national contexts. Schmidt argues that

we miss a vital element in the construction of identity if we fail to recognize that it not only involves a sense of belonging to Europe and active engagement in Europe but also that it demands communication about Europe. European identity is established not just by the ways in which member state elites and citizens self-identify as *being* European but also by what they are *saying* about Europe as they engage with Europe (2011a:16).

What matters is what people say about Europe and the EU as they are communicating about the crisis. It is not just the practice of speaking about Europe that matters for European identity, but how Europe is talked about. For example, is the crisis considered an issue affecting all of Europe, so that people perceive themselves to be part of a European community, or is the focus of debates focused on the national context? What does a crisis in Europe mean for those involved in the debate? A discursive approach can therefore help to elucidate the dynamics of identity construction in an institutional context by considering more closely the language to discuss EU issues and the actors involved in articulating these ideas.

On the one hand, actors can explain crises strategically in order to legitimise policy action (Waeber, 2009:165). As noted above, a critical juncture can open up a 'window of opportunity' which to a certain extent allows actors the freedom to put forward new ideas based on their perceived political or economic interests (Marcussen et al., 1999:617). Actors have what Schmidt labels 'foreground discursive abilities' which allow them to act strategically to legitimise policy, something which she argues is necessary to explaining change 'because they refer to people's ability to think outside the institutions in which they continue to act, critique, communicate, and deliberate about such institutions' (2011b:56). Through so-called 'communicative discourse', actors engage in the 'presentation, deliberation, and legitimation of political ideas to the general public' (Schmidt, 2008:310). In so doing, they try to make sense of the crisis and enter into a process of legitimation of crisis policy issues. In this sense, leaders in the member states are the 'prime communicators to the 'markets' and to 'the people' or, better, to their national publics' (Schmidt, 2014:189), where deliberation and contestation of these ideas in the public sphere then involves other actors such as the mass media (Schmidt, 2014:189). This can be understood as a 'process of mass persuasion' when leaders 'seek to *communicate* with both the markets and the people on the results of the coordinative discourse in the effort to convince them of the necessity and appropriateness of their decisions' (Schmidt, 2014:202). The crisis can therefore offer an opportunity to introduce new ideas about identities during the process of communicating the crisis and crisis policies.

On the other hand, this 'window of opportunity' is expected to be relatively limited. Even if there is a 'window of opportunity' for actors to introduce new ideas, the extent to which they are able to actually effect change is little understood because the crisis becomes 'endogenised' into the national discourse. We know that new ideas have to 'resonate' with the existing

identities in order to take hold (Marcussen et al., 1999). Yet, if new ideas have to ‘resonate’ with the existing identities, and new ideas are selected on the basis of perceived interests, themselves constructed, to what extent are ideas put forward during a crisis actually likely to be ‘new’? As Smith and Hay argue, ‘given the highly path-dependent nature of political discourse, there are strong *a priori* reasons for anticipating distinct, even divergent, ideational responses even to common pressures and imperatives’ (2008:363). Actors are constrained by their social, political and institutional contexts which affects the way the crisis is constructed in different contexts (Widmaier et al., 2007:755). Leaders ‘evoke frames that resonate within the respective national cultures’ (Crespy and Schmidt, 2014:9), which limits the extent to which a crisis might lead to change. They are limited in their ability to introduce new ideas and alter identities because of the need to persuade the public, needing to construct the crisis in a way that makes sense by drawing on ideas and identities available in their particular contexts. Elites, for example, ‘must consider what ideas will be persuasive and establish institutional and political support for ideas to translate into policy action’ (Widmaier et al., 2007:754). This explains the ordoliberal framing of the crisis in Germany; as Crespy and Schmidt find, German elites needed to ‘create resonance for the public and, eventually, ensure the legitimacy of their actions’ (2014:6; see also Widmaier et al., 2007:754). During the Eurozone crisis, social and political agents will therefore have interpreted the crisis according to particular ideas about the economy in order to navigate out of an economic crisis and reduce uncertainty (Blyth, 2002). The crisis is therefore often interpreted in terms of the existing economic ideas in the various national and political contexts, thereby reinforcing these ideas more than challenging them. Crises are likely to be less an ‘external event’ and more a reflection of existing ideas.

Furthermore, elite constructions of these crises and framing of policies can be rejected or contested by the wider public (Widmaier et al., 2007:755). Even if elites construct a crisis and frame policies in a certain way according to their perceived ‘interests’, this may not be accepted by the public. Firstly, the difficulty for elites is that they must often speak to different institutional contexts when constructing a crisis and identity. For example, Crespy and Schmidt note that actors are involved in a ‘simultaneous discursive double game’ of EU politics’ (2014), where preferences and identities are constructed in overlapping domestic and European institutional contexts. Here we can perceive institutions not simply as formal ‘external rule-following structures’ (Schmidt, 2011b:55), but also non-formal institutions which constitute ‘dynamic webs of meaning, understandings, norms and ideas’ (Moon, 2013:114) that are ‘internal to sentient agents’ (Schmidt, 2011b:55). When talking about identity change, then, it is important to consider not just resonance in formal European and national institutions but also discourses on national and European identities in the different contexts (Crespy and Schmidt, 2014:6). Secondly, there are a variety of different audiences at a national level with whom elites must communicate and who also take part in the process of communication about a crisis. During the crisis, elites have had to speak to both the ‘markets’ and ‘the people’, the latter of which includes such diverse audiences as ‘national and European electorates, interest groups, members of civil society and social movements [...] opposition parties, members of legislatures, and political commentators’ (Schmidt, 2014:204). This means that they are constrained in terms of what ideas they can put forward.

The ideas put forward by elites therefore both gain resonance and are contested and reframed by media and opposition actors, when discussion of the crisis focuses on ‘the persuasiveness of claims concerning the necessity of change’ (Widmaier et al., 2007:753-754) where the public

is able to ‘reject elites’ attempts to legitimate or naturalize changes made during periods of crisis’ (2007:755). The media can therefore determine how crises and crisis policies are constructed, given that it is ‘often key to framing the terms of the communicative discourse, creating narratives, arguments, and images that become determinant of interpretations of a given set of events’ (Schmidt, 2012:16) and feeds back into the elite discourse – the media constitutes a ‘key communication platform connecting citizens to political elites in today’s ‘mediatised’ democracies’ (de Wilde et al., 2010:5). The elites and media therefore engage in a process of legitimation and contestation of particular policy action which ensures that dramatic change is highly unlikely. In order for these processes of persuasion to be successful, actors therefore need to construct the crisis in such a way that it ‘resonates’ in their political and social context. For this reason, this means that the likelihood of dramatic change at a time of crisis is relatively limited. Nevertheless, subtle change might become possible during the course of a struggle for legitimacy and in the event of competing understandings of the crisis. As Schmidt argues, ‘during the moment of crisis, the mechanisms of change are often understood as incremental, involving bricolage or layering of one new idea onto the other, although they can also involve the recurrence of old ideas reintroduced in a new guise’ (2014:198). In light of these dynamics, then, how does this debate and process of persuasion about the crisis relate to identity? Examining the construction of the crisis is therefore vital to understanding processes of identity change. The dynamics of identity change and continuity will be explored in the next section.

### **Constructing Crises – The Limited Possibility of Change in European Identities**

The question is to what extent the constructions of the crisis change identities? This section will argue that the effect of the crisis on European identities is likely to be minimal because crises

are endogenised into existing identities at the national level. Ideas about the crisis are necessary for understanding how identities would be stabilised and potentially reconstructed; crises are relevant for identity, constituting ‘moments where elite and mass public agents attempt to persuade each other over “who they are” and “what they want”’ (Widmaier et al., 2007:756). With regards to the 2008 financial crisis, Froud et al. argue that ‘as long as no story wins out, group identity, institutional affiliation, and crude calculations of interest become more important as the new polity is “turf wars” writ large’ (2012:50). However, just because identities become salient, does not mean they are likely to change. In calling for and contesting the necessity of policy action, elites and the media draw on existing political and economic ideas as well as particular understandings and elements of European and national identity in order to justify and legitimise their claims. Identity is therefore constructed through representations of the EU, other Europeans, and perceived interests in the competing crisis frames.

As mentioned above, Marcussen et al. describe a critical juncture as originating from ‘policy failure’ or ‘external events’. However, these ideas must be considered in greater detail to fully understand the identity dynamics at play. How far can a crisis actually constitute an ‘external event’? For a crisis to be relevant for European identities it must be seen at a European level, as a crisis affecting the whole of Europe or a country’s place in Europe. Yet, to understand a ‘European’ crisis’ it is necessary to have an understanding of what ‘Europe’ and ‘European identity’ actually is. If a crisis is a European crisis, it begs the questions: what is Europe, and who are the Europeans? As mentioned earlier, there is not one single European identity, but multiple Europes, multiple European identities and multiple understandings of what it means to be European (see also Waeber, 2009:168). Given that a European crisis will be constructed by actors in a particular national context with a motivation to make sense of the crisis,

constructing a 'European' crisis will endogenise the crisis into particular national discourse on Europe and European identity and reflect identity rather than open a window for change.

Furthermore, for the crisis to be understood as a common European crisis, therefore, it is likely that there is some sense of European identity already in existence. Whether the crisis and crisis policies are framed as issues of European concern or issues of national concern are of importance here. It is argued that during a critical juncture elites communicate new ideas about identity based on their interests. However, interests can reflect European identities, where the notion of common European concern identifies 'the set of political and social values and principles in which [actors] recognize themselves as 'we' (Cerutti, 2008:6). Rather than just informing identities, interests and identities are mutually constitutive. Following Lucarelli, 'identities imply interests: this means that interests are not exogenously given [...] but are identity-contingent' (2008:31). What is considered in the 'European interest' or the 'national' interest therefore cannot be separated from the identities that inform them; identities both construct and are constructed by interests. What actors might perceive to be in their interests may in fact be determined by identities that already exist, which further endogenises the crisis into the existing discourse. Framing issues as a matter of 'European concern' can therefore be expected to both construct and reflect European identity in that context.

In the same vein, the construction of a 'national' crisis can be expected to reflect a national identity and interest as distinct from the European interest, constructing and reflecting the primacy of national identity. As discussed, Europe can resonate with national identity to create 'Europeanised' national identities. However, it is also possible that Europe functions merely to serve the national. That is, rather than becoming intertwined with the idea of the national to create a Europeanised identity, Europe can merely function as a vehicle for the consolidation of national identity. In his study of British and Danish European policies, for example, Larsen

identifies the dominant discourse on Europe as a primarily instrumental discourse in which Europe was 'primarily legitimized by its utility for the states' (1999:456). He found that this either constituted an external 'we/they' dynamic where 'national sovereignty versus Europe is presented as a zero-sum game' (1999:457) or one where European cooperation was deemed necessary for the purposes of the national interest (1999:457). There might be an element of pro-Europeanism in these discourses, but the dominant focus remains on the national level. While these are two particularly Eurosceptic countries, the study identifies what Hawkins describes as a 'nationalist meta-narrative' (2012:6), arguing that the focus on national interest 'cues people to think of the EU not in terms of issues and policies, but in terms of nationality' (2012:9). These identities are therefore not Europeanised – Europe has merely an instrumental function for the construction of national identity. This means that an understanding of the crisis as a 'national' crisis will to a certain extent reflect national identities that have not been Europeanised, where Europe features in instrumental terms for the benefit of or detriment to national identity.

Nevertheless, understandings of Europe are inherently contested (Malmberg and Stråth, 2002:4), which may open up the possibility of change. As shown, whereas Europe has been incorporated into the national identity in some contexts, in others it 'represents a challenge or even a threat to the nation' (Malmberg and Stråth, 2002:10). This may translate into disagreement amongst elites, for example between political parties on the left-right spectrum or along Grande and Kriesi's cosmopolitan-nationalist cleavage (2014). It may also translate into a division between elites and citizens; according to Medrano, there is 'currently an unbridgeable mismatch between the national leaders' conceptions of the EU and those of a significant minority of citizens and, at the same time, a strong disagreement among the elites about Europe's political identity' (2009:82). This opens up potential for identity change; as

Diez argues, ideas expressed about Europe and the EU ‘take part in the construction of the polity itself’ (1999:599). Given the process of persuasion between elites and the media, then, a European crisis could potentially lead to new understandings of Europe in the different national contexts.

Indeed, a crisis may reinforce or challenge existing discourses depending on the particular construction of the crisis and depending on the construction of the ‘Other’, something which constitutes an important element of identity construction. Just as there are multiple Europes, then, so Europe has ‘multiple Others’ (Risse, 2010:53). Hay argues that ‘crises are representations and hence ‘constructions’ of failure’ (Hay, 1996:255). Here the politics of blaming (Ntampoudi, 2013) and the attribution of responsibility become important (Crespy and Schmidt, 2014:11). Following Hall, ‘it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its constitutive outside that the ‘positive’ meaning of any term – and thus its identity – can be constructed’ (1996:4-5). By presenting a threat to the existence or the ‘distinctiveness’ of the community (Triandafyllidou, 1998:600), the ‘excluded outside’ is fundamental to the construction of the Self, and plays a vital role in stabilising identity. This is important for the development of political identity to the extent that these processes construct the boundaries of the community. Moreover, an Other can be both ‘external’ and ‘internal’, ‘so called ‘out-group[s] from within’ (Risse, 2010:53). Internal Others are ‘those that belong to the same political entity with the in group’ and the external Others as ‘those that form a separate political unit’ (Triandafyllidou, 1998:600). With regards to Europe, the Other identifies *who* the Europeans are, *who* is the Self, the ‘we’, in constituting European ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson, 2006). It stipulates who is considered a legitimate member of the community, and where the boundaries of Europe lie. Following Triandafyllidou, then, an internal Other may constitute not just ethnic minorities and

immigrant communities within the nation state, but also other EU member states (1998:601) or indeed groups of member states. It is also important to determine whether the Other is a European Other or a national Other, that is, does it serve to construct European identity, or strengthen national identity? Following Risse, what matters for identity in the context of the Euro crisis is ‘whether the conflict pitches Europeans as *Europeans* against each other rather than Germans against Greeks’ (2014:18). Othering practices can therefore help us to understand variation and change in European identities during the crisis.

It is during ‘periods of social, political or economic crisis’ that such outside groups become salient ‘significant others’ (Triandafyllidou, 1998:603). They play a role in helping people overcome the crisis ‘because it unites the people in front of a common enemy, it reminds them of ‘who we are’ and emphasizes that ‘we are different and unique’ and thereby acting as the ‘lever for the transition towards a new identity’ (1998:603). As Lieberman notes, Othering of an out-group at a time of crisis helps ‘to promote in-group cohesion’ and help ‘members of the in-group to view their fates as collectively pooled’ (2009:110). In his discussion on the development of taxation policy, Liebermann argues that the socially constructed perception of risk is important for determining social boundaries (2009:117). He finds that ‘the stronger the collective identity and the weaker the lines of internal division, the more likely it is that citizens will sacrifice as long as the benefits of that sacrifice can be credibly restricted to group members’ (2009:111). The crisis itself may therefore play an Othering role. If the crisis is constructed as an external crisis presenting a threat to Europe, Europeans and EU institutions it may be read and understood as a common European experience or question of ‘collective fate’, reinforcing existing identity discourses on Europe. Where the crisis creates internal divisions (such as if the EU or an EU member state can be blamed), a challenge to European identities may emerge. If blame is attributed to Greece, for example, it may result in its exclusion from

the European community (see e.g. Ntampoudi, 2013:11-12; Crespy and Schmidt, 2014). As Eder maintains, ‘a collective identity only works if the narrative boundary is coextensive with the boundaries that delimit the legitimate members of a political community’. Collective identity struggles ‘in cases where this narrative boundary is narrower than the citizens around it’ (2011:47). The emergence of internal Others within Europe may therefore open up the possibility of change to European identities.

However, it is also important to restate that ‘Others’ may also be constructed according to existing identities rather than create new divisions. As discussed in the previous section, crises are constructed in such a way that they resonate with the respective social and political contexts. Existing identities and ideas might determine these constructions and the attribution of blame. Lieberman notes that ‘feelings of collective identity are malleable and may be shaped by the precipitating crises that motivate initial calls to sacrifice, but preexisting boundary institutions are still likely to shape the interpretation of objective dangers as posing significant risks or not’ (2009:110). The interpretation of the crisis is therefore to a certain extent defined by *existing* boundaries – and the perception of the meaning of the crisis as posing a threat to the community is defined by those existing identities. The dynamics of identity change and continuity therefore need to be examined empirically in order to further understand what happens at a time of crisis. The different constructions of the crisis and potential for identity change can therefore be summarised in the table below.

Table 1: The Constructions of the Crisis

<i>Crisis Constructions</i>	<b>Exogenous European crisis</b>	<b>Endogenous European crisis</b>	<b>Exogenous national crisis</b>	<b>Endogenous national crisis</b>
<b>Origin of the crisis</b>	Cause from outside Europe	Cause within Europe	Threat from outside nation-state	Cause within nation-state
<b>What is at risk?</b>	Threat to existence of EU institutions/interests	EU institutions/EU member states caused crisis	Threat to national institutions/interests	National institutions caused crisis
<b>Possibility for identity change?</b>	<i>Identity reinforced</i>	<i>European identity change possible?</i>	<i>National identities reinforced</i>	<i>National identity change possible?</i>

### **European Identities in Germany, Ireland and Poland.**

This chapter has so far outlined the dynamics of identity change and continuity during a crisis. In order to identify potential identity change, therefore, it is necessary to examine European identity discourses in the individual case study countries in order to have a starting point for identifying change. As explained in this chapter, there is not ‘one’ European identity but multiple identities, multiple Europes. The meaning of European identity therefore varies between member states. The three case studies, Germany, Poland and Ireland demonstrate this. In West Germany, the idea of ‘Europe’ was incorporated into national identity in the post-war period, where relinquishing national sovereignty to the nascent European Community stood as a symbol of the country’s commitment to European integration. Germany’s Nazi past functioned here as the Other against which its new European identity was constructed (Marcussen et al., 1999). German novelist and Nobel Prize-winner Thomas Mann’s famous mantra ‘we do not want a German Europe but a European Germany’ anticipates this Europeanised identity (cited in Marcussen et al., 1999:622), something which continued to be

present with the introduction of the Euro. While the prospect of a single currency had been discussed throughout the 1980s to facilitate the single market, the process was accelerated post-reunification in light of French fears of a stronger Germany (Marsh, 2009:133; Katzenstein, 1997:8). The Euro was therefore presented by German and European leaders as an issue of European identity – German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, for example, explicitly connected the introduction of the Euro with the notion of ‘good Europeanness’ related to ‘overcoming the German militarist and nationalist past’ (Risse, 2002:13) and tying the new united Germany closely to Europe.<sup>3</sup> The EU, the Euro and European integration were therefore clearly linked to German national identity – to be a ‘good European’ was simultaneously to be a good German.

However, post-war identity in West Germany was also associated with so-called *Deutschmark patriotism* as a result of the *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle) of the 1950s where the country’s historical experience of hyperinflation in 1923 and 1948 served as an ‘Other’ of the post-war national identity (Risse, 2002:14), counting ‘among the traumatic experiences that have remained deeply fixed in the collective German conscience’ (Mertes, 1996:6; see also Kaelberer, 2005:292). During this time, the *Deutschmark* ‘acquired a highly identity-inducing value as a powerful national symbol of Germany’s prosperity and its economic miracle after the second World War’ (Risse, 2002:14) – it became the ‘founding myth of the new (West) Germany’ (Kaelberer, 2005:291). Connected to the German economic model of ordoliberalism (to be considered in greater detail in Chapter 4), the *Deutschmark* ‘symbolized the “rise from the ruins” of World War II’ (Risse, 2002:14). Although it has been argued that this came to clash with the post-war commitment to European integration with the introduction of EMU (see e.g. Risse, 2002), the commitment to monetary stability and the values that led to the success

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<sup>3</sup> This draws on arguments made in my article entitled ‘Has Germany “Fallen out of Love” with Europe? The Eurozone Crisis and the ‘Normalization’ of Germany’s European Identity’, forthcoming in the journal *German Politics and Society*.

of the *Deutschmark* were integrated into German conceptions of Europe. With guarantees that the Euro would be built on the model of the *Deutschmark* and correspond with ordoliberal economic principles such as price stability and Central Bank independence, it can be argued that ‘the Maastricht negotiations offered Germany a chance to reconcile its European identity with economic nationalism’ (Kaelberer, 2005:294). As Kaelberer argues, ‘transferring a German conceptualization of money to the rest of Europe was the most logical solution to the complex interaction of currency and collective identity in Europe’ (2005:294). Germany’s adoption of the single currency therefore highlights the connectedness of European and national interests and identities in Germany.

In contrast to Germany’s European identity based on the experience of the Second World War and post-war period, then, Poland’s move towards EU membership took place within the so-called ‘return to Europe’ discourse following the fall of communism, which tied the new post-1989 Poland discursively to Europe. EU accession saw Poland return to what it had always viewed as its cultural or spiritual home in Western Europe (Kundera, 1984). European debates in Poland are therefore ‘tremendously historically determined’ (Góra and Mach, 2010:239). After the communist period, the country was left economically weak with underdeveloped democratic and governmental institutions (Góra and Mach, 2010:225). After 1989, the country aimed at a fast modernisation and wanted to ‘overcome its marginalization and ‘return to Europe’ – in other words, join the more dynamic part of Europe it has always wanted to belong to but never succeeded in attaining’ (Jedlicki, 1993:84). Not just focused on the economic imbalance with Western Europe, then, this idea related to a return to the perceived ‘cultural’ home of Poland in Western/Central Europe present in Poland over centuries. According to

Jedlicki, it re-articulates a ‘perpetual’ return to Europe which has been part of the Polish discourse for a millennium.

This idea of Europe reveals an ‘inferiority complex’ developed over the course of its history, related to slower economic modernisation and a perceived lack of modernity in relation to the ‘civilised’ Western Europe (Törnquist-Plewa, 2002:219). The insecurity of Poland’s position in Europe was also related to the experience of the three partitions as well as the years it spent excluded from Western Europe behind the Iron Curtain (Kundera, 1984). These ideas have dominated the Polish relationship with Europe, leaving it feeling like the ‘unwanted child’ (Törnquist-Plewa, 2002). Central to this is the notion that Poland lies on Europe’s periphery, which has resulted in a ‘lack in self-confidence as to the strength of the native culture’ (Törnquist-Plewa, 2002:229). This was strengthened during the communist period, which Jedlicki argues, ‘deepened the civilizational gap in Europe’ (1993:84). During this time, Europe became ‘a symbol for prosperity, freedom, a dream and an unreachable goal’ (Törnquist-Plewa, 2002:235). European identity has therefore been closely linked to Polish identity particularly in the post-communist period – the stronger and more secure Poland’s position in Europe, the stronger Polish identity becomes, representing ‘another example of intertwined identities’ (Risse, 2010:79).

In Poland, conflictual discourses present the EU as a threat to Polish sovereignty and the Polish nation. These are related in particular to the legacy of Poland’s communist experience (Sidorenko, 2008:100), as well as to a longer history of ‘victimization’ by foreign powers (Risse, 2010:77). According to Sidorenko, the populist nationalist discourse in the post-communist period is related to two conceptions of patriotism – a Romantic notion of national unity as a ‘spiritual entity’ (rather than as a political or communal one) (2008:106) and the notion that ‘sovereignty of the nation must come before the liberty of its citizens’ (2008:107).

These ideas are related not just to the experience not just of the communist era but also of the partitions, when Poland was carved up between Prussia, Austria-Hungary and Russia for a period of 125 years. Finally sovereign after having ‘paid an enormous price for its freedom’ (Risse, 2010:79), this is an exclusive nationalist narrative which ‘connects Poland’s fate as a victim of European powers, namely Germany and Russia, and its heroic struggles for freedom, understood as independence and sovereignty’ (Risse, 2010:80). Europe therefore does not resonate with Polish identity here at all; instead, Europe represents a threat to the new, sovereign Polish nation which needs to be defended from new foreign powers.

In Poland, the ‘barbaric east’ described above, usually represented by Russia, functions as an Other for Europeanised identities in Poland as in many other CEE countries. According to Törnquist-Plewa, in some Polish discourses, Europe takes the position of debtor, owing Poland for its role as a bridge between East and West and ‘as the bulwark of Europe, as the shield of free, democratic Europe against Eastern barbarism’ (2002:230), a notion ‘deeply rooted in Polish identity discourse’ (Zarycki, 2004:610). Furthermore, continuing a long history of Russian Otherness, Neumann argues that Russia functioned as a constitutive Other in the construction of a in the post-1989 political identity of Central Europe, particularly in an appeal to the Maastricht negotiations of the early 1990s where the central European countries of Poland, Hungary and (at the time) Czechoslovakia presented themselves as an integral part of the European integration project (1993:365-366). This, he argues, emerged from ‘frustration with the Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe’ (1993:366). The Russian Other in Polish identity thus clearly places Poland firmly within a European identity context. However, Germany also functions as an ‘Other’ of an exclusive Polish national identity (Góra and Mach, 2010:3), seen as another dominant power in Europe that poses a threat to Polish sovereignty. Indeed, in many

19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century discourses, Germans were considered the ‘as traditional enemies, occupiers and oppressors were frequently perceived as the violators of European cultural values’ (Törnquist-Plewa, 2002:225). Both Germany and Russia can therefore be considered the significant Others of Polish identity.

In Ireland, Europe primarily takes an instrumental role for the strengthening of Irish national identity. In Irish discourses on Europe, the EU either serves or conflicts with discourses on Irish nationalism. Some scholars interpret Ireland’s national identity to be Europeanised. Hayward, for instance, argues that pro-European discourses in Ireland have involved myths about Ireland’s history in Europe, particularly in relation to the Celts as a ‘European people’ and thus revealing a ‘nationalist desire to write Ireland into the European story’ (2009:173). Hayward stresses that the ‘notion that Ireland naturally ‘belongs’ in Europe has enabled EU membership to be presented as a means of *reintegration* into the international community as an active player’ (2009:127), arguing that the role of Europe in Irish nationalism ‘is based upon a particular conception of the relationship between national interests and European interests, and thereby, national identity and European identity’ (2009:135). However, in the Irish case the emphasis on national identity, national interests and national sovereignty takes primacy. This is evidenced by the primarily economic motivations for Irish EU membership (Rees, 2009:97; Ferriter, 2004:681). In fact, there was rapid economic development in Ireland after EU succession in 1973, but particularly from the mid-1990s, when Ireland became known as the ‘Celtic Tiger’, a ‘miracle economy’ in Europe (Smith, 2005:37). In this context, the EU is framed in Irish discourses as a question of the Irish economic interest.

The EU has therefore consistently been a question of Ireland's economic development. Like Poland, Ireland can be considered to suffer from an inferiority complex related to its slower economic development and peripheral location. Beyond economic considerations, however, Hayward emphasises that the 'the phrase 'the economy' is now frequently substituted for the term 'nation-state' (2009:237). Strengthening the Irish economy by opening up its trade opportunities had the consequence of reducing its dependence on trade with Britain, therefore also serving as a means to secure Irish symbolic sovereignty from the British. In fact, noting their common history of colonisation, Norman Davies argues that there are comparisons to be drawn between Poland and Ireland, maintaining that 'the temper of the Irish is indisputably close to the Poles [...] the Irish are distinctly *Polskowaci*, the Poles distinctly *irlandizujący*' (2006:24), that is, the Irish are 'Polish-like', the Poles 'becoming Irish'. As Hayward asserts, EU membership has been seen as 'the means by which the potential of Irish nationhood is fulfilled' (2009:129). In the case of Ireland, Britain has long functioned as a significant Other in Irish national identity discourses. Gillespie maintains that Irish nationalism has 'always had a European vocation as the source of inspiration and allies against domination by its more powerful and larger neighbour Britain' (2012:8). Ireland's membership of the European Monetary System, and later EMU, formally broke Ireland's long-running monetary union with Britain (O'Donnell, 2000:23). But more than just breaking an economic link, they also served as a symbolic break with Britain. According to O'Donnell, Ireland left the twentieth century 'free of the two masters that dominated and constrained it – London and Rome' (2000:45). Quinn and Connaughton note that there was a 'prevailing belief that being Irish was irreconcilable with being ruled from England and that sovereignty was necessary to underpin Irish identity' (2009:35). Irish sovereignty is therefore exercised through participation in the EU as a means to free the country from British rule (Hayward, 2009:167).

Discourses on Europe in Ireland therefore position Britain as Ireland's Other, but not Europe's Other. Like Poland, Ireland has a self-conscious awareness of its peripheral location in Europe. Whereas in Poland this often results in the desire to discursively construct Poland as part of Western or Central Europe against the Russian East, however, in Ireland this awareness arguably serves to consolidate Irish national identity – according to Hayward, Ireland's geographical position 'has been traditionally interpreted in Irish nationalist discourse as a clear indicator of its distinctiveness' (2009:167). Rather than promoting a Europeanised Irish identity, then, these discourses with their British Other have, as Gillespie maintains, 'historically provided the setting for the development of Irish nationalism and the principal context in which it sought allies against Ireland's conquest by Britain from the sixteenth century onwards' (2012:2). In this respect, then, Europe serves in this context as a facilitating mechanism for Irish identity. European identity discourses in the three case study countries can therefore be summarised in the Table 2 below.

Table 2: National Discourses on Europe in Germany, Poland, and Ireland

<i>National discourses on Europe</i>	<b>What is Europe? Multiple Europes</b>	<b>Who are the Europeans? The Role of the Other</b>	<b>What is Europe for? The Construction of Interests</b>
<b>Germany</b>	Post-war consensus – Europe of peace, democracy. Multilateralism  <i>Deutschmark</i> patriotism	Nazi past, WW2 -> Germany's peaceful role  Experience of hyperinflation -> monetary stability	European Germany – German interests as European interests
<b>Ireland</b>	Celts as European Economy – Celtic Tiger Irish sovereignty – strengthening of Irish nation through Europe	Britain – colonial past -> EU secures independence from Britain	Primacy of Irish economy and Irish nation -> EU as instrument
<b>Poland</b>	Return to Europe, post-communism, Poland's rightful place in (Western)Europe,  Europe as foreign power, threat to Polish sovereignty	Russia and the 'barbaric East' – long history of Russian occupation  Germany as foreign occupying force	Polish interests in Europe -> Poland as protector of West – European/Polish interests  Defence of Polish interests through Polish sovereignty

## Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the theoretical foundations of this thesis and developed expectations for the processes of change and continuity of European identity discourses at a time of crisis. To do this, it combined social constructivist literature on European identity and discursive/constructivist institutionalist concepts of ideational change to understand the role of actors in reinforcing and reshaping identities in the communicative discourse about the crisis. Firstly, it justified the constructivist ontology by outlining the importance of social and institutional contexts for identity construction. However, it showed how existing sociological institutionalist (SI) understandings of European identity are much better equipped to understand

the gradual development of identities but insufficiently conceptualise change at a time of crisis, a so-called ‘critical juncture’. It explained how identities are understood to change at times of critical junctures, which can open up ‘windows of opportunity’ for elites to change identities, if the crisis clashes with existing identities. However, it argued that there is a problem with this literature to the extent that a crisis is always understood as an ‘exogenous’ shock. Because crises have to be constructed by social and political actors, they are interpreted according to existing ideas and identities in the national contexts.

Secondly, then, this chapter outlined how DI concepts of ideational change are useful for understanding how crises are constructed, particularly the role of actors and the discursive interactions between elites and the media when framing crises and reconstructing identities. On the one hand, actors have ‘foreground discursive abilities’ where they can think to a certain extent beyond the existing discourses in the institutional context. On the other hand, in order to legitimise policies and make sense of the crisis in their ‘communicative discourse’ with the public, they have to draw on existing identities and ideas in order that their ideas ‘resonate’ in their national context. Moreover, these ideas can be contested by the public. By considering the interplay of different institutional contexts, both European and national, and the “communicative discourse” between elites, the media and citizens in legitimising and debating EU issues, it is possible to better understand the dynamics of identity change and continuity between and within EU member states at a time of crisis for the EU.

Thirdly, this chapter outlined expectations that the crisis will lead to minimal change on the basis that various understandings of the crisis – the meaning of Europe, perceived interests and the ‘Others’ in large part determine how the crisis is understood. It argued that dramatic identity change is unlikely given the path-dependence of identity discourses and the need for actors to create ‘resonance’ with different national publics in order to make sense of the crisis. In order

to impact on European identities, the crisis must be seen as being a European crisis affecting the whole of Europe and that country's place in Europe. However, in order to make sense of a 'European' crisis, this will likely reflect national discourses on Europe, which can help to illuminate 'what Europe is' and 'who the Europeans are'. Furthermore, perceiving the crisis to be an issue of common European concern will reflect existing European identities, the perception of being part of the same community. Nevertheless, Othering practices are important for considering how boundaries of Europe might be reconstructed. In the process of constructing failure and attributing blame, the construction of an external Other or external threat to Europe is likely to reinforce existing identities. However, the emergence of internal Others or internal divisions may challenge identities and redraw boundaries.

Finally, in light of this, it operationalised the framework by providing an overview of existing identity discourses in the case study countries. It showed how Europe was tied in with Germany's national identity in the post-war period as a way to reconstruct its shattered identity, where the Nazi past functioned as the Other for Germany's new European identity. It also showed how the history of hyperinflation and *Deutschmark* patriotism of the post-war economic miracle have led to the incorporation of values such as monetary stability into Germany's identity. In Poland, on the other hand, Europe has served as a way to strengthen Poland's self-image and overcome its perceived inferiority at the 'margins' of Europe, something which came to expression in the post-1989 period as the "return to Europe" discourse to legitimise EU accession. As part of this, Russia and the 'barbaric East' have served as the Other of European identity in Poland. Nevertheless, Europe in Poland is a much more contested concept than in Germany, with a strong competing discourse on Polish sovereignty, where Europe is seen as a threat to a sovereign Polish nation. In Ireland, however, Europe has an instrumental function firstly for serving Irish national economic interests in light of slower

economic development during the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Irish economy, however, also serves as a proxy for Irish national sovereignty, where securing the country's economic future at the same time secures its sovereignty from Britain, the long-standing Other of its national identity. The rest of this thesis will explore the extent to which these existing identities and understandings of Europe have changed during the early stages of the Euro crisis. In light of this theoretical framework, Chapter 3 will outline the methods chosen to examine the way in which the crisis has been constructed in the public sphere by different actors.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS - A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY APPROACH**

### **Introduction**

Chapter 2 set out the theoretical framework for exploring the possibility of European identity change at a time of crisis. This chapter will outline the methods chosen and explain the appropriateness of these choices for answering the research questions first set out in Chapter 1:

- To what extent has the Euro crisis affected the construction of European identities?
- How and why does the effect of the crisis differ between countries with different identities and experiences of the crisis?
- Following on from this, the question of whether the effect of the crisis on European identities differs between political and media discourse is also a matter of interest.

In light of the theoretical framework, which argues that the capacity of the crisis to change European identities lies with how the crisis is framed by political and media actors in the national contexts, the methods must be able to identify the different ways in which the crisis and crisis policies are constructed by these actors in the three case study countries and the way in which identities are reproduced in these constructions. As argued in Chapter 2, identities are socially constructed through interaction in European institutions and the European public sphere. These identities are considered able to change at times of so-called ‘critical junctures’, if they are ‘perceived’ as a crisis. However, the processes of change at such moments are little understood. In order to better understand the dynamics of identity change and continuity at a time of crisis, then, the way in which the crisis is constructed by political and social actors in their national contexts is key. There are a number of quantitative studies of European identity

using survey and experimental methods (see e.g. Bruter, 2005; 2009; Fligstein, 2009; Risse, 2013) and European public spheres (Van de Steeg, 2006; Risse and Van de Steeg, 2003; Trenz, 2004a; Koopmans and Statham, 2010), including those that conduct quantitative frame analysis of media discourse. However, as Checkel and Katzenstein argue that survey-type methods ‘risk imposing a conceptual unity on extremely diverse sets of political processes that mean different things in different contexts’ (2009:10). Given the research focus on the particular context-specific framing of the crisis and the discursive construction of European identities, qualitative frame analysis allows for a deeper interpretive study within the various political and cultural contexts in addition to an understanding of the role of agency.

Discursive approaches to European identity are ones that take ‘words, language, and communicative utterances seriously’ (Risse, 2009:149), emphasising the ‘constructive power of language’ (Christiansen et al., 1999:535). As argued, what is important for European identity is not just engagement with Europe but what elites, the media and citizens are ‘*saying* about Europe as they engage with Europe’ (Schmidt, 2011a:16), particularly as they try to make sense of the crisis. This research is interested in the strategies and constraints placed on actors in their national contexts in the process of crisis construction. By taking a closer look at the language used to communicate about the EU we can understand the content of identities and better trace the way in which they are reproduced or changed in the process of this communication at a time of crisis (Crespy and Schmidt, 2014:6). Furthermore, because the research focus is on ‘communicative discourse’, it is important to look at media and political communication rather than speaking directly to political actors in interviews or questionnaires, which might produce different results. In order to answer the research questions, therefore, the methods need to examine the language used by political and media actors to communicate about the EU during the crisis in different countries.

In this thesis, extensive analysis of newspaper articles is conducted alongside political speeches and press releases relating to the crisis at specific periods of time in 2010 and 2011 in three case study countries: Germany, Ireland and Poland. This research thus adopts a comparative approach using three case studies which represent countries with different experience of the crisis and different member state categories: Eurozone and non-Eurozone, large and small, founding member and enlargement, east and west, varieties of capitalism, and different discourses on European identity. In order to examine a wide variety of discourse on the crisis by different actors, the methods include two broadsheet newspapers and one tabloid newspaper alongside political discourse from the main government and opposition parties in each country. In order to limit the data, time periods were chosen which represented moments at which the crisis was particularly salient in the EU and when we would expect to see a change. The materials are analysed using qualitative frame analysis in order to identify the main themes used to communicate about the crisis and coded using qualitative data analysis software QSR NVivo to facilitate analysis of a large body of data. This chapter will therefore outline the methods chosen: the case studies and the comparative method, the materials - political speeches, press releases and newspaper articles, the time periods selected and the method of data analysis: frame analysis and coding using NVivo.

### **Case Studies and the Comparative Method**

This thesis adopts a comparative case study approach as the most appropriate method in light of the theoretical framework. A comparative case study of countries with different identities and different experience of the crisis can help understand the processes involved in identity construction at a time of crisis in different contexts and to explore the extent to which crises indeed reflect existing ideas and identities. Comparative politics focuses on ‘interactions within

political systems' (Caramani, 2014:3) and has focused in particular on the comparative study of democracies (see e.g. Lijphart, 1999; Rokkan, 1970). As a 'case-oriented comparative study' (Ragin, 1987), this thesis compares the effect of the Euro crisis on European identities in three case study countries: Germany, Ireland, and Poland. In contrast to other research which may simply use a particular country or community as the research location, a case is an 'object of interest in its own right' (Bryman, 2012:68). The goal of comparative case studies is to identify the 'similarities and differences among macrosocial units' and for 'understanding, explaining, and interpreting diverse historical outcomes and processes' (Ragin, 1987:6). According to Hantrais, cross-national comparative studies

have in common their concern to observe social phenomena across nations, to develop robust explanations of similarities or differences, and to attempt to assess their consequences, whether it be for the purposes of testing theories, drawing lessons about best practice or, more straightforwardly, gaining a better understanding of how social processes operate' (1999:93).

This comparative research can therefore achieve an in-depth understanding of the diverse processes of identity construction at a time of crisis in different EU countries. However, a number of disadvantages have been cited with regards to case study research, in particular selection bias (Geddes, 1990) and the problem of 'comparability of relatively dissimilar societies' (Ragin, 1987:9; see also Gerring, 2004). The primary disadvantage cited in relation to this form of research relates to problems with generalizability to the extent that they pose a 'small N' problem (George and Bennett, 2003:17) and cannot necessarily be considered representative of a larger number of cases (Gerring, 2004). A study which analyses and compares only three of 28 EU member states must therefore take care in the kind of claims it is able to make about processes and countries outside the scope of the research project. However, increasing the number of cases leads to additional problems relating to the comparability of

measures given that different concepts have different meanings across contexts (Caramani, 2014:11), and limits the depth with which one can analyse each case. Moreover, it must be noted that the researchers using case studies ‘do *not* aspire to select cases that are directly “representative” of diverse populations’ (George and Bennett, 2003:30); the purpose of case study research is therefore not generalizability (Bryman, 2008:71).

The primary goal of this kind of comparative research is therefore not to be truly representative of a large number of cases, but rather to conduct a detailed analysis in order to ‘understand and interpret specific historical outcomes in a small number of cases’ (Ragin, 1987:17). In this respect, cases are studied as ‘wholes’ rather than a set of variables (Caramani, 2014:11). As such, we can ‘understand social phenomena better when they are compared in relation to two or more meaningfully contrasting cases or situations’ (Bryman, 2008:72). Case studies are therefore better suited to ‘understanding the conditions under which specified outcomes occur, and the mechanisms through which they occur, rather than uncovering the frequency with which those conditions and their outcomes arise’ (George and Bennett, 2003:31). Because of this, comparative case studies are less able to test theories than they are to build and develop them (Ragin, 1987:16). However, they are ideally suited to exploratory work which, Gerring notes, defines ‘path-breaking research’ (2004:349). Case studies can therefore illuminate and develop theories by providing detailed analysis of different phenomena and theoretical ideas (Ragin, 1994:112). Given that there have been few studies which examine the role of crisis for European identities, this strategy has been adopted in order to contribute to theory building.

### *Case Study Selection*

As discussed, this research uses Germany, Ireland and Poland as empirical case studies. Ragin argues that cases selected in comparative research ‘must be coherent’ and ‘offer some potential

for advancing social scientific thinking' (Ragin, 1994:113). The three case studies represent countries which have had very different experiences of the crisis. As Risse argues, research into European identity during the crisis requires an investigation of 'whether similar meaning structures have emerged during the crises, particularly between the "creditor" and the "debtor" countries' (Risse, 2014:14). This section will outline the rationale for each selected case study, outlining the experience of each country with EU membership, EMU and the Euro crisis, on the basis of this, outlining some expectations of change during the crisis.

Before proceeding to an overview of the chosen case studies, the choices require some additional clarification. Firstly, the decision to include Poland, an EU member state currently outside the Eurozone, might not be obvious at first glance. It could be argued that it would be more appropriate to use, by way of example, France, another founding member of the EU and EMU, and that as a non-Eurozone member state Poland is perhaps less affected by the crisis. However, it must be noted that the crisis has had profound implications for the future of European integration far beyond simply the Eurozone. Poland, along with the UK, has been cited in relation to the dangers and difficulties of a further institutionalisation of a "two-speed Europe" between the "Ins" and "Outs" of the Eurozone (see e.g. Proissl, 2010:12). Rather than examining the consequences of the crisis exclusively in the Eurozone, this thesis examines the consequences in the wider European Union, in the wake of fears about any potential disintegration or fracturing of the EU. Indeed, as The Economist argued, 'the bigger peril is that a rush to create *Kerneuropa* ("core Europe") may fracture the EU between 17 "ins" and ten "outs", potentially damaging the single market on which the prosperity of both groups rests' (Economist, 2011)<sup>4</sup>. With formalisation of the 18-member Eurozone summits and further integration within this bloc to manage the crisis, the "out" group will have inevitably become

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<sup>4</sup> The Eurozone increased to 18 members on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 with Latvia's adoption of the single currency.

more side-lined. Poland therefore serves to represent the so-called ‘out’ group in the Eurozone alongside the ‘in’ group to which Germany and Ireland belong. To focus purely on Eurozone countries would risk contributing further to the consolidation of the “in” group and isolation of the “out” group. However, it is also an unusual case as a large member state outside of the Euro which, in contrast to the UK, is treaty-bound to join the Euro in the future and has expressed a desire to join.<sup>5</sup>

Secondly, the obvious absence of any of the other worst afflicted ‘debtor’ countries such as Greece, Spain or Portugal must also be accounted for. The inclusion of Greece in particular would undoubtedly be a useful and interesting comparison particularly in relation to the German case, where the ‘Greek crisis’ was of particular salience in the public debates. Furthermore, Ireland can perhaps be considered an exceptional case in the crisis, having fared the best out of the crisis countries and having formally exited the bailout programme at the end of 2013 (Hodson, 2013). However, it must be noted that in a qualitative study I am limited by my language skills. Selecting Greece, Spain or Portugal would involve starting a new language from scratch and as an English native speaker, Ireland was therefore the clear choice amongst the ‘debtor’ countries. Later research projects involving researchers with a variety of language skills could seek to include these countries as case studies. Furthermore, as noted in the Introduction, Greece has already been the focus of a lot of new research as the country worst hit by the crisis, in terms of crisis discourses (see e.g. Boukala, 2014; Ntampoudi, 2013) and the political and economic causes of the crisis (Featherstone, 2011; Pappas, 2014; Vasilopoulou et al., 2014). Furthermore, while there have been a number of publications focused on the

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<sup>5</sup> The Economist also points out that there is no homogeneity even amongst this “out” group, arguing that ‘Britain’s prime aim is to avoid entanglement with the euro zone, but Poland’s is to avoid exclusion. Britain is calling the lawyers to set the terms for divorce [...] Poland wants to be included in all discussions, and to avoid new obstacles to joining the monetary union (2011). There are therefore those members who are intent on remaining outside of the Eurozone and those members seeking eventual Euro membership.

political economy of the Irish crisis (see e.g. Donovan and Murphy, 2013; Kitromilides, 2012; Hay and Smith, 2013) and politicization of EMU in the public sphere (Hechinger, 2014), there has not been a systematic investigation of European identity in Ireland since the crisis. Germany, Poland and Ireland therefore constitute a unique combination of countries not studied together in any systematic way in the context of the crisis.

### *Germany*<sup>6</sup>

Germany is an exceptional case study but one which is particularly significant both with regard to European integration in general and European identities in particular. It is also likely to be able to tell us much about the potential stability or instability of European identities at a time of crisis. As discussed in Chapter 2, Germany has traditionally been the committed advocate of increased European integration throughout the post-war period when its national identity was tied closely with Europe. After the end of the Second World War, relinquishing national sovereignty to the nascent European Community stood as a symbol of Germany's commitment to peace and the abandonment of previous leaders' historical desire for power and territorial expansion in Europe. Furthermore, its 'social market economy' and economic model of ordoliberalism has been a central part of its national identity and conceptions of Europe since the introduction of the single currency. In recent years, however, a debate about the so-called 'normalisation' of European identity in Germany has emerged, understood broadly as the development of a more self-confident German national identity. This arguably began in the immediate post-reunification period in the early 1990s, but intensified during the term of Gerhard Schröder, who came to office in 1997. Schröder signified a generational change in

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<sup>6</sup> This section draws on parts of my article entitled 'Has Germany "Fallen out of Love" with Europe? The Eurozone Crisis and the 'Normalization' of Germany's European Identity', forthcoming in the journal *German Politics and Society*.

Germany and he was able to articulate a discourse rooted more clearly in notions of national interests and identity (see e.g. Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 2001:698). If, with the generational change, Germany's past becomes less present in the national consciousness, Germany's need to be tied to Europe may wane and an opportunity for a change in discourses on European identity could emerge.

In particular, the Eurozone crisis offers an opportunity to study potential changes in European identity discourses in Germany in more recent years. Scholars have suggested that the crisis is acting as catalyst for change in Germany's relationship with Europe. Paterson, for example, has claimed that the crisis has signified 'a tipping point for classic German Europeanism' (Paterson, 2011:59). Proissl argues that the crisis shows Germany has 'fallen out of love with Europe' (Proissl, 2010). We might consider whether the Eurozone crisis is serving to continue this process of 'normalisation', completing the break with Germany's traditionally strong pro-European discourse and leading to a strong focus on national interests. In light of the bailouts of Greece during the crisis, as Germany is expected to transfer large sums of money to struggling EU economies to protect the Euro, we might expect the emergence or strengthening of discourses in Germany which more avidly defend Germany's national economic interests and construct a more bounded 'we' community of Germans. Furthermore, the crisis also presents an opportunity to consider the extent to which ordoliberal values can be considered compatible with Germany's European identity, in light of fears about inflation and a potential collapse of the Euro.

### *Ireland*

Compared with Germany, the case of Ireland offers the opportunity to analyse a quite different dynamic in the Eurozone crisis. As one of the so-called 'debtor' states and a recipient of EU

bailout funds, Ireland is likely to be having a different experience of ‘European solidarity’ to Germany – being on the receiving side of redistribution rather than the giving side. Given that economic interests have been a primary motivation for EU membership since its accession, the experience of economic boom followed by severe economic crisis makes Ireland an interesting case study for questions about identity and discourses on Europe. From the mid-1990s, Ireland experienced a boom which led to the label the ‘Celtic Tiger’ and a reputation of being the EU’s ‘unparalleled success story’, an ‘example to be emulated among new EU member states’ (Rees et al., 2009:1). After EU accession in 1973 there was continual economic development in Ireland, but the country experienced rapid economic growth particularly from the mid-1990s onwards, when it became ‘one of the fast growing economies in Europe, outperforming its European neighbours’ (Rees, 2009:95). It was a time when Ireland ‘outperformed all industrialized economies [...] with an average annual growth two to three times that of EU and OECD countries’ (Dorgan, 2006:13). Attributed to its favourable corporate tax rate, massive foreign direct investment and high levels of EU structural funds, along with its English-speaking workforce (Smith, 2005), Ireland had a 4% unemployment rate and an annual rate of growth of 9.4% by 2002 (Kitromilides, 2012:166).

Whilst it has been argued that the success of the Celtic Tiger has been overstated, amidst claims that it should in fact be considered the ‘Celtic kitten’ or ‘paper tiger’ (Smith, 2005:38), more important in the context of this research is rather the perception of a boom (and later crisis) than the realities of economic growth. As Smith argues, elites in Ireland have been keen to use the ‘Celtic Tiger discourse’ as a political strategy both domestically and on the international stage (2005:53). Furthermore, a change in attitudes has been attributed to the Celtic Tiger years, where Ireland ‘is now open to the world not only in trade terms, but also in thoughts and attitudes...today’s younger generation has a well-grounded confidence created by the country’s

new role in Europe since 1973' (Dorgan, 2006:12). Given the dramatic turnaround in the country's economic fortune after 2008, the question of Irish identities and discourses on Europe becomes interesting. If European identity discourses in Ireland have been closely linked to economic growth and independence from Britain, how might such discourses be affected by a situation in which Ireland requires financial support from the EU, to which Britain has contributed a significant amount? Might we not expect there to be significant change in a situation where the Irish have again become dependent on British support through the bailout programme? To what extent have Irish national interests become less compatible with Europe given the harsh bailout conditions and the role of EMU membership in the crisis? Alternatively, has the crisis served to strengthen European identities, in light of a clear reliance on the EU for bailout funds on the receiving end of European solidarity? Here it will be particularly important to note how the crisis has been constructed in the Irish public sphere and where blame has been attributed.

### *Poland*

Poland presents an opportunity to study the effect of the crisis on identity in a country which, in contrast to Ireland and Germany, is not a member of the Eurozone but, as a new EU member state of the 2004 enlargement, is treaty-bound to join in accordance with the *acquis communautaire*, once the country meets all the economic criteria. The country remains officially committed to adopting the single currency. As mentioned in Chapter 1, there is a particular lack of data about CEE countries when it comes to the politicization of EU politics and the role of the Euro crisis (Risse, 2014:12). While it should not be considered representative of all CEE countries, it can provide some interesting insights as a new member state, particularly in light of the 'return to Europe' discourse outlined in Chapter 2 which was an important justification for EU accession across the CEE states. As discussed, Poland joined the

EU in the context of a desire to return to the core of Europe after decades behind the Iron Curtain. Furthermore, it has also suffered from a certain ‘inferiority complex’ in relation to its perceived place at the periphery of Europe, centuries of occupation and slower economic development. The crisis has seen Poland emerge as the only country not to go into recession – what the then Prime Minister Donald Tusk dubbed the so-called ‘green island’ of growth in an otherwise entirely ‘red’ map of the European Union (Pomorska and Vanhoonacker, 2012:76). The crisis period has also seen Poland become a more powerful player in the EU, exemplified in particular by Poland’s Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2011 (Pomorska and Vanhoonacker, 2012:78) and more recently by the choice of Donald Tusk to be the next President of the European Council. Considering the ‘inferiority complex’ mentioned above, a development where Poland emerges as the only European economy to escape recession and takes on a leadership role in the EU could potentially be highly significant for discourses on Europe in Poland, signifying perhaps a new self-confidence for Poland and a moment when the country finally ‘returns’.

However, Poland signed the Fiscal Compact in December 2011 and agreed to contribute financially to the bailout mechanisms, something which presents an important test of European solidarity in Poland given its long-standing status as a net-recipient of EU funds and relates directly to the Polish sovereignty discourse. The relationship to Germany during the crisis is particularly important here. Given the fear of Germany in Polish sovereignty discourses outlined in Chapter 2, we might ask to what extent Germany’s position as Poland’s ‘Other’ has shifted. On the one hand, Poland’s relative economic success and new leadership role may have calmed historical fears about German hegemony. On the other hand, Germany’s clear economic and political power in overcoming the crisis may serve to reinforce such fears. There may also be parallels here with Germany in our expectation that it is becoming a more self-assertive player

in the EU. However, whereas the normalisation debate in Germany implies that Germany's *national* identity will become more assertive with a stronger focus on *national* interest, we might expect here that Poland's *European* identities become more assertive and self-confident. These three case studies therefore present a unique and interesting exploratory study of the role of crisis in shaping European identities, offering data about three countries that are both understudied and rarely studied in comparison. The following table will summarise the main similarities and differences between the chosen case studies in relation to the EU. The next sections will outline the data collection strategy.

Table 3: Case Study Comparison

	<b>Germany</b>	<b>Ireland</b>	<b>Poland</b>
<b>Length of EU membership</b>	Founding member	1973	2004
<b>EMU member?</b>	Yes	Yes	No –treaty-bound to join, current planned entry date - 2017
<b>Large/small EU country</b>	Large	Small	Large
<b>Relationship with EU</b>	Committed to European integration, ‘European Germany’, multilateralism	Economic benefits of European integration, strengthening national sovereignty	“Return to Europe”, ‘inferiority complex’, Polish sovereignty
<b>Historical memory</b>	WW2, Nazi era, hyperinflation	British rule, Irish nationalism, Irish independence	Communism, partition – regaining sovereignty
<b>Reasons for joining the EU (discourse)</b>	Vergangenheitsbewältigung (‘Coming to terms with the past’)	Trade/economics, independence from Britain	Return to Europe
<b>Economic model</b>	Ordoliberalism/Social market economy	Liberal market economy	Post-communist capitalism
<b>Economic crisis</b>	Strongest European economy, bailouts of Greece, austerity measures	Severe economic crisis, end of boom years, EU/IMF bailouts	Only EU member not to enter recession, ‘green island’, although not unaffected.
<b>Last change of government (as of 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2014)</b>	2009 – Grand Coalition to CDU-CSU/FDP coalition. 2005 – Chancellor Schroeder to Merkel	2011 – Fianna Fail/Green Party to Fine Gael/Labour. Taoiseach – Brian Cowen to Edna Kenny	2007 – Law and Justice Party to Civic Platform/Polish People’s Party (re-elected 2011)

## **Data Collection**

### *Time periods*

In order to limit the volume of data inevitable with a study involving three cases and different kinds of discourse it was necessary to select specific points in time at which to conduct the analysis. This allowed for an overview of the earlier stages of the crisis as well as for a restriction of the quantity of data available over the course of several years. The snapshots in time involve key moments during the crisis when EU policies were particularly salient in the public sphere. While these are brief time periods, the broad body of sources allows for a comprehensive overview of debates at different and critical stages of the crisis. Furthermore, they allow for an exploration of the processes involved at different stages of the crisis, for example, when the individual bailouts were being negotiated or the point at which the entire Eurozone was seen to be at risk of collapse. The snapshots are as follows:

#### 1) April/May 2010 (Germany and Poland)

This period constitutes the two weeks spanning the Eurozone meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> May at which leaders agreed to the first Greek bailout as well as other economic coordination plans to help the Euro. This was a time when Germany was debating and legitimising the Greek bailout, and the first fears about an existential threat to the Euro had begun to emerge. This time period presents particular questions about the effect on identity. For example, given Germany's substantial contribution to the Greek bailout during this time, we can expect that this period in time presented a test of strength of European solidarity in Germany. In the case of Poland, we might question the extent to which Poland's political and economic future was linked to a crisis in the Eurozone (to which Poland does not belong) at this stage. Whereas Poland was not

expected to contribute financially at this time, from April-June 2010 the Euro had begun to fall heavily against the dollar, something which would also have had implications for the Polish economy and currency, which are closely tied to the Euro. Furthermore, the then Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk was awarded the Charlemagne Prize presented to those considered to have made a significant contribution to European unification in May 2010. We can therefore expect press coverage and public statements relating to this award and to Poland's position in the EU more generally.

#### November 2010 (Ireland)

Considering Ireland's position as a so-called 'debtor' or bailout recipient country, the period at the end of November 2010 was selected in order to capture the debates which took place at a moment when Ireland was on the opposite side of the crisis to Germany, a 'creditor' or 'net contributor' country. At the end of November 2010, the Irish government formally requested a bailout from the EU. While the bailout was designed to save Ireland from default, the funds were attached to conditions such as extremely harsh austerity measures, a large contribution from its national pension reserves and high interest rates on the loans provided. The period from 21<sup>st</sup> November – 5<sup>th</sup> December 2010 spans the moment at which Ireland formally applied for financial assistance from the EU/IMF on 28<sup>th</sup> November to deal with the growing fiscal crisis that followed its banking crisis in 2008. This period provides an opportunity to consider the extent to which the politics of blaming places a role in identity construction. How far were Europeans, Germans, or the British blamed for Ireland's plight at this time? Alternatively, was this a moment at which Ireland was reminded of the benefits of EU membership, in the sense that the EU was 'coming to the rescue'? While including Ireland in the May 2010 time period would also have been interesting, it has been noted that November 2010 was the moment at which EMU issues were most visible in Irish public debates (Hechinger, 2014:96).

Furthermore, it was Ireland's financial situation rather than that of Greece that was the focus of debates during May 2010, where Greece was a 'test case' for Ireland's developing crisis situation (Hechinger, 2014:202). The period covering the Irish bailout was therefore the most important period for the Irish case study during 2010.

## 2) December 2011 (all cases)

The second time period comprises approximately the first two weeks of December 2011, the fortnight spanning the European Council summit on 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> December which saw the agreement of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance (TSCG, otherwise known as the Fiscal Compact) between twenty-six EU member states, with the exception of the United Kingdom and the Czech Republic. This Treaty agreed on strengthened budgetary rules and increased economic policy coordination. This period also follows the agreement of a second bailout of Greece in October 2011. December 2011 also saw the conclusion of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU. This time period was extended to begin on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2011 in the case of Poland to include the debate following Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski's speech in Berlin at which he now famously declared that he 'fears German power less than German inactivity' on the Euro crisis. In the case of Poland, in order to deal with the volume of articles, the time period has been split to range from 29<sup>th</sup> November to 3<sup>rd</sup> December (the days following this speech and prior to the European Council summit) and 13<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> December (the days surrounding Tusk's speech to the Sejm during a debate on the outcomes of the Council summit). This summit was widely dubbed to be the summit to 'save the Euro' and therefore highly salient for all three case studies. It is a point at which the crisis became one affecting all of Europe rather than individual crisis countries, demanding justifications and motivations for 'saving' the currency as a whole. Given the agreement to further integration in economic policy, this time period presents a test of the willingness to share sovereignty in this domain. It also

presents a test of European solidarity in both Germany and Poland with commitment from both countries of additional funds to the ESM. This thesis thus focuses on three highly relevant political moments for Germany, Poland, and Ireland during the Euro crisis. Data for all case studies at these time periods was therefore collected from the following sources.

### *Materials*

Given the focus of this research on the ‘communicative discourse’ between elites, the media and citizens for examining how the crisis is constructed, the primary focus of this research is media discourse complemented by political communication in the form of speeches and press releases by political elites, namely government elites and political parties. According to Schmidt, the media is the intermediary between leaders and citizens, the ‘main transmission belt for information, reporting, commenting, critiquing EU leaders; press conferences, speeches, declarations, and actions, as well as the responses from informed publics and ordinary citizens’ (Schmidt, 2014:204). Furthermore, Trezn argues that European quality newspapers are the ‘principal carrier of the discourse on European unity and collective understanding of the EU’ (2004b:1). In this sense, the quality press functions as a ‘public entrepreneur’ and that newspapers must be ‘analysed in their most active role as a political actor and campaigner’ (Trezn, 2004b). However, the inclusion of the tabloid newspapers is particularly important in order to gain a full picture of EU debates and to avoid an ‘elite bias’ resulting in a more ‘Europeanised’ impression of public debates (Risse, 2010:114), especially as we know that elites have long been the most pro-integration actors across the EU (Hooghes and Marks, 2009). This study therefore examines the reporting of the crisis in three different newspapers in each country at the above time periods to investigate the ways in which the crisis is understood and contested in the public sphere. This research design allows for an very detailed study of the three case studies; as Bennett and George argue, using ‘a combination of within-case analysis

and cross-case comparisons within a single study' allows for the strongest possible interpretations and theory development (2003:18). The newspapers chosen are as follows:

- Germany – Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ), Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ), BILD Zeitung
- Ireland – Irish Times, Irish Independent, Irish Daily Star
- Poland – Gazeta Wyborcza (GW), Rzeczpospolita (RZ), Fakt

These newspapers include the two most widely-read broadsheets from each country, representing both the conservative and liberal-leaning sections of the press, and the most widely read tabloid newspaper, in order to gain an impression of discourses which are most pervasive in the public sphere in the countries in question. Articles were gathered using the electronic archives of the broadsheet newspapers in the case of Germany and Poland and NexisUK in the case of Ireland. Given the absence of electronic archives for all three tabloid newspapers, original copies were accessed using the newspaper archives of the British Library, the Berlin State Library and the Lower Silesian Public Library in Wrocław. Search terms in the electronic archives were 'Euro' and 'European Union' or 'Euro' and 'Europe'. Articles from all sections of the newspapers were collected where available (including online articles where possible and excluding regional sections and sport), and all types of articles from news, to editorials and letters to the editor (while not written by journalists they are also submit to an editorial process). All articles dealing centrally with the single currency and the Eurozone crisis were selected and those not dealing with Europe/the EU or the single currency as a central theme were discarded.

It must also be noted that many studies of this kind might generally involve analysis of a much higher number of articles. In a trilingual project carried out by a single researcher, however, the quantity of data is limited by the time it takes to read in a language that is not one's mother

tongue. Nevertheless, the value of including three diverse case studies outweighs the limitations created by a smaller data sample. Table 3 shows the number of articles that have been coded.

Table 4: Articles By Newspaper and Year

	<b>Year 2010</b>	<b>Year 2011</b>
<b>BILD</b>	13	11
<b>Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)</b>	28	21
<b>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)</b>	20	22
<b>Irish Daily Star</b>	27	24
<b>Irish Independent</b>	61	51
<b>Irish Times</b>	116	67
<b>Fakt</b>	3	16
<b>Gazeta Wyborcza (GW)</b>	15	34
<b>Rzeczpospolita (RZ)</b>	22	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>281</b> <b>(Total 583)</b>

In addition to this, political speeches and press releases from the selected time periods were collected from party and government websites. Political discourse in addition to media discourse allows us to identify contestation of crisis legitimation and differences between elite and media or mass level. Major speeches by heads of government and high-level government ministers as well as the main opposition leaders were analysed, along with press releases at the key time periods which were collected from the websites of the largest governing and opposition political parties.

Table 5: Speeches and Press Releases By Country and Year

	<b>Year 2010</b>	<b>Year 2011</b>
<b>Germany</b>	11	3
<b>Poland</b>	1	10
<b>Ireland</b>	7	13 <b>(Total 45)</b>

### **Data Analysis: Approaching Discourse**

The approach to individual texts is qualitative frame analysis in order to identify the different elements which constitute discourses on the Eurozone crisis. A frame can be defined as ‘an interpretive scheme used to make sense of the “world out there”’ (Risse and Van de Steeg, 2003:5) helping to ‘render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action’ (Benford and Snow, 2000:614). Frame analysis therefore serves to identify the various meanings and interpretations of the crisis and the different understandings of Europe embedded within them. By using what Ragin describes as ‘flexible frames’, comparative researchers can ‘refine and elaborate existing ideas and theoretical perspectives’ (1994:122). The frames have therefore been used as broad categories from which to conduct textual analysis. Risse notes that, in identity research, determining the ‘we’ poses methodological challenges (2010:124). Indeed, we cannot measure ‘identity’ simply through explicit references to identity issues. Rather, the identity constructions are embedded within the texts and the language used to discuss policy issues. Moreover, because there is no single European identity, but a multitude of European identities, it is necessary to identify the content of the various national European identities. Here, the focus is not necessarily a matter of being ‘European’ or not, or ‘less’ or ‘more’ European, but rather what kind of Europe is constructed and what it means to be European. It is also necessary to determine the ‘other’ which is constructed in the discourse. Is it an internal Other or an external? Furthermore, the frames of reference – European or national – must also be determined. Are matters perceived as common European or as national issues? As Risse notes, framing can be completely different and hardly Europeanized despite strong politicization of EU issues in national public spheres’ (2014:7). Key concepts from my theoretical framework have therefore been operationalized which form a number of questions to ask of the texts:

- How is the Eurozone crisis constructed? What is the cause of the crisis? Is it a common European crisis or, e.g. a Greek problem?
- How is the EU/Euro constructed through these texts and specifically through policy solutions? What meanings are attributed to the EU/Euro? What kind of Europe is portrayed? What are the main themes through which the EU/crisis is discussed?
- What is the frame of reference (European/National?)? Which internal/external others are constructed?

The frames were generated using qualitative data analysis software QSR NVivo 9 through coding at so-called 'nodes'. Data analysis software constitutes a 'valuable resource in the management of qualitative data' and assists in the retrieval of categories and themes (Basit, 2001:145). This software allows a researcher to easily manage large amounts of data and to access the data categorised at the different nodes. According to Bazeley, computer-assisted data analysis is 'not intended to supplant time-honoured ways of learning from data, but to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of such learning' (2007:2). Using this software, it is possible to identify the diverse crisis frames used by the different actors, differentiating between broadsheet and tabloid newspapers and political and media discourse and at different time periods. As Bryman argues, a case study in qualitative research 'tends to take an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research' (2008:69). The texts were therefore initially read to generate 'codes', defined as 'an abstract representation of an object or phenomenon [...] a way of linking data to ideas and from ideas back to supporting data' (Bazeley, 2007:66). The codes were generated inductively in consideration of the above questions in the process of coding. An initial sample of texts was read in order to pin-point the main themes in the texts and to develop some initial codes. These codes were then used as a

starting point for the first reading of the rest of the texts and formed the broad framework for analysis. The codes were then continually refined during the analysis of the texts from all three cases studies.

There are drawbacks and concerns related to the use of such software for analysing qualitative data, particularly in that they might create ‘a tendency to code to the exclusion of other analytic and interpretive activities, which biases the way in which qualitative research is done’ (Bazeley, 2007:9) For this reason, coding was used to identify the main crisis frames to facilitate, rather than replace, more detailed textual analysis conducted by the researcher. While frame analysis often allows for quantitative analysis of data, the focus of this research is the detailed meanings in which different ideas are embedded. As Basit argues, social phenomena do not need explanation through quantitative means, but rather it is the ‘quality and richness of the response to a social situation which we should focus on’ (2001:151). This research therefore took a flexible approach to frame analysis in order to facilitate detailed interpretation of the texts in each case study context. The broad codebook used is described in the following.

#### Outline of Codebook

The aim of the coding is to understand what meanings are given to the crisis and to Europe and European identity in the public sphere and to consider the ‘communicative conditions’ in which European identities are likely to be promoted, reinforced or challenged. The frames can act as a proxy for particular understandings of national and European identities and help us to understand the meaning or strength of ‘Europeanness’ as a political identity. Five broad categories were identified which then each had a number of sub-frames or ‘child nodes’, to use the language used by NVivo.

- Crisis frame

This frame relates to how the crisis is constructed, what meaning it is given or what cause is attributed to it, the extent to which the crisis is ‘framed as issues of common European concern and of common European fate’ (Risse, 2010:125). This is particularly important for questions about ‘critical junctures’. In order for European identity discourses to change, there must be a crisis that strongly relates to European discourses. For example, if the cause is constructed solely as the result of the ‘markets’, the crisis could function as an ‘external Other’ posing a threat to Europe, thus serving to reinforce European identities. If it is constructed as a broader institutional crisis which invokes European values and risks the break-up of EU as a whole, this may also function in the same way to encourage solidarity amongst Europeans. However, the framing of the crisis also serves to create divisions in Europe. Blaming Greece, ‘southern European’ or ‘peripheral’ countries creates internal Others within the EU, as does a framing of the crisis which attributes its cause to the so-called ‘design flaw’ or ‘birth defect’ of the Euro. Finally, if the crisis is framed as a domestic crisis or a broader global crisis the impact on European identities is unlikely to be significant.

- Interests frame

This frame relates to the extent to which the EU and crisis policies are presented in terms of either the European or national interest or both. Here, the European Union is not discussed explicitly in terms of identities or values but perceived material interests of either Europe or the nation-state. However, framing crisis policies in terms of the national interest, for example, serves to bind identities to the nation and limits willingness to exercise European solidarity. Sub-frames here include the perceived benefits or threat to national economic interests or the

political strength of a member state, or European economic interests, institutions or strength in view of globalisation trends.

- Solidarity frame

This frame is related to the proposed solutions to the crisis and identifies the instances in which they are framed in terms of solidarity with other Europeans or EU member states, particularly salient in light of the large sums of public funds contributed to the bailout programmes. Furthermore, this frame identifies the competing understandings of ‘European solidarity’ present in the case study countries. The solidarity frame reveals particular understandings of the ‘good European’. For example, in the German context, accepting such measures as austerity and adhering to treaty rules are sometimes linked to the ‘European idea’ and presented as a display of solidarity in a European community. References to, for example, economic sacrifices, adherence to rules, and handing out punishments for breaking them, are made within the context of a ‘we’ community where, for example, ‘Defizitsünder’ (deficit sinners) are ‘sinners’ as EU member states, and are to be punished as such. This nevertheless represents a ‘thin’ kind of solidarity, in contrast to ‘thicker’ forms of solidarity involving wealth redistribution, debt-sharing and economic sacrifices. There are also instances where solidarity is primarily expressed in relation to the national populations. This frame can also reveal the boundaries of the European community, for example, in the instances where debtor countries have broken the ‘community rules’.

- Sovereignty frame

Sovereignty emerged as a key frame in all case study countries, but particularly in Poland and Ireland. This frame relates to the instances where crisis policies are linked to questions of national sovereignty – including fiscal or budgetary sovereignty and threats to national

sovereignty by other EU member states – particularly Germany, along with France. It identifies the instances where opposition to crisis policies such as the bailouts debt-sharing or, in the case of Ireland, common taxation policy, is framed in terms of implications for national sovereignty rather than European solidarity. This frame therefore highlights the implications the crisis is having on questions of European and national statehood. Furthermore, it sheds light on the strength of European political identity and the extent to which there is a willingness to share sovereignty with other EU member states, and illuminates emerging divisions in Europe particularly between core and periphery. Concern about German (and to some extent French) dominance over national affairs emerges as a strong point of antagonism.

- History frame

This frame brings together all references to history found within the articles and helps to reveal the content of European and national identities. For example, there are some references to the early days of European integration post-1945 and the EU and single currency's 'founding fathers', in particular the need to remember their founding vision during this time of crisis. Depending on the how frequently it occurs, this could potentially serve to construct or make more dominant a shared founding narrative for the EU. There are also many references to Germany's past and the need to prove to Europe its peaceful intentions, as well as recurring references to Germany's fear of inflation. In the German context these might function to solidify the need for European unification or cooperation, but rising fear of German dominance in other EU member states may lead to the 'Othering' of Germany and an increased desire to protect national sovereignty. There are also references to the fall of communism in 1989 and the Irish war of independence and the Anglo-Irish Treaty which relate to motivations for and opposition to further European integration.

<b>Crisis frame</b>	<b>Solidarity frame</b>	<b>Sovereignty</b>	<b>History frame</b>	<b>Interests frame</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial markets</li> <li>- Institutional crisis</li> <li>- Euro design flaw</li> <li>- Southern European crisis</li> <li>- National politics</li> <li>- Domestic politics</li> <li>- Global crisis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Thick solidarity</li> <li>- Debt-sharing/redistribution</li> <li>- Economic sacrifices</li> <li>- Ordinary people</li> <li>- Further integration</li> <li>- Thin solidarity               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community rules and punishments</li> <li>- Budgetary discipline and austerity</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Creditors responsible</li> <li>- National solidarity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fiscal sovereignty</li> <li>- No bailouts</li> <li>- No debt-sharing</li> <li>- No tax harmonisation</li> <li>- German dominance</li> <li>- National sovereignty</li> <li>- EU to increase national sovereignty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1989/reunification</li> <li>- Fear of German dominance</li> <li>- Fear of inflation</li> <li>- Founding days of EU</li> <li>- War in Europe</li> <li>- European colonialism</li> <li>- Fall of empires</li> <li>- National Socialism</li> <li>- Wirtschaftswunder</li> <li>- Irish War of Independence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- European interests</li> <li>- Globalisation</li> <li>- European economy</li> <li>- EU institutions</li> <li>- National interests               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strength of member state</li> <li>- Trade, exports, economy</li> <li>- MS in Europe's interests</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the research methods used in this thesis, including a discussion of the comparative case study approach and methods of data collection and data analysis. Firstly, it outlined the comparative case study approach adopted. Designed to study particular political and social phenomena across national contexts in detail, this thesis has selected three case studies with which to observe the effect of the Euro crisis on the construction of European identities. It will do this by studying the crisis in the political, historical and social context of the country under observation and to observe similarities and differences between the case study countries. While there are a number of disadvantages to the case-study approach, in particular that of the ‘small N’ problem of generalizability, the goals of a comparative case study approach differ from those of ‘large N’ studies. Instead of seeking to test theories and generalise to a larger sample, this approach seeks to provide in-depth, detailed knowledge of particular social and political processes and phenomena within the chosen contexts. In so doing, case studies can provide an exploratory function to help the process of theory building, in this case, the role of crisis in identity construction. The chapter then outlined the rationale for the case study selection. The three countries represent different categories in the EU, most notably, a ‘creditor’ country, a ‘debtor’ country and one non-Eurozone member, which as a new member state is treaty-bound to join the Euro. As three countries rarely studied in comparison, and with relatively little research of European identity in both Ireland and Poland, this combination of case studies makes for a highly original piece of research.

Secondly, this chapter outlined the methods of data collection. It outlined the time periods chosen to limit the quantity of data available, namely May 2010, November 2010 and December 2011, which constituted important moments during the crisis for all three case study countries and presented interesting tests of European identity, European solidarity and national

sovereignty. It also outlined the choice of materials: three newspapers from each country, including two broadsheet newspapers (one conservative and one left/liberal) and one tabloid, alongside political speeches and press releases from the main governing and opposition parties. As a comparative study both within and between cases, this body of data provided a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of crisis and identity construction in the three countries. Finally, it explained the method of data analysis. This thesis uses a qualitative frame analysis approach to understand the different meanings given to the crisis and understandings of Europe and European identity in the three countries. Using qualitative data analysis software QSR NVivo, frames were inductively generated by asking a number of theoretically-informed questions of the texts. This resulted in the data being coded at different 'nodes' for 'Crisis', 'Solidarity', 'Interests', 'Sovereignty' and 'History'. These broad categories allowed for an overview of the different crisis frames and facilitated a deeper analysis of the texts. In light of these research methods, the next chapter will present the findings of the first empirical case study of Germany, followed by Ireland and Poland in the next chapters.

## CHAPTER 4: HAS GERMANY FALLEN OUT OF LOVE WITH EUROPE?<sup>7</sup>

### Introduction

Chapters 2 and 3 set out the theoretical framework and research methods adopted in this thesis. The primary objective is to examine the extent to which the Euro crisis has affected the construction of European identities in Germany, Ireland and Poland, how and why the effect of the crisis differs between countries and types of discourse. To do this, the competing ways in which the crisis is framed in the communicative discourse between media and political actors are investigated. This chapter constitutes the first empirical case study of this thesis and will argue that, in line with expectations, the crisis has primarily reflected existing ideas and identities in Germany rather than changed them due to the political constraints in the German context. It has been argued that the Euro crisis in Germany has presented a clash between the German economic model of ordoliberalism, the theoretical foundation of the social market economy, which has been strongly linked to the country's post-war identity, and the country's commitment to European integration (see e.g. Bulmer and Paterson, 2013), which is expected to have sparked a shift in European identity in Germany. This chapter will take these claims as a starting point and argue that the crisis and the ordoliberal model have not necessarily proved incompatible with European integration and European identity. Instead, debates during the Euro crisis were framed both in terms of Germany's long-standing post-war European identity which, as outlined in Chapter 2, emphasises the importance of the European project for overcoming Germany's Nazi past, and in terms of an 'ordoliberal' Europe, less a federal state-in-the-making and more so based on an 'ordoliberal ethic', where the 'good European'

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<sup>7</sup> This chapter draws on my article entitled 'Has Germany "Fallen out of Love" with Europe? The Eurozone Crisis and the 'Normalization' of Germany's European Identity', forthcoming in the journal *German Politics and Society*.

demonstrates such values as economic discipline and individual responsibility (see also Galpin, 2015). While the crisis opened up a ‘window of opportunity’ for actors to articulate a different idea of Europe for strategic purposes, in some cases redrawing the boundaries of Europe to a ‘Northern European’ community, it has not introduced new ideas, but rather strengthened ordoliberal conceptions of Europe that were already in existence with the introduction of the single currency particularly amongst conservatives and the German Constitutional Court.

Germany’s experience of the crisis differs starkly from Ireland and Poland. Whereas Ireland suffered as a ‘debtor’ country and bailout recipient and Poland emerged as the ‘green island’ of growth in an indebted Europe, Germany was largely responsible for agreeing and making a significant financial contribution to the bailout programmes as one of the most important ‘creditor’ countries. In this context, Germany is an important study of European solidarity (Risse, 2013:15). While the country did not experience an economic crisis in the same way as other EU member states, the debates about the crisis were of high salience because of Germany’s expected financial contribution. These bailouts were highly controversial and met with an enormous backlash in the populist press, particularly in 2010, when *BILD Zeitung* ran a vociferously anti-Greek campaign. Since the onset of the crisis, Germany has seen the development of a new ‘Eurosceptic’ party – Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) – which formed in 2013 and, despite missing out on any seats in the 2013 *Bundestag* election, won 7% of the vote and 7 seats in the 2014 European Parliament election. Furthermore, public opinion in Germany has consistently opposed the bailout packages, with a majority of Germans opposing the Greek bailout in 2010 and a significant number even advocating the exclusion of Greece from the Eurozone. Altogether, both the actions of the German government and the apparent development of a public backlash against the EU have led to the accusation that Germany has ‘fallen out of love’ with Europe, a consequence of a ‘normalised’ national identity (see e.g. Proissl, 2010). The German reluctance to offer a bailout to Greece in 2010 is often read as a

reluctance to express European solidarity, where Germany puts its own narrow interests before the common European good.

Drawing on in-depth and systematic analysis of German political and media discourse, this chapter will argue that this opposition to the bailout mechanisms should be read primarily in terms of Germany's economic model of ordoliberalism rather than a turn away from Europe per se. In so doing, it will offer up-to-date and original empirical research on European identity in Germany. Following Hillebrand (forthcoming), it will show how it is the ordoliberal values of economic discipline and individual responsibility that drive opposition to EU action on the Euro crisis rather than a shift away from European identity. This compares to findings from the Poland and Ireland case studies, where the crisis also reflects the long-standing national discourses on Europe. In Poland it reflects both the 'return to Europe' and national sovereignty discourses. In Ireland, it reflects both Ireland's economic and sovereignty-based motivations for European integration and long-standing understandings of Irish identity. However, it differs from both cases to the extent that even opposition actors voice their opposition to EU and government policy in terms of 'Europeanness', therefore contradicting the claims of the normalisation thesis. The first section will outline the normalisation debate in relation to the crisis and the German economic model of ordoliberalism. The following sections draw on detailed qualitative analysis of political communication and media reporting of the crisis. The second section will show how, contrary to popular belief, German elites framed the crisis in terms of its existing post-war European identity arguably to safeguard Germany's position in Europe rather than to move it away from Europe. While there was a strategic element to this discourse in order to gain legitimacy for the Greek bailouts and later the EU's 'Fiscal Compact', it is clear that they are constrained by veto players such as the German Constitutional Court and other factors, most notably the need to create resonance with the German public and existing discourses on Europe. The next section will explain the various understandings of

European solidarity, showing how what is often interpreted to signal an absence of solidarity can instead be read as a ‘thin’ solidarity based on an ordoliberal ‘capitalist’ ethic. The final section will show how, despite the articulation of national interests and national sovereignty in some parts of the press, debates about the crisis measures construct a new ‘Northern European’ community which redraws the boundaries of Europe, but nevertheless positions Germany as solidly European.

## **The Normalisation Thesis and German Ordoliberalism**

### *The Normalisation Debate*

This section will briefly outline the ‘normalisation’ debate and explain why Germany’s actions during the early stages of the crisis led to the accusation that it had ‘fallen out of love’ with Europe. As outlined in Chapter 3, ‘normalisation’ refers to primarily international responses to perceived changes in Germany’s historical post-war commitment to Europe. Germany was the committed advocate of increased European integration throughout the post-war period, from the early days of European integration in the 1950s right through to the launch of the European single currency in the early 1990s, a time when ‘multilateral integration had entered the German elite’s genetic code’ (Bulmer and Paterson, 2013:1393). In recent years, however, a debate about the ‘normalisation’ of European identity in Germany has emerged, understood broadly as the development of a more self-confident German national identity. According to Hyde-Price and Jeffrey, normalisation involves ‘Germany becoming more like other powers in its class, e.g. France, and the UK’ (2001:690) whose European policies involve the explicit and open pursuit of self-interest in contrast to the common ‘European’ interest. This normalisation process is considered to have begun in the immediate post-reunification period in the early 1990s (Berger, 1997:202), in part due to the incorporation of citizens of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) who developed their own distinctive east German identity

(Hogwood, 2000). It is also thought to have intensified during the 1990s with a new generation of Germans less conscious of the country's past. However, this supposed re-focus on national interests has also been associated with the introduction of the Euro. Given the importance of the *Deutsche Mark* and the “social market economy” (soziale Marktwirtschaft) that contributed much to West Germany's self-confidence’ (Risse, 2002:14) in the post-war period, the loss of that national symbol along with a perception of increased prices following the introduction of the Euro led to disillusionment with the single currency amongst the German public and to low levels of support for the Euro in polls in the early 2000s.

The Euro crisis is presumed to have exacerbated this shift away from the European interest. The assumption in the more recent ‘normalisation’ literature is that discourses more avidly promoting Germany's economic interests and national identity were strengthened and its European vision weakened particularly during the first Greek bailout negotiations in the first half of 2010, where Merkel's initial refusal to consider a bailout ‘represented a new German normality’ (Bastasin, 2012:183). Alongside this, the *BILD Zeitung* ran a vociferous anti-Greek campaign during the first half of 2010 which famously called on the “bankrupt Greeks” to sell their islands to pay off their debts (“Verkauft doch eure Inseln, ihr Pleite-Griechen”, *BILD*, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2010). This reluctance has been interpreted as revealing a lack of European solidarity. Paterson, for example, claims that the crisis signifies a ‘tipping point for classic German Europeanism’ (2011:59), where the particular nature of the crisis and Germany's position as the largest European economy has led to a ‘gradual process of hollowing out’ of its European vocation (2011:67). Bulmer and Paterson argue that Merkel has eschewed the ‘pro-European rhetoric of a common European destiny (Schicksalsgemeinschaft)’ (2010:1071) that previous German leaders have upheld and departed ‘dramatically from Germany's traditional solidaristic approaches to EU partners’ (2010:1055). Other scholars have provided bleak prognoses. Proissl argues that Germany has ‘fallen out of love with Europe’ (2010), while

Guérot asserts that Germany ‘no longer sees itself as Europe’s architect and conductor but as its victim’ (2010:2); Young and Semmler note that the reluctance to agree to the bailout might indicate that ‘the Eurozone could be confronted with a less committed Germany and thus even a possible collapse of the Eurozone’ (2011:5). Germany’s actions during the early stage of the crisis has therefore led to claims that it has turned away from Europe and is focused on a stronger sense of national identity and national interests. But is it as simple as just becoming ‘less European’? Whereas Germany was trying to protect its perceived national economic interest to a certain extent, these actions should be interpreted rather in terms of the constraints of the German context – the values of German ordoliberalism and the Constitutional Court. This chapter will argue that the crisis is framed in terms of both Germany’s longer-standing post-war European identity as well as its economic model of ordoliberalism, reflecting alternative conceptions of ‘what it means to be European’ present in the German context at least since the early 1990s.

### *German Ordoliberalism*

This chapter argues that the perceived changes in the German discourse on Europe during the crisis can primarily be understood as a continuation of the incorporation of ordoliberalism into understandings of Europe which has defined German ‘Euro scepticism’ since the launch of EMU in the 1990s, particularly the notion of Europe as a ‘community of stability’ as ruled by the German Constitutional Court as early as its Maastricht Decision in 1993 (Bundesverfassungsgericht (German Constitutional Court), 1993; 1998; see also Herdegen, 1998:14; Howarth and Rommerskirchen, 2013). Serving as the ‘theoretical foundation of the postwar German social market economy’ (Bonefeld, 2012:633), the economic model of ordoliberalism (*Ordnungspolitik*) is a particularly German variant of neoliberalism which requires that markets be regulated in order to achieve ‘the theoretical outcome in a perfectly

competitive market' (Dullien and Guérot, 2012). It places a strong emphasis on values of competitiveness and budgetary discipline, monetary stability and individual responsibility, enforced by rules set by the state. Going beyond the purely economic sphere, ordoliberalism touches upon 'the ethical, moral and normative frameworks of individual behaviour' (Bonefeld, 2012:651; see also Hillebrand, forthcoming), and is 'deeply ingrained in the German political culture' (Howarth and Rommerskirchen, 2013:751). It is a powerful economic orthodoxy that 'transcends party lines' (Howarth and Rommerskirchen, 2013:715, 757) including the main opposition party, the SPD, whose core support base depends on a strong export-led economy (Bonatti and Fracasso, 2013:1033).

According to Bulmer and Paterson, there have been the 'two strands' present in German elite discourse on European integration – the first based on Germany's post-war European identity and the second based on ordoliberal values for the benefit of Germany's export economy, which combined to 'shape the rules of integration' (2013:1393). With the onset of the Eurozone crisis, this second strand is seen to have become more important than the first, where debates about further integration by means of, for example, the mutualisation of debt through Eurobonds, bailout mechanisms and the reform of the European Central Bank (Hillebrand, forthcoming) have come into conflict with the ordoliberal model which precludes such moves on economic grounds (Wolf cited in Bulmer and Paterson, 2010:1069). However, this chapter argues that the incorporation of ordoliberal values into Germany's post-war European identity during the Euro crisis is a continuation of the same process since the 1990s. The notion of Europe as a 'community of stability' is not a new one but has rather been present in the German discourse since the earliest days of the Euro. As Howarth and Rommerskirchen find, the CDU in particular has referred to the German 'stability culture' to legitimise EU policy since the 1990s (2013:751), as part of 'a deliberate strategy to challenge widespread public opposition

to the introduction of the single currency' (2013:760). Former Chancellor Kohl, for example, called for support for EMU by speaking of a 'European Stability Culture' (cited in Howarth and Rommerskirchen, 2013:759). Moreover, the very institutional architecture of the single currency was modelled on the *Deutsche Mark* and the German 'stability culture'. In order to preserve the economic achievements of Germany and particularly to assuage the fear of inflation associated with memories of the Weimar Republic, the Maastricht Treaty, and later the SGP, involved 'uploading ordo-liberal principles to the EU level' (Bulmer, 2014:1247). The ECB was modelled on the *Bundesbank*, with price stability its primary objective, and the convergence criteria required to adopt the single currency reflect ordoliberal budgetary principles (Bulmer, 2014:1247). From its launch, then, European integration did not necessarily clash with Germany's economic model but instead involved Germany 'exporting it throughout the Eurozone' (Howarth and Rommerskirchen, 2013:760). It is therefore primarily Germany's 'ordoliberal heritage' rather than its perceived national interests that helps to explain Germany's reluctance to act and public opposition to the bailout programme to its particular interpretation of the crisis (Hillebrand, forthcoming).

Ordoliberalism attributes the crisis to lack of competitiveness and high levels of debt in the crisis countries, that is, a failure on the part of the Greeks to exercise economic responsibility, as well as to the failure of Eurozone institutions, in particular, the problems associated with having a monetary union without political union (Hillebrand, forthcoming). Bailing out these peripheral countries once the crisis hit was perceived to pose a risk to Germany's international competitiveness, especially if the bailout was provided without strict conditionality through economic and structural reforms (Bonatti and Fracasso, 2013:1024). Concern for the continued health of Germany's strong economy is therefore related to the concern that the bailout would put its social market economy under pressure. Furthermore, the Germans had already been undergoing tough reforms, particularly Agenda 2000 and Hartz IV, which saw significant cuts

to Germany's social welfare system in order to deal with the costs of reunification (Bonatti and Fracasso, 2013:1024) and large public debt (Bulmer, 2014:1256). Moreover, instead of solving the problems of the periphery, a bailout would rather reinforce the existing structural problems in both Greece and the Eurozone as a whole that allowed the lack of competitiveness and economic discipline to develop in the first place (Bonatti and Fracasso, 2013:1036). More than just a question of economic interest, then, ordoliberalism constitutes a value system and a certain perception of fairness. Given the German experience of austerity, the suggestion that they should pay to assist those who had not undergone the same reforms was a difficult pill to swallow.

The commitment to this economic model by both the German public and main political parties therefore creates a number of practical constraints in the German domestic politics which complicated the German reaction to the crisis (Bulmer and Paterson, 2013:1400). Along with her liberal coalition partners, the Free Democrats (FDP), who have traditionally been the most committed to the ordoliberal model and who were able to exercise a strong influence on the government at that time (Bastasin, 2012:134), Merkel also needed to listen to public opinion. The Germans were doggedly anti-bailout and she was facing a regional parliamentary election in North Rhine-Westphalia on May 9<sup>th</sup> 2010 at a time when support for the coalition was 'at a historical low' (Bastasin, 2012:183; see also Young and Semmler, 2011:8). However, her biggest constraint was arguably the *Bundesverfassungsgericht*, the German Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe, which has long been active in ruling on European integration (Young and Semmler, 2011:8-9) and in particular in ensuring the ordoliberal commitment to monetary stability. It was highly influential in determining the German management of the crisis starting with the Greek crisis in 2010 (Bastasin, 2012:124) and became 'the primary site for the assessment of the legality of relations between Berlin and the European Union, and therefore

also a crucial actor in the EU' (Bastasin, 2012:128). The Court has become a 'co-shaper of German European policy' (Bulmer and Paterson, 2013:1399) before and during the Euro crisis. The most important of its decisions relating to the Euro was its decision on the Maastricht treaty in 1993. Following the ratification of the treaty which launched EMU, the Court reasserted the notion of EMU understood as a "community of stability" and maintained that if the stability requirements, that is, the convergence criteria set out in the Maastricht Treaty, not be met, then Germany 'could pull the plug and leave the Monetary Union altogether' (Herdegen, 1998:14). As discussed, the Euro has therefore long been defined as a 'stability community' in the German context. The empirical parts of this chapter will show how the crisis in Germany was framed in terms of its long-standing European identity as well as in terms of its ordoliberal model, leading to new understandings of Europe in the discourse of the opposition to the Euro and EU policy action.

### **A European Crisis?**

The chapter will show how these perceived changes in identity should not be read as a dramatic change or 'normalisation' of European identity in Germany but rather evidence of the constraints on Merkel posed by the ordoliberal model and Constitutional Court. German elites come to frame the crisis as a European crisis that draws on long-standing meanings of European identity in Germany, as a strategy to legitimise the EU bailout due to the constraints placed on them by the German context. Prior to the German government's acceptance that a bailout would be necessary, German elite discourse was noticeably different. Prior to May 2010, there was a steadfast refusal to consider the possibility of a bailout. In speeches to the *Bundestag* in March 2010, Merkel insisted that Greece alone was responsible for the crisis, claiming that 'We must put a stop to trickery' (Merkel, 2010a). A week earlier, she stated that

The Greek situation was not produced by the speculators [...] but by the fact that the Stability and Growth Pact was violated over many years. The Euro is therefore facing the biggest challenge it has ever had to deal with. I can also say

that the Karamanlis government participated in this. The previous government was also involved in it (Merkel, 2010b).

At this time, the crisis was framed as a Greek crisis for which Greece alone bore ultimate responsibility. While she accepted that the ‘ultima ratio’ – the last resort – could be IMF and bilateral aid (although not ‘community aid’) (2010a), primary responsibility was given to Greece to guide its own way out of the crisis through the implementation of austerity measures (2010b). She also steadfastly denied any responsibility for Germany in causing the crisis:

It is downright absurd, to turn Germany, with its competitive economy, quasi into a scapegoat for the development which we now have to overcome [...] We are making an important contribution to strengthening Europe’s competitiveness on the world markets. We can be rightly proud of this (Merkel, 2010a).

Finally, and most controversially, she accepts the notion, already put forward by her finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble, that the EU was in need of a contractual agreement in which ‘as a last resort, it is even possible that a country be excluded from the Eurozone if it consistently fails to meet the conditions in the long-term’ (2010b). These statements were met with controversy across Europe, including accusations, as outlined above, that Germany was refusing to act in solidarity with Greece. It was certainly an unprecedented suggestion that a member state could be excluded from the single currency. However, we can also understand this as an awareness and sensitivity to the constraints of the German context, where Merkel’s reluctance to come to Greece’s aid can be understood as a strategy by Merkel to avoid a challenge by the Constitutional Court, which could technically force Germany out of the Eurozone. Any financial aid package therefore had to be for the purposes of the stability of the single currency and the future of the Euro as a whole rather than for the future of Greece; speaking in terms of solidarity with Greece would automatically signal to the Court that Germany was violating the treaty (Bastasin, 2012:171). According to Bastasin, Merkel was

also conscious of the need to ensure that the German public did not become so disenchanted with the Euro in such a way as to threaten Germany's future in the EU or the rise of populist parties (Bastasin, 2012:172). Given that Germany's position in the Euro could be put at risk if this were the case, it can be argued that her delay was actually a strategy to maintain Germany's position in Europe rather than to limit it.

*'If the Euro fails, then Europe fails* (Merkel, 2010c).

By May 2010, however, there is a distinct shift in German elite attitudes to the Greek crisis. By this point, the crisis came to be framed by German elites as a crisis for the Euro as a whole, and indeed for all of Europe in order to legitimise the negotiation of the Greek bailout, something which found particular resonance in the left/liberal press but also across the political spectrum. On the one hand, we see clearly how the crisis is framed as one affecting the whole of the Eurozone rather than just Greece, with Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble's assertion that we 'must defend the common European currency as a whole' (2010). On the other hand, in a nod to the Constitutional Court, Schäuble also reminds of the commitments laid down in German Basic Law to a united Europe (2010). The crisis is therefore framed as a broader European crisis which reflects long-standing European identities in Germany. Risse notes that, despite mixed opinions in Germany, the introduction of the Euro was always linked with European identity by German political elites: Chancellor Helmut Kohl explicitly associated support for the single currency with a notion of 'good Europeanness' related to 'overcoming the German militarist and nationalist past' and tying the new united Germany closely to Europe (Risse, 2002:13). Likewise, Chancellor Merkel and Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle both drew heavily on the history of the EU and the original goals of European integration and linked them to the future of the Euro, in so doing invoking the '*Schicksal*' (fate) of the European project. In a speech at the Charlemagne Prize Award Ceremony, Merkel declared that 'if the

Euro fails, then it is not just the currency which will fail. It will be Europe that fails, it will be the idea of European unification which fails' (Merkel, 2010c). She expresses similar ideas in the *Bundestag*, declaring that 'the currency union is a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* (community of fate). It is therefore a question, no more and no less, of protecting and withstanding a test of the European idea' (Merkel, 2010e). Free Democratic Party (FDP) leader and Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle also continued this idea, arguing that the EU is facing its greatest crisis. He highlighted what was at stake: not just the Euro, but the very achievements of the EU's German founding fathers:

What Konrad Adenauer and Theodor Heuss began, Willy Brandt and Walter Scheel, Helmut Schmidt, Helmut Kohl and Hans-Dietrich Genscher continued. They deepened European integration and in doing so lay the foundation for German and European unification. Today 500 million Europeans from 27 countries live in a common legal space in peace, in freedom and with a prosperity that has never been known before (Westerwelle, 2010).

In the German elite discourse, then, the crisis is framed as a threat to the entire process of European integration, to the unification of the European continent, and to the achievements of peace since the end of the Second World War, equating the Euro with 'Europe' more broadly. They also reinforce the long-standing Other of Germany's European identity – its past. For example, Merkel and Westerwelle call upon the support of the *Bundestag* and the German people to support the bailout proposals. By invoking the 'original' motivations for European integration, that is, European peace in the post-war period, they quietly hint that a failure to save the Euro would result in a reversion to the 'dark' days of the European continent, and to Germany's Nazi past. Recalling the 'great European' leaders of post-war Germany, Westerwelle reminds Germans of their post-war duties in Europe. Moreover, Schäuble even begins his speech on May 7<sup>th</sup> by reminding his audience of the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War the following day, which closed the 'darkest chapter in our history'

(2010). In a country still highly conscious of its past, such discursive strategies leave little room for dissent, for disapproval, for refusing support.

In order to legitimise policy action, then, German elites, like Irish and Polish ones, frame the crisis through the lens of existing discourses on Europe in order to achieve resonance. On the one hand, they are acting strategically and framing the crisis in a particular way to achieve resonance for political ends. On the other hand, it is clear that they are constrained by both the practical and discursive constraints of the German context. Because of concerns about the Constitutional Court, German government leaders had to frame the crisis as a Euro or European crisis for the bailout to be viewed as constitutional. However, the meaning of a ‘European’ crisis had to have resonance in the German context – that is, a crisis of the post-war ‘idea of European unification’ inextricably linked to German unification, which helped to overcome the Nazi past. This framing of the crisis resonated in the media discourse and extends through to 2011, when, at the European Council summit to ‘save the Euro’ a similar legitimising process took place. This is particularly important in the left/liberal press but also present in all newspapers particularly in 2011. Firstly, the historical motivation for European integration is re-articulated. In one article in the SZ, it is stated that Europe’s fate will depend on German Chancellor Merkel and former French President Sarkozy’s ability to come to agreement and find a solution to the crisis:

Adenauer and de Gaulle, Kohl and Mitterand, and now Merkel and Sarkozy: Europe’s destiny is always decided by the constellation of the most important leadership duo which steers the fate of the continent. As the largest nations in the EU, Germany and France [...] represent perfectly the ruptures which have led to war time and time again for centuries and now determine the tension in the Eurozone [...] Now having to reconcile the continent in its fiscal and budgetary policies, Merkel and Sarkozy’s personalities are as different as their models for the EU’s design (‘Ein Paar’, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 3rd December 2011, p. 6)

Their ability to solve the crisis is therefore not just a question of saving the single currency, but also a question of continuing the entire process of European unification. The implication is that solving the crisis is not just a question of economics or straightforward politics, but also a symbol of Franco-German and European reconciliation, a ‘defining mark of the infant Republic’s identity’ in the post-war period (Bulmer and Paterson, 2013:1393). This idea is also present in *BILD* which also discusses the ‘fate of the community’ and the importance of a ‘united Europe’ led by a strong Franco-German alliance. For example, it reports French President’s ‘*Schicksalsrede*’ (speech of fate), stating that “Shoulder-to-shoulder with Merkel: France and Germany finally came together after tragic times, said Sarkozy. A united German-French partnership means a united Europe’ (‘Sarkozy hält Schicksalsrede an die Nation’, *BILD*, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2011). Moreover, the summit is described as a ‘summit of fate for the whole EU’ (‘Britten drohen mit Reform-Blockade’, *BILD*, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011). The references to the war again remind Germans of the other Other of their European identity – its past – and the references to Schicksal remind Germans of Europe’s shared destiny. References to the ‘founding fathers’ of the EU such as Monnet, Schuman and Delors, also reinforce a founding narrative of the EU. As will be shown in the coming chapters, a similar pattern is found in Poland and Ireland where original identities and motivations for EU membership are invoked in order to legitimise policy. In Ireland, the ‘pro-Europeans’ draw on economic interests and sovereignty frames to legitimise EU policy action, on the basis that the EU and the Euro remain the best guarantees of the Irish economic interest and Irish national sovereignty. In Poland, the government and ‘pro-Europeans’ legitimise Poland’s participation in the Fiscal Compact by emphasising the importance of playing an active role in the EU as ‘good’ Europeans in order to secure Poland’s rightful place in the European core.

On the one hand, therefore, German elites and the media invoke Germany’s long-standing European identity to legitimise EU action. They remind Germans of the country’s long-

standing commitment to European integration, to the Franco-German relationship, European reconciliation and the ‘Other’ of Germany’s European identity – its past. On the other hand, Merkel and other German elites have to include ordoliberal values into her conception of Europe/European identity in order to satisfy ordoliberal opponents and the Constitutional Court. The crisis therefore does not just reinforce the long-standing post-war European identity in Germany, it also continues the process of incorporating ordoliberal values into the European community since the launch of the single currency. This can be understood as both a strategy by German elites to ensure EU policy resonates and a reflection of the importance placed on these values by the German public which constrains elites. This is particularly well reflected by examining understandings of European solidarity in Germany, which constructs new understandings of what it means to be European.

### **European Solidarity and the ‘Good European’**

Alongside notions of ‘Europe’ as a community designed to bring peace, freedom and prosperity to Europeans in the post-war period, the European community and the idea of the ‘good European’ have, in the German political and media discourse, been connected with the values of ordoliberalism. This can be considered a strategic manoeuvre by German politicians, especially the CDU, to justify crisis measures, but one which resonates with ordoliberal principles valued by the German public (Howarth and Rommerskirchen, 2013:759). This is reflected in the various constructions of European solidarity that can be identified in the German case study and constitutes a stark contrast to the two other case studies. In Poland, the cleavage over EU policy is primarily drawn along nationalist-cosmopolitan lines, between those who see European and Polish identity as inseparable and those who see them as conflictual, and between those who see Polish sovereignty as having been strengthened or weakened by European integration. In Ireland, EU policy debates take place in instrumental

terms, centred on whether the EU serves or damages Irish national interests, Irish sovereignty, and ultimately Irish identity. In Germany, despite some focus on national sovereignty and national interests as will be elucidated in the final section, the debates are framed first and foremost in terms of European solidarity and European values. The question relates to what it means to be European, who belongs to the European community, and who has responsibility for the crisis. Rather than being a question of European identity or not, then, the German case centres around the question of what a good European should be and also what kind of identity exists to support political union. This section will firstly outline the relationship between solidarity and identity before leading into a discussion of European solidarity during the Euro crisis.

### *The Relationship Between Solidarity and Identity*

Framing crisis policies in terms of European solidarity reflects Germany's existing European identity as well as helps to construct new meanings and community boundaries. European solidarity provides identity with much of its political content, that is, a particular set of values, rules or obligations of membership of a European community, the 'us'. Chapter 2 outlined the importance of the 'Other' in the construction of European identity. A consideration of solidarity provides (political) meaning to these us vs. them relationships. According to Karagiannis, solidarity 'brings together [...] a (often *a posteriori*) description of a certain social reality at a certain time, and a (often *a priori*) political project (2007b:5), in other words, it is a 'politically committed re-specification of the social' (2007a:1). While solidarity can be considered a descriptive tool to illuminate existing social bonds, she argues, it also performs a 'normative function' serving to 'programmatically announce a political project' (2007b:18). In the European context, solidarity illustrates what Europeans are willing to do for each other at a time of crisis and what they understand the European community to be. The former Constitutional Court judge Böckenförde (2005:31) argues that 'the solidarity required in a free

trade zone or economic community is thus different from that demanded by a political community'. European solidarity, he notes, 'presupposes an answer to the question of the *telos*, the purpose and goal of European integration' (2005:31). European solidarity can therefore reveal particular meanings and understandings of Europe and European identity. As Hall argues, 'some national leaders suggest that 'more Europe' means a fiscal compact with stricter rules on debt and deficits, whereas others seem to hope it will entail a more aggressive form of transnational Keynesianism, if not something tantamount to European economic governance' (2014:1238). These economic ideas are reflected in the different understandings of European solidarity.

However, while solidarity might be an expression of identity, it can also serve to re-articulate or renegotiate existing identities, social bonds or community boundaries. In the context of the crisis, the question of solidarity has strengthened alternative meanings given to European identity in Germany. The development of European identity 'certainly owes a lot to a sense of European solidarity that is promoted, notably, by European institutions' (2007a:3) and, by extension, national governments. A particular articulation of solidarity as a European value can recreate a (new) sense of belonging, a new identity (Karagiannis, 2007a:6). During the Euro crisis, the solidarity promoted by European institutions, national governments and other actors in the public spheres can therefore serve to reconstruct existing identities by defining boundaries and specifying the framework, the political project, which maintains the social bonds between Europeans (Mau, 2007:130). Rather than a more zero-sum, European or national dichotomy that can often be identified in the Polish and Irish cases, in the German case we can see alternative visions of what it means to be European. There are 'several ties of solidarity – several specifications of the social' which reflect co-existing and competing ideas of Europe and European identity (Karagiannis, 2007a:1) The question is therefore not just

whether or not European solidarity exists, but what exactly this solidarity means and what kind of identity it serves to construct. In Germany, notions of solidarity engage with or are tied to the German economic model of ordoliberalism. This section will show that there is a different understanding of European solidarity in Germany that highlights the moral duties and obligations to conform to EU rules and ensure the stability of the Eurozone. Despite some contestation, this is propagated by German elite actors and resonates across the political spectrum

*‘An oil spill of bad ‘Ordnungspolitik’ is moving across Europe’<sup>8</sup>.*

As discussed in the first section, ordoliberalism goes beyond the purely economic sphere, touching upon ‘the ethical, moral and normative frameworks of individual behaviour’ (Bonefeld, 2012:651; see also Hillebrand, forthcoming). It places a strong emphasis on values of competitiveness and budgetary discipline, monetary stability and individual responsibility, enforced by rules set by the state. These ordoliberal values have been incorporated into Germany’s European identity, where the ‘good European’ comes to mean the ‘good ordoliberal’. That is reminiscent of Max Weber’s modern capitalist spirit, where non-compliance with the rules of the capitalist spirit is ‘treated not as foolishness but as forgetfulness of duty [...] it is an *ethos*’ (Weber, 2003:51). In his elucidation of the historical roots of solidarity, Fiegle notes that, ‘whereas in France the history of *solidarité* was related to a Catholic concept of ‘collective guilt’ and a ‘community of sinners’ (2007:50), *Solidarität* was developed into a Protestant notion of individual responsibility for one’s sins’ (2007:54). Along these lines, Hechinger attributes the nature of the German debate on EU fiscal policy to the ‘deep-seated beliefs among German elites and citizens that debts are morally wrong’ (2014:193) – here it is worth noting that the German word for ‘debt’ – *Schuld* – is also the word for ‘guilt’. German insistence on economic reforms and budgetary and monetary discipline can

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<sup>8</sup> ‘Ein Ölfleck über Europa’, FAZ, 27th April 2010, p. 13

thus be understood as a ‘a sort of civil religion’ (Bastasin, 2012:179; see also Howarth and Rommerskirchen, 2013:752). As former President of the European Commission Jacques Delors is quoted as saying, ‘not all Germans believe in God, but all believe in the Bundesbank’ (Issing, 2002). Holding debts therefore automatically has the connotation of guilt and immorality.

In the context of the Eurozone crisis, breaking the rules, such as the EU treaties, the guidelines laid down in the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP), and bailout conditions such as structural reforms and austerity measures, constitutes not just an infraction of a capitalist or ordoliberal ethos but an infraction of the rules and values of a European community. Infringing these rules therefore allows for moral judgements about what it means to be a ‘good European’. Overall, the good European who exercises solidarity is one who understands the obligations and responsibilities of EU membership and contributes to economic stability. At the same time that the EU is becoming what Falkner labels a ‘non-compliance union’, where ‘non-compliance with EU rules has recently happened at an increasing number of levels’ (2013:2), this understanding of European solidarity in Germany demands individual responsibility for economic behaviour and compliance with EU rules. Although evident across the political spectrum and throughout the press, this idea is demonstrated particularly well by Angela Merkel, who has declared that:

A good European is not necessarily one who helps quickly. A good European is one who complies with the European treaties and the respective national law and in doing so ensures that the stability of the Eurozone is not endangered (Merkel, 2010d).

Here, Merkel justifies the delay to agreeing the Greek bailout, arguing that the ‘good European’ is one who complies with the European treaties in order to ensure the stability of the Eurozone.

However, outright opposition to the bailout funds reflects this ordoliberal ethic, emphasising both the responsibility of EU leaders to respect the rules of the EU treaties and the responsibility of the crisis countries to exercise economic discipline. This notion of the ‘good European’ is therefore directed at German or EU leaders in general who have not kept their promises or complied with treaties and agreements such as the SGP, constituting both opposition to the bailout and opposition to the government more generally. For example, one *BILD* headline asks: ‘why are our politicians breaking this EU treaty?’ (‘Warum brechen unsere Politiker diesen Vertrag?’), *BILD*, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2010, p.1), referring to the so-called ‘no bailout clause’ in the Maastricht Treaty which states that one member state should not be liable for the debts of another.<sup>9</sup> Politicians supporting a Greek bailout are accused of being ‘bad Europeans’ because they are advocating breaking the EU treaty rules. For example, *FAZ* engages with Merkel’s notion of the ‘good European’ and highlights that she constitutes, by her own definition, a ‘bad European’ due to the consistent by-passing of EU treaties by the German government (‘Im Namen Europas, *FAZ*, 7th May 2010, p. 1).

By the same logic, in the crisis countries being a good European involves the implementation of austerity and structural reforms to comply with the budgetary rules laid down in the SGP. Descriptions of the crisis countries as the ‘deficit sinners’ (*Defizitsünder*), the ‘Euro debt sinners’ (*Euro-Schuldensünder*) (‘Sarkozy kündigt neuen Rettungsplan an’, *BILD*, 2nd December 2011, p.1) and ‘sinner country’ (*Sünderland*) (‘Was Sie über den EU-Gipfel wissen müssen’, *sueddeutsche.de*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2011) imply an immorality in the economic behaviour of those countries and evoke an almost religious condemnation of debt. One *FAZ* article

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<sup>9</sup> There is debate about whether this clause does actually constitute a ‘no-bailout’ clause in a strict sense, see e.g. Falkner (2013). However, for the purposes of this argument it is the perception of non-compliance which is important for the question of solidarity and trust.

justifies its opposition to the bailout, or rather to ‘bypassing the no-bailout clause’, on the basis that it will seriously endanger the stability of the Euro, maintaining that ‘solidarity is proved only through solidity’ (‘Solidarität bewährt sich in der Solidität’, FAZ, 24th April 2010, p. 12). Solidarity is therefore expressed not through the transfer of money from one country to another, but through ‘solidity’, that is, through all member states accepting the responsibility to ensure ‘solid’ state finances – through austerity measures, fiscal discipline, and economic structural reforms. Ordoliberal values of economic discipline, monetary stability and compliance with the legal rules are therefore incorporated into understandings of Europe and the ‘good European’.

As noted in Chapter 2, Germany’s history of hyperinflation during the Weimar and post-war period functions as an ‘Other’ of Germany’s post-war identity. Just as the Second World War is reflected in other crisis frames, and Irish and Polish history are reflected throughout the crisis debates in those countries, the collective memory of inflation also informs the fear of currency instability during the crisis. For example, FAZ maintains that ‘the Euro zone is not a liability or inflation community’ (‘Solidarität bewährt sich in der Solidität’, FAZ, 24th April 2010, p. 12) amid concerns that ‘the currency union is becoming an inflation union’ (‘Die Euro-Zone steht auf dem Spiel’, FAZ.NET, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2010). However, it also engenders a debate about the understanding of history. For example, another FAZ article argues that the memory of hyperinflation as caused by a central bank loaning the state money as an ‘implanted memory’. Instead, it was ‘rather the reparations which caused the Reichsbank to flood the currency market with Reichsmarks in order to pay the Allies’ claims in pound sterling, francs and other currencies’ (‘Der Krieg der Banken gegen das Volk’, FAZ, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2011, p. 28). Furthermore, there are varying interpretations of the impact of the Euro, for example, one SZ article claims that the Euro ‘has until now brought us better protection from inflation than the

national currency' (Finis Melancholia', SZ, 6th December 2011, p.18). Referring to the later Weimar period, another SZ article suggests that 'Papandreou finds himself in a comparable situation as Reich Chancellor Heinrich Brüning, who worsened the crisis with his austerity measures' ('Die Krise ist auch eine Chance für Griechenland, SZ, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2010, p. 29). This leads us into competing understandings of European solidarity constructed primarily by left-leaning opposition and media actors.

There are voices in the German political and media sphere who construct a different understanding of solidarity based on the principle of wealth redistribution, the mutualisation of debt or calls for full political union. Left-wing political actors such as the left of the SPD, for example, have opposed the 'sound money paradigm' (Howarth and Rommerskirchen, 2013:765), something which can be seen in competing constructions of solidarity. In contrast to the purely ordoliberal solidarity, where exercising ordoliberal values is deemed an expression of solidarity, solidarity here is more than simply solidity. This model constructs the 'good European' as those committed to a European political union. In fact, the origins of the word 'solidarity' lies with the Roman legal concept of *in solidum*, meaning 'an obligation for the whole, joint liability [*Gesamthaftung*], common debt, solidary obligation: *obligation in solidum*' (Brunkhorst, 2005:2). While this original meaning has been lost along the way, there are some references, particularly in the German debate about Eurobonds coming from the left, to the need to share debt liabilities amongst EU member states linked to a consciousness as a single European people. One letter to the editor in SZ, for example, calls for Eurobonds to be introduced quickly on the basis that 'if we want to be a single European people, then we have to accept the disadvantages, because the advantages of the common currency outweigh them' ('Gesucht: Eine Alternative zum Superstaat', SZ, 8th December 2011 p. 29).

In particular, the opposition SPD and the Green Party constitute the political actors expressing this kind of solidarity, based on a strong notion of community and commitment to the European project. For example, a joint SPD/Green Party declaration published by SZ calls for the agreement of a European development programme, investment in infrastructure and youth unemployment, as well as support for the creation of a European ‘sinking fund’. The document maintains that

The sinking fund connects a clear political commitment to a common Eurozone and joint liability with necessary solidaristic efforts for stable budgets on the part of the member states. We are extending the government’s fiscal union into a solidarity union. Because only with solidarity between member states can we ensure the stability of our currency (‘SPD und Grüne attackieren die Kanzlerin’, *sueddeutsche.de*, 8th December 2011).

Such policies are then linked to the ‘economic and political future of Europe’. Joint European debt liabilities and the funds for a European development programme are explicitly linked to a notion of European solidarity to safeguard the future of Europe. Redistribution of wealth and shared European debt – the solidarity union – therefore constitute European solidarity before stability can be ensured. Going beyond this, solidarity is also accompanied by a call for further and deeper integration, especially for the completion of a full political or economic union, that is, full unification of the European continent. In this model, the ‘good Europeans’ are those who call for further integration, in so doing remembering the broader purpose and values of the European Union. This is reflected in one SZ article which remarkably refers to elite financial actors, such as (former) CEO of Deutsche Bank Josef Ackermann alongside other directors and managers throughout the European economy, as the ‘best Europeans’ - the only ones calling for the ‘unification of the continent’. The article claims that:

It is quite noticeable that the representatives of the financial and economic system are among the active Europeans. That they defend and value what was generally sacrosanct in the first decades after the war – the unification of the

continent [...] Unmistakeably, managers and businessmen and women have been the best Europeans all these years – because they need the Euro, export everywhere and open subsidiary companies ('Monnets wahre Erben', SZ, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011, p. 18).

The financial elite are therefore perceived to be doing a better job at calling for more integration through the single currency or full political union than European politicians. Whereas in Ireland, domestic politicians are accused of causing the Irish crisis and bringing the country to ruin, domestic politicians in Germany are accused of failing Europe in their duty of furthering European integration and the path to political union. Instead, they were slow to act, or made the wrong decisions. For example, claiming that Germany 'holds the key for the future of European integration as well as the wellbeing of 330 million citizens of the Eurozone', the SPD and the Greens argue that it 'would be fatal if Europe failed at the small-mindedness of a German government' (SPD und Grüne attackieren die Kanzlerin', *sueddeutsche.de*, 8th December 2011). Furthermore, the SPD's Steinmeier argues that:

The decisions which were taken on 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> May – far-reaching decisions on saving the Euro – were right. [...] But, ladies and gentlemen, don't be too proud of this. Others in Europe had this courage, not the German Chancellor or the German Government. What happened to Germany's leading role in Europe? They went from the accelerator pedal to putting their foot on the brake, but this was the wrong move (2010).

Here, Steinmeier accuses Merkel of failing to move European integration forward to fight the crisis. A similar notion is expressed by Sigmar Gabriel, leader of the SPD, who argues that 'since Konrad Adenauer, nobody has ruined the German-French alliance so fundamentally as you have done in the last months' (2010). Merkel is accused by the main opposition party as failing her duties in Europe - she 'failed' to act as a good European by remembering her obligations to the European community and the post-war consensus for reconciliation and cooperation.

Nevertheless, most of these challenges continue to reinforce this conception of solidarity based on an ordoliberal ethic and construct a reciprocal solidarity – ‘solidarity with conditions’ based on an EU/German contribution to a bailout fund in exchange for a commitment to structural reforms and austerity in the debtor countries, as seen in the above quote calling for solidarity from the EU alongside the ‘solidarity efforts’ of the crisis countries. This solidarity is often connected to the original values of European integration. Rather than connecting the idea of European unification to just the Euro, Merkel has repeatedly linked it explicitly to the concept of a stability union. In so doing, she is able to turn the ordoliberal value of stability and sound money into one of many important values of the EU. For example, in 2010 she maintained that ‘ultimately it is a question of our values and principles: democracy, protection of human rights, sustainable economic growth, a stable currency, social peace. The 21<sup>st</sup> century can be Europe’s century.’ (Merkel, 2010c). She continues this idea in 2011, when she argues that

We are advocating [...] for a specific stability and growth culture, but we are doing this in the European spirit of Konrad Adenauer and Helmut Kohl. German and European unification were and are two sides of the same coin. We will never forget that (Merkel, 2011).

Working to ensure economic stability through strict budgetary criteria is therefore equated with the work of other ‘good Europeans’ in the history of European integration. This finds resonance particularly in the SZ, where the moral duty for economic discipline is considered even the ‘moral duty’ of all Western nations (‘Zwei Freunde, eine Botschaft’, SZ, 30th April 2010, p. 27), linked not just to the Euro but to the future of the EU and the European integration project. Another SZ article calls for reform of the SGP and strict stability criteria by arguing that ‘we should not allow today’s difficulties undo the achievements of the last 50 years’ (Finis Melancholia’, SZ 6th December 2011, p. 18). Invoking the achievements of European

integration in this context automatically connects compliance with community rules such as the SGP with the European integration project.

Support for crisis measures of this kind constitutes a reciprocal form of solidarity, where bailout funds are provided with conditions, in exchange for guarantees of structural reforms and austerity measures. Where Germany acts in solidarity by offering Greece and other ‘crisis countries’ a bailout, the crisis countries play their part and express solidarity through economic reforms. Reporting of the situation therefore often highlights the balanced, reciprocal nature of the arrangements, where, for example, the Greek Parliament passes the bailout package obligating them to €30 billion of cuts in exchange for the €100 billion loan from the EU/IMF (‘SPD enthält sich bei Griechenland-Hilfe’, SZ, 7th May 2010, p.1; ‘Die Euro-Zone steht auf dem Spiel’, FAZ.NET, 7th May 2010). Moreover, the economic sacrifices undergone in the debtor countries through austerity and structural reforms linked explicitly to the idea of a Europe which was built in the aftermath of World War Two. Economic discipline through austerity and structural reforms therefore come to constitute a form of European solidarity, to serve not just the stability of the Euro but also the European integration project. For example, the document from SPD and Green Party leaders published in the SZ reminds us that:

all crisis countries have, this year and last year, shown the willingness to undergo great sacrifice in order to make their contribution to the stability of the currency union. The chance for a new beginning in solidarity arises from the history of today’s Europe, built on the rubble of the Second World War (‘SPD und Grüne attackieren die Kanzlerin’, sueddeutsche.de, 8th December 2011).

Here the economic sacrifices made by the debtor countries through austerity and structural reforms are recognized and linked explicitly to the idea of a Europe that was built in the aftermath of World War Two. Because the crisis countries have undergone the ‘sacrifices’ required for a stable Eurozone, Germany will, in turn, act in solidarity and provide the

necessary financial assistance, thereby creating a ‘solidarity union’. Such measures are repeatedly presented as a necessarily reciprocal expression of solidarity

Furthermore, even the main opposition parties use this notion of an ordoliberal ethic, the notion of the ‘good European’ who promotes stability and complies with community rules. There was considerable opposition in Germany to the Federal Government’s bailout plans, with the Social Democrats (SPD) failing to support the bailout package in early May 2010. Bulmer and Paterson describe this as ‘the first major breakdown in the European policy consensus between the main parties in half a century’ (2010:1062). While this was certainly the case, it should not be read as a breakdown of their European identity, but rather as a debate about who should take responsibility – indeed, the left parties are the primary advocates for deeper political union. Stemming from a particular understanding of the crisis as caused or prolonged by the financial markets, these voices call for the involvement of the creditors in the bailout programmes and for a financial transactions tax to share the burden fairly.

In opposing the rescue package, therefore, the SPD was calling for the involvement of creditors in the bailout as an act of solidarity on their part, something that further supports this ordoliberal concept of the ‘good European’. The SPD extends this ‘community morality’ otherwise applied to EU leaders and to crisis countries to the banks and creditors. In light of their perceived role in the crisis, the banks and creditors are called upon by some political and media actors to express their solidarity too, and a moral judgement is passed on the banks’ and creditors’ perceived bad behaviour, irresponsibility and lack of discipline. The ‘financial markets’ and ratings agencies function here as an external Other for Europe. For example, when demanding that investors take a cut on their debts owed, the SPD demand that ‘strict action should also be taken against speculators who bet on state bankruptcy’ (‘Bundestag zu Hilfe für Griechenland

bereit', SZ, 27th April 2010, p. 1). Quoted in the SZ, then president of the Federal Republic, Horst Köhler, 'castigates financial capitalism' and he calls for 'drastic consequences' for those investors and financial institutions including banning high-risk transactions, maintaining that 'disarmament for such weapons of mass destruction' is necessary ('Köhler geißelt den Finanzkapitalismus', SZ, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2010, p. 1). SZ again reports of demands for banks take part in the bailout plans, on the basis that 'those who own Greek government bonds have been pocketing a high level of interest for a long time and should therefore also participate in the financial restructuring of the country' ('Griechische Anleihen jetzt Ramsch-Papiere', SZ 28<sup>th</sup> April 2010, p.1). FAZ cites the deputy chair of the Left Party's parliamentary group, Gesine Löttsch, who likens the 'speculators' to the 'Taliban in pin-stripes' ('Die Euro-Zone steht auf dem Spiel', FAZ.NET, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2010). The SZ quotes one political analyst who states that 'the markets want to see blood. When help fails to appear, they will get it ('Chaos', SZ 24<sup>th</sup> April 2010, p. 28). Another article in FAZ labels the crisis 'the banks' war against the people' and laments the power the 'financial oligarchy' is exercising over democratic governments. It argues that

now the financial sector has started a new form of warfare – seemingly less bloody, but with the same objectives as the Viking invasions more than a thousand years ago and the actions of the European colonial powers who took possession of land and mineral resources, infrastructure and other profitable means of income ('Der Krieg der Banken gegen das Volk', FAZ, 4th December 2011, p. 28).

The perceived irresponsibility on the part of the banks and investors therefore results in the expectation to contribute to the Greek bailout and, later, in the form of a financial transactions tax. This relates to calls for an international financial transactions tax to force banks to play their part in solving the crisis.

This form of solidarity is confirmed by findings of other studies which show that opposition to bailouts in Germany is a complex question demanding consideration of the ‘multidimensionality’ of the bailout programmes (Bechtel et al., 2012:2). For example, Bechtel et al. find that Germans are much more supportive of bailouts with conditionality and a fairer contribution from other member states. They find that support for EU bailouts dramatically increases when they include conditionality – that is – bailout funds with the condition of structural reforms and austerity measures – and burden-sharing - where the burden of payment to the bailout funds is shared more fairly between other member states – which remains true across the political spectrum and across different sections of the population (2012:24). The majority of citizens in the ‘creditor’ countries are found to be broadly supportive of this kind of conditional solidarity linked to the rules of fairness (Risse, 2013:17). On the other hand, it is found that support for bailouts which include significant ‘hair cuts’ on the part of investors is relatively low (Bechtel et al., 2012:19), reflecting perhaps the fact that such calls are found only in some, mostly left-leaning parts of the political and media spectrum. We can therefore see a European identity based on an ordoliberal ethic and European solidarity which demands economic discipline and compliance with European community rules. This can help us further understand the hostility to the bailout in the German press and the proposed exclusion of Greece and southern Europe from the EU. The next section will show how the crisis opened a ‘window of opportunity’ for the staunchest ordoliberals to criticise the very design of the Euro and call for the exclusion of Greece and other southern European countries from the Eurozone. In contrast to the normalisation thesis, this section argues that, whereas these frames do not necessarily present ‘a ‘federal’ vision of the EU, rejecting wealth redistribution and debt mutualisation, they do still discuss EU crisis measures in terms of Europeanness, reflecting the continuous presence of the European identity in Germany.

### **National, or Northern European? – What Kind of European Union?**

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, there has been much discussion of a ‘normalisation’ of Germany’s European identity during the course of the crisis. Indeed, there has been stark opposition to bailout programmes voiced particularly in the populist press, but also in the conservative press and sometimes also the left-liberal press. Furthermore, in 2013, Germany saw the creation of a new ‘Eurosceptic’ party – *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD - Alternative for Germany). AfD formed in 2013 comprising of a number of economists and academics and labels itself an ‘anti-Euro’ party. It is comprised of a number of members of the CDU and FDP who left their respective parties to a certain extent due to their pro-EU policies but also to a more general disillusionment not related to EU policy, particularly following the FDP coalition with the CDU in 2009-2013. In particular, the AfD opposes the bailout programmes, Euro membership of ‘debtor’ countries such as Greece, banking union and debt-sharing. The crisis can therefore be considered a ‘window of opportunity’ for German ‘Euroscepticism’ to take hold. They are not new ideas, but rather the crisis allowed them to gain traction in the context of the crisis. This section will show that, whereas there is some focus on German national interests and German sovereignty from the conservative, ‘Eurosceptic’ actors, this needs to be qualified in two ways – firstly, German ‘Euroscepticism’ finds expression as anti-Euro, rather than anti-EU (in this sense, German Eurosceptic parties are not comparable with British Euroscepticism in the form of UKIP – indeed, following the 2014 European Parliament elections AfD joined the grouping with the British Conservatives). Secondly, it is expressed in terms of a Northern European community based on an ordoliberal ethic, a community of the ‘economically virtuous’ who comply with community rules. Both however result in calls for a different kind of Europe that does not necessarily have full political union as its final objective.



*Headline: 'So the Greeks do want our money' – BILD Zeitung*

On the one hand, opposition to bailout programmes and other common economic policies reveal, on first reading, a preoccupation with national interests and identity and imply an absence of European solidarity. For example, Kuhn and Stoeckel find that 'exclusive nationalists are less likely to endorse European economic governance' given that it 'touches on [...] macro-economic sovereignty' (2014:637). Particularly in the early 2010 period, there are references to German economic interests and German sovereignty in much of the debates opposing bailout programmes. Firstly, in the backlash against the Greek bailouts particularly in April-May 2010, there is a concern with German national (economic) interests with seemingly little empathy for the struggling EU member state. In blaming the Greeks for the crisis, the headlines such as 'So the Greeks do want our money!' ('Griechen wollen unser Geld', BILD, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2010, p. 1) have contributed to the view that Germany has become less 'European'. Concerned about the burden on the German taxpayer, *BILD* reports that 'Germany is liable for up to 22.4 billion euro for Athens up to 2012 alone – with taxpayers' money!' ('Liebe Politiker...', BILD, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2010, p.2). Another declares that 'the German contribution alone amounts to 123 billion for the bankrupt neighbours. But for us there is now no more money for tax decreases! Are we actually the idiots of Europe?' ('Wir sind wieder mal Europas Deppen!', BILD, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2010, p. 1). It also publishes a list of alternative options of how to spend the 110 billion euro bailout package ('Was man mit 110 Mrd. Euro tun könne',

BILD, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2010, p. 2). This list includes improving German streets, more child allowance for German children, and lowering pension contributions or the national rate of VAT. The more Germany spends through the EU, then, the less it can spend on its own social system.

Particularly by 2011, attention is transferred somewhat from Greece to the single currency itself. In designating the crisis the result of a flawed Euro design, there are references to the importance of German national sovereignty particularly over budgetary matters. This frame reveals not new ideas created by the Euro crisis, but rather a strengthening of existing opposition to the Euro and full political union which has been growing since the Maastricht Treaty, in particular by the Constitutional Court. In particular, the Court's 1993 Maastricht Decision emphasised that the EU constitutes an 'association of democratic states' in which the citizens of the member states must legitimise EU decision-making through their respective national parliaments (Bundesverfassungsgericht (German Constitutional Court), 1993). In addition, the 2009 Treaty of Lisbon ruling maintained that, on the basis that there is no European people, sovereignty in issues such as fiscal and social policy must be retained by the member states (Bundesverfassungsgericht (German Constitutional Court), 2009). This reflects the notion, upheld by conservative actors in Germany, that there is not sufficient sense of Europeanness for political union (Hechinger, 2014:169). In this vein, the Euro crisis is understood to pose a threat to Germany's fiscal sovereignty on the basis that there is not one sufficient European identity to support a federal EU. For example, one article maintains that 'neither the EU treaties nor the Basic Law permit Germany's automatic liability for foreign debts' ('Europa kann vom deutschen Finanzföderalismus lernen', FAZ, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2011, p.21). The reference to 'foreign' debts places Greece and other debtor countries as external and therefore not a legitimate recipient of a German guarantee or German money. The same article

notes that ‘the core area of budgetary sovereignty must be protected as an inviolable element of the constitutional state’.

On the other hand, articles which oppose EU action on the basis of national interests are relatively uncommon, more prominent in the spring of 2010 than later on in the crisis and primarily found in *BILD* and *FAZ*. There has also been a significant softening of the *BILD* discourse since 2010, when anti-Greek sentiment was at its worst. Moreover, the hostility identified should not necessarily be read simply along the lines of a dichotomy of national vs. European identity, but rather as a debate about European values and what the EU should be. Firstly, criticism of the Euro does not translate in a loss of commitment to European integration or a dramatic shift in European identity discourses. For example, one letter to the editor published in *FAZ* suggests that the Euro has damaged the values of the community:

The Euro has divided the European Union. The execution of the “bailout fund” along the lines of a fiscal protectorate is to destroy the idea that Europe is not just a currency union but also a Europe of justice, freedom, security and collaboration, to which countries like Great Britain, Sweden, Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary also belong (‘Der Euro hat die Europäische Union gespalten’, *FAZ*, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2011, p. 9).

The author of the letter reasserts a notion of what it means to be European that extends beyond the Eurozone and highlights the argument that opposition to the Euro does not necessarily mean Germans have become ‘less European’. Likewise, the above article in *FAZ* argues that ‘in order to protect itself, Europe should remember the values which allowed it to flourish and blossom: the values of rights and democracy, freedom and diversity’ (‘Europa kann vom deutschen Finanzföderalismus lernen’, *FAZ*, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2011, p. 21). The policies of the AfD also support this broader notion of Europeanness. For instance, in its 2014 European election manifesto, the AfD reasserts its commitment to the EU but sets out its reform

proposals for the Eurozone. In the preamble of its 2014 European election manifesto, the AfD states that:

The Alternative for Germany wants a European Union of sovereign states. The AfD rejects a European federal state modelled on the United States of America, as there is no European nation and no European people. The European Union is committed to freedom, peace, prosperity and social security. It has contributed to German and European recovery, to the economic boom, to international understanding and to German reunification' (Alternative für Deutschland, 2014).

Claiming that the *'Einheits-Euro'* (unity Euro) has been a disaster, however, they propose mechanisms for its dissolution, including a country to leave the Eurozone without leaving the EU if they do not fulfil the conditions of membership, or for the formation of a smaller monetary system between the 'stability-oriented Euro countries' along the lines of the former European Monetary System. They call for Germany's secession from the Eurozone should these proposals not be met. These frames, therefore, primarily express opposition to the Euro yet still utilise Germany's post-war European identity discourse.



Left to right: 'The Greeks suffer. The Germans pay. The banks cash in.' 'Con artists, facilitators, Euro-Saviours' (Implication: 'The Greeks con, the EU facilitates, Germany saves'). 'Stable currency instead of EURO debt insanity'.

Source: <http://www.alternativfuer.de/europawahl/europa-wahlprogramm/> Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> August 2014

Anti-Greek sentiment should therefore not be read as a failure of Germany to exercise European solidarity, but rather as resentment towards a country and people who have been deemed ‘bad Europeans’, as a ‘crisis of the “European” Stability Culture’ (Howarth and Rommerskirchen, 2013:762). Liebermann argues that ‘*groupness* is contingent upon the existence of the formal and informal rules that help to sort out membership, providing guidelines about who is in and who is out’ (2009:110). The Eurozone crisis in Germany has therefore led to the construction of new boundaries in Europe on the basis of compliance with the ordoliberal ethic. This new divide sees Greece and other southern European countries excluded from the new Northern European identity, and former eastern European countries such as Poland incorporated within the new community. As Hechinger notes, the scandal relating to falsified statistics ‘delegitimized Greek demands for solidarity and disconfirmed claims that Greece was subject to “exceptional circumstance” beyond the country’s control which would have justified solidarity of its European partners from a German perspective’ (2014:189). In line with the ordoliberal solidarity outlined in the previous section, Greece is considered to have been a drain on the EU and broken the ‘rules’ of the European community, particularly given that bailing out Greece would fly in the face of the Germans’ tough experience undergoing structural reforms to adapt to the costs of reunification (Bonatti and Fracasso, 2013:1024). Presented as a bankrupt state, with inefficient institutions, irresponsible politicians and corrupt governments, it is considered to have lacked economic discipline and deceived the EU through falsified statistics. One *BILD* article criticized what it perceives to be grossly luxuriant lifestyles and a culture of corruption in Greece, describing a country of ‘the bankrupt and luxury pensions, tax dodgers and con-artists’ (‘Krise? Welche Krise?’, *BILD*, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2010, p. 2). In another edition of *BILD*, a template letter to German MPs voting on the bailout reminded them that Greece has been ‘living beyond its means’, that ‘bankrupt Greece is getting the biggest cheque in history’ (‘Pleite-Grieche kriegt den dicksten Scheck der

Geschichte', BILD, 3rd May 2010, p. 2) and that the government 'has deceived the appropriate EU institutions with many kinds of trickery' ('Liebe Politiker...', *BILD Zeitung*, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2010, p. 2).



*Anti-Greek BILD Headlines April-May 2010*

The FAZ likewise implies that Greece has demonstrated a culture of wastefulness and a mismanagement of EU funds, claiming that

while Ireland and Spain reduced their dependence on EU transfer payments considerably in the years prior to the outbreak of the financial crisis and Portugal's net position fluctuated only slightly, Greece received more and more money. A glance at its economic performance also shows that, unlike the other states, the Greeks have not recovered economically ('Pigs-Staaten hängen schon lange am Tropf der EU', FAZ, 8th May 2010, p. 14).

In contrast to other net receivers, therefore, Greece has in the eyes of some German journalists particularly from the conservative and populist press, misused or wasted EU money by failing to stimulate economic growth, and has not exercised the responsibility or met the expectations placed on it through membership of the European community by reducing its dependence on such financial aid. *BILD* points out that 'you do not believe anyone who has already lied once. Especially when it is a question of money. This applies to every community that is based on reciprocity – from a business through to a union of states' ('Wer soll die Griechen noch

glauben?’ BILD, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2010, p. 2). Greece is thus presented as a kind of ‘problem child’ to be excluded from the EU on the basis that it has broken basic rules of good behaviour in a European community. The notion that anti-Greek sentiment during this time can be attributed to the country’s perceived bad behaviour rather than a lack of European solidarity can be further supported by evidence that the number of Germans opposed to Greek bailouts was the same as that opposed to bailouts of large German corporations such as Opel (Bastasin, 2012:154)

However, this ordoliberal notion of the ‘good European’ is also transferred to ‘southern European’ countries more broadly, serving to create a Northern European community based on an ordoliberal ethic. As Ntampoudi finds, Greece is understood as the ‘centre-piece representative’ of a wider group of ‘PIGS’ countries (2013), meaning that, while it is the focus of the most hostility, it represents a wider ‘problem’ with the incorporation of southern European countries in the single currency. Moreover, Bechtel et al. find that bailouts in Germany ‘face the strongest opposition when the recipient country is Greece and are most popular when the recipient country is Ireland, with Italy and Spain falling in the middle’ (2012:17), suggesting further that opposition to bailouts does not take place on principle through a lack of solidarity but rather in light of the extent to which the countries in question and are seen to be good Europeans. The ordoliberal ethic along the lines of Weber’s ‘modern capitalist spirit’ necessarily risks creating a dividing line between North and South Europe. For example, Weber argued that ‘the lack of a *coscienziosita* of the labourers of such countries, for instance Italy as compared with Germany, has been, and to a certain extent still is, one of the principle obstacles to their capitalistic development’ (2003:57). The ‘ordoliberal ethic’ therefore creates not just anti-Greek sentiment but facilitates the re-emergence of long-standing stereotypes about southern Europe. In the crisis discourse, Greeks and other southern Europeans are presented as lacking in this ‘capitalist self-discipline, honesty and efficiency’

natural to the North. The construction of a Northern European community along these lines is most evident in FAZ. For example, it is manifested in proposals for Greece to leave the Euro or for the creation of a North Euro on the basis of their compliance with northern European ordoliberal values:

if Greece and other southern European countries cannot rigorously improve their conditions – that is: increase competitiveness, adapt the labour market, decrease spending and budget deficits, increase taxation, reform social services - they have to consider leaving the Eurozone and establish their own economic area, which in ten or 15 years could once again join the “North Euro” (‘Griechenland muss aus dem Euro’, FAZ, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2010, p. 25).

The FAZ in particular draws a very clear geographical line between northern and southern Europe in doing so making strong value claims between the two parts of the continent. For example, one article about Portugal notes that ‘the most south-western country in the European Union has always been considered the poorest of the 16 Euro countries and has recently gotten into increasing difficulties’, explaining the risk that the Portuguese government will not manage to pay back its debts’ (‘Wird Portugal das nächste Griechenland?’ FAZ.NET, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2010). In another article about Greece, FAZ asserts that ‘the south-eastern country will be spared insolvency and the investors will be – at least for the time being – protected from debt restructuring’ (‘Unsicherheit trotz Griechenland-Hilfe, Bettina Schulz, FAZ, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2010, p. 22). Another FAZ article claims that ‘you will not find a political majority in Germany to support the building of a pipeline through which dozens of billions will be pumped every couple of years into the southern part of the EU in order to maintain the fiction of an economic and monetary union’ (‘Im Namen Europas’, Berthold Kohler, FAZ, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2010, p. 1). Furthermore, the PIGS acronym is used to group the crisis countries together, in so doing invoking long-running stereotypes of the southern countries:

That the “PIGS states” of Portugal, Ireland, Greece and Spain, currently in financial difficulties, are the largest recipients of EU aid is not surprising, for the crisis has primarily affected countries which are traditionally economically

weak. A glance at the sum of aid which Portugal, Ireland, Greece and Spain have received from Brussels since 1999 shows how much these countries have been being drip-fed by the European Union for years ('Pigs-Staaten hängen schon lange am Tropf der EU', FAZ, 8th May 2010 p. 14).

Ntampoudi argues that the 'processes of dehumanization and objectification' inherent to the use of this term 'can make the imposition of tough austerity measures on these populations seem palatable and appropriate, even desirable' (2013). The 'unstable', 'indebted' southern European countries are therefore excluded from a northern European community because of their failure to comply with 'northern' European standards. In these examples, we can see which values are associated with being part of a northern European community – economic stability and fiscal discipline, competitiveness, and individual responsibility.

Interestingly, the former eastern European countries are incorporated into this emergent Northern Europe, in so doing overcoming, at least in the context of the crisis, the long-standing divisions in Europe between East and West long based on a notion of economic underdevelopment and 'backwardness' (Wolff, 1994:9). This division has then returned to what Wolff explains was the pre-Enlightenment, Renaissance division of Europe between North and South (albeit at that time between the 'cultured South' and the 'barbaric North') (1994:4-5). For example, discussing Poland's economic success as the 'green island of growth' in an otherwise 'red' indebted Europe, FAZ notes that 'Poland, which since the 1990s has had a debt brake in its constitution, sees itself in the tradition of a northern European stability culture' ('Polen als Insel im Osten', FAZ, 9th December 2011, p. 11). Furthermore, in an interview with the FAZ, the then Czech President Václav Klaus discusses the potential of Germany, Austria and the Netherlands as an optimal currency area. He questions 'whether countries such as Portugal, Spain or Greece belong to such an optimal currency area' but maintains that 'the Czech Republic more or less belongs to the German economic area' ('Der Euro war eine falsche Entscheidung', FAZ, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2010, p. 7). Although speaking of

the benefits for the Czech Republic in leaving the EU after he left office (Haughton, 2014:85), he suggests here that the Czech Republic could belong to such a 'core' northern European Euro on the basis of its shared economic values with other Northern member states. Furthermore, he also claims that 'the differences between Ireland and Greece or between Portugal and Finland are very big', indicating that Ireland, despite in the throes of a sharp economic slowdown, nevertheless belongs to the North. As will be shown in later chapters, this northern European identity can also be found in other countries in the 'North': in Poland there is a sense of self-identification as part of the 'virtuous North', particularly in view of the perceived injustice of Poland's contribution to the ESM as a country much poorer than Greece. In Ireland, there is a sense that Ireland differentiates itself from other crisis countries in 'southern Europe' by presenting it as the 'good child' of the EU's bailout programme.

Kidder and Martin find in their study of everyday tax discourse in the USA that Americans discussed taxation 'in moral terms' between 'virtuous, hard-working citizens and undeserving people who do not work hard' (2012:126). In the Euro crisis in Germany, then, the issue of bailouts, debt-sharing and economic reforms divides not necessarily between member states, but between Europe's deserving (those who work hard, exercise fiscal discipline, implement reforms) and the undeserving, that is, the 'lazy Greeks' in some cases, as well as the bankers and investors who have also demonstrated a lack of responsibility and economic morality, or the EU leaders who have not respected the treaty rules. This translates into a European identity based on an ordoliberal ethic, forming a solidarity derived from compliance with European community rules and the implementation of fiscal discipline at a national level. In light of this, we might therefore read the hostility towards the bailouts and crisis policies as not void of a European vision, but rather articulating a new vision of the EU, one which is indeed less federal, where further sharing of sovereignty is minimal and the mutualisation of debt ruled out, but one which nevertheless constitutes a European community working towards the

stability and competitiveness of the European economy. This is an EU to which Greece and southern Europe may belong, if they play their part as ‘good Europeans’. Europeanness is thus still very much evident in the German public sphere, albeit with a meaning sometimes different from the older post-war European discourses.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has considered the extent to which the Euro crisis has affected European identity in Germany by drawing on detailed and comprehensive qualitative analysis of the communicative discourse between political and media actors. Rather than signalling a dramatic shift in European identity, it has argued that the crisis instead reflects existing identities and ideas, in part due to the strategic goals of German elites to legitimise crisis policies and find resonance with the public. While the Euro crisis opened a ‘window of opportunity’ for German opponents of EMU to oppose it more than they have done in the past, the ideas expressed reflect a longer process of incorporation of ordoliberal values into the values of the European community since the Maastricht Treaty. The Euro crisis therefore did not open the door to new ideas about Europe and European identity in Germany, it strengthened older ones. Firstly, this chapter outlined the ‘normalisation’ thesis and the German economic model of ordoliberalism, which presents a number of constraints on ideational change in the German context. Secondly, it showed how the crisis reflects Germany’s post-war European identity where the Nazi past functions as the ‘Other’, ensuring an identity based on peace, democracy, justice and European reconciliation. Thirdly, it showed how different understandings of European solidarity demonstrate the way in which the crisis reflects a continuation of efforts to incorporate ordoliberal values, the German ‘stability culture’ into conceptions of Europe and Europeanness which has been ongoing since the introduction of EMU. In the final section, it showed that what is often considered evidence of Germany’s strengthened national identity, that is, anti-

Greek sentiment and opposition to EU bailouts, can actually be considered a reflection of this alternative conceptualisation of the European community, where the ‘good European’ contributes to the stability of the currency and exercises proper economic discipline. This translates into a ‘Northern European’ community of the economically virtuous in contrast to the profligate southern Europeans.

With regards to the normalisation thesis, it is possible to argue that there is new German Euroscepticism intensified to some extent by the Euro crisis. However, it should be considered a soft form of Euroscepticism which does not voice opposition to the EU in general but to the Euro – promoting a European integration project between ‘European sovereign states’, in contrast to a European political or federal union called for by other German actors. Even the most radical Eurosceptic actors still assert their commitment to the European integration project and place Germany within a ‘Northern European’ community. The AfD, Germany’s ‘radical’ Eurosceptic party, which does not even oppose the EU, received 7.1% of the vote in the 2014 European elections. While they have certainly been gaining ground, particularly in regional elections in 2014, it is hard to see that Euroscepticism has become mainstream in Germany; Germans still seem to trust the major parties, all of whom support the Euro. The findings of this case study which show that European identity remains present albeit sometimes limited to Northern Europe also fits in with opinion polls which show that Germans are broadly supportive of European integration (Pew Research Center, 2014) but strongly opposed to further enlargements of the EU (European Commission, 2013b). Furthermore, what exactly does it mean to be ‘normal’? The EU has always been in Germany’s national interest even if it was not packaged in this way. As discussed, EMU was designed on the basis of the German model, with the ECB set up as a ‘European *Bundesbank*’ and the commitment to monetary stability and budgetary discipline reflected German ordoliberal values. Moreover, studies show

that Germany has been the major beneficiary of the single market due to its export-based economy (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014).

This chapter has therefore discussed the findings of the German case study. However, can we expect the same effect in the other case study countries? One problem for Germany is the extent to which other European countries accept the concept of ordoliberal solidarity. If demands for austerity and structural reforms are read not as reciprocal solidarity but as the imposition of painful conditions from a more dominant member state, resentment towards Germany will develop. The case of Ireland will be able to shed some light here. In contrast to Germany, Ireland is one of the countries directly affected by the crisis and a recipient of an EU bailout – placing them on the other side of debates about European solidarity. Poland, on the other hand, has not been so directly affected by the economic crisis, but as President of the EU in 2011 and a non-Eurozone member, faces political consequences of the crisis. The next chapter describes the findings of the Irish case study, which, similarly to Germany, also reflects existing discourses on national identity and European integration. However, in contrast to Germany, and to a certain extent Poland, Europe has a primarily instrumental function for Irish national interests and identity.

## CHAPTER 5: IRISH IDENTITY AND THE UTILITY OF EUROPE

### Introduction

*'Ireland's tragic journey from the economic take-off away from the periphery of Europe to the crash landing back into the economic periphery in the space of 20 years'* (Kitromilides, 2012:161).

Chapter 4 outlined the findings of the German case, which showed that the crisis was framed in terms of Germany's post-war European identity and alternative ordoliberal conceptions of Europe and European solidarity which have developed since the 1990s to legitimise the single currency, which, in the context of the Euro crisis, sometimes results in the construction of a Northern European identity. This chapter focuses on the effect of the Euro crisis on the construction of European identities in Ireland, how the effect differs in Ireland compared with Germany and Poland and between political and media discourse. As with the German case (and later as we will see, with the Polish case) and in accordance with expectations set out in the theoretical framework in Chapter 2, the crisis is constructed in such a way as to reflect existing discourses on both Irish identity and the relationship between Europe and the Irish state. The crisis in Ireland is first and foremost constructed as a domestic crisis, where the causes of the crisis can be attributed to a perceived flaw in the Irish character. Although everybody in Ireland is held responsible, the crisis reflects a division between the Irish elite and the 'ordinary' Irish, representing less a crisis of European identity than a crisis of Irish identity. Where there is the perception of a 'European' crisis, it is primarily understood to be a European economic crisis, reflecting the economic motivations of Irish membership of the EU. In the debates about EU crisis programmes, however, Irish elites and media actors draw on existing discourses on the Irish economy and Irish national sovereignty in order to legitimise and contest EU policy. This

often results in a core vs. periphery divide and strong anti-German sentiment particularly in the populist press.

The Irish case is an interesting comparison to Germany and presents some striking similarities with Poland. Whereas there have been claims of a turn away from Europe in Germany, there has not been a significant drop in support for the EU in Ireland despite the crisis and the introduction of harsh austerity measures and reforms required as a condition of their bailout. In May 2012 the Irish population passed the Fiscal Compact by 60.4% (FitzGibbon, 2013) with over 50% turnout despite the economic crisis and austerity which had shaken the country since 2008 (Gillespie, 2012:6). The previous year, opinion polls showed that over 65% of people in Ireland believed it was better off within the EU (Gillespie, 2012:6), with just 21% of Irish believing that the country could better face the future outside it (European Commission, 2013b). Moreover, the extent to which the Irish tolerated the bailout programme is notable, as Whelan maintains, the Irish 'accepted the extraordinary scale of fiscal adjustment with a remarkable level of equanimity and without any significant turn towards radical politics' (2013:20; see also Laffan, 2013:48). Given the oft-cited turn to Euroscepticism during the crisis in different member states, we might ask why there does not seem to have been a turn against the EU in Ireland. The Irish have also consistently ranked as one of the national populations reporting the lowest levels of European identity in public opinion surveys (see e.g. European Commission, 2002:27), with the numbers declaring themselves to be 'Irish only' remaining below the EU average by 2004 (Laffan and O'Mahony, 2008:255). Why has there not been a significant turn against the EU in Ireland, despite the low levels of identification with the EU as reported by Eurobarometer polls? Alternatively, is the crisis likely to have generated a greater degree of European identity in Ireland? It is with these questions that this chapter will seek to engage.

Like Germany and in Poland, the crisis reflects Ireland's original motivations for joining the EU, that is, economic interests and sovereignty. Whereas in Germany, a 'European' crisis constitutes first and foremost a threat to the European idea, the European project of peace, democracy and freedom, a 'European crisis' in Ireland is a European banking or economic crisis which highlights the interdependence of the Irish economy with the European economy and banking system as a whole. In a similar way that the crisis discourse in Germany reflects both its post-war commitment to the European project and to monetary stability, the crisis discourses in Ireland reflect the path-dependent nature of discourses on the state – sovereignty stretching back to the fight for independence from Britain in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, along with the trauma remaining from economic crisis in the 1980s. There are strong similarities to Poland here, as will be seen in the Polish case study described in Chapter 6. In both countries, the historical experience of occupation and colonisation and the ensuing struggles for independence are extremely salient in the debates on EU crisis policies. Nevertheless, in contrast to both Germany and Poland, Europe for Ireland primarily has an instrumental function to strengthen Irish sovereignty and the Irish economy.

This chapter is structured as follows. This chapter will firstly show how the crisis is first and foremost understood as a domestic crisis with its cause rooted in particular understandings of the Irish character and in light of a history of economic crises in Ireland. Although in December 2011 in particular the crisis is constructed as a broader European economic crisis, it still reflects the original purpose of European integration for Ireland – perceived national interests. Secondly, it will show how crisis policies are legitimised by Irish elites and pro-European media actors by highlighting the utility of Europe for Ireland, particularly in terms of the economy and

Irish sovereignty. Although there is some reference to European solidarity and the ‘European interest’, this ultimately relates to a demand for aid for Ireland. Thirdly, it will show how opposition to EU policies on the part of opposition party elites and the conservative and populist press also draw on the same themes to justify their claims. In particular, they oppose the prospect of tax harmonisation as a fundamental threat to Irish self-determination. Furthermore, the Othering of Germany and France as large, dominant states who have taken Irish sovereignty reinforce a core/periphery divide also present in the Polish case. In contrast to Germany and Poland, Europe therefore plays a primarily instrumental role for Ireland for most actors in the Irish debate.

### **Ireland and the Crisis – Domestic or European Factors?**

*‘One of the most dramatic and largest reversals in economic fortune ever experienced by an industrial country’ (Donovan and Murphy, 2013:2)*

In contrast to Germany and Poland, which were affected by the crisis much later, Ireland was first hit by the crisis in September 2008 following the collapse of Lehman Brothers in the wake of the 2007 sub-prime mortgage crisis in the United States (Connor et al., 2010:4). During the course of the following years, the crisis was to be extremely painful for Ireland – described as the country’s ‘tragic journey’ (Kitromilides, 2012:161), with the necessary reliance on an EU/IMF bailout ‘deeply traumatic’ for a country that ‘since its foundation in 1922, has been able to meet external obligations to financial markets even when poor’ (Laffan, 2013:47). Before examining the representations of the crisis in the public sphere, this section will give a brief overview of the crisis in Ireland. To what extent was it a home-grown crisis or a failure of EU institutions such as the Euro? This will help to understand the significance of the perception in the Irish public sphere of a ‘domestic’ crisis. As outlined in Chapter 3, Ireland was, before 2008, considered a ‘‘miracle’ growth economy’ which transformed ‘from a poor, stagnant

peripheral economy to one of the richest in terms of per capita income economies in Europe' (Kitromilides, 2012:160). The Celtic Tiger was not necessarily as strong as it seemed, however, known better perhaps as a 'Celtic kitten' (Smith, 2005:38). The crisis has been considered the perfect storm of both domestic and European factors working in interaction (Kitromilides, 2012:180). This section will therefore show how the crisis was primarily a domestic crisis but one which might not have happened were it not for membership of EMU.

### *Domestic Factors*

The crisis in Ireland had its primary roots in the domestic sphere rather than the EU. These domestic factors were situated in various sections of Irish society – developers, investors, the banks and the political elite. The crisis can initially be considered the result of the bursting of a housing bubble in Ireland which firstly developed as a result of over-confidence during the Celtic Tiger boom that property prices would continue to rise (Connor et al., 2010:7). Policy incentives such as tax breaks for the property market and massive lending to property developers fuelled investment in the property market (Dellepiane and Hardiman, 2010:9) and resulted in a significant part of the working population employed in the construction sector – exceeding 13 percent in 2007 (Honohan, 2009:4). This property bubble was financed by a significant increase in bank lending to property developers (Kelly, 2009:2). As Kelly argues, this crisis 'was amplified by the presence of a genuinely rogue bank, Anglo Irish' (2009:22). Bank lending developed into what Donovan and Murphy describe as 'Ponzi-style financing', where borrowers were given extremely lax terms for their loans (2013:74). The worst institutions for reckless practices were 'controlled by a single, powerful and long-standing chief' who exerted enormous power over the running of the institutions – none of which, however, were held accountable for their actions (Connor et al., 2010:18). The lack of

regulation taking place therefore led to the presence of moral hazard in the day-to-day running of the banks.

In turn, the Irish regulatory authorities failed to sufficiently supervise the activities of the country's banks or to prevent the housing boom from getting out of control (Whelan, 2013:8). Since the 1990s, Ireland has been running a system of 'light touch regulation' popular in the US and UK in particular (Connor et al., 2010:15), which emanated from a belief that markets would ultimately self-regulate (Donovan and Murphy, 2013:40). This facilitated the illegal activities of the Anglo Irish Bank. In addition to this, the 'rogue' banks and speculative developers profited from their connections with the governing party, Fianna Fáil (Connor et al., 2010:64; Donovan and Murphy, 2013). This resulted in banks being, as Kelly succinctly puts it, 'too connected to fail' (Kelly, 2009:24). The bursting of the housing bubble, followed by the collapse of the banking system, then resulted in a full-scale national fiscal crisis. Firstly, the government's dependence on revenue from the property sector meant that a 'substantial source of government revenue disappeared almost overnight' when the crisis hit (Whelan, 2013:10). Secondly, the Government issued a blanket guarantee of all Irish banks in September 2008 when the banking crisis reached its peak following the collapse of Lehman Brothers, in so doing intertwining 'the banking debt with the sovereign debt' (Clancy and McDonnell, 2011:3). By 2010, this guarantee had become unsustainable and the country was forced to apply for an EU/IMF bailout. The bailout that was agreed in November 2010 ultimately amounted to €67.5 billion, including contributions from the IMF, EU and EU member states in bilateral loans and an additional €17.5 billion from Irish assets (Clancy and McDonnell, 2011:4). The crisis was therefore in large part a domestic crisis brought about by 'self-inflicted mistakes' made over

the course of several decades (Whelan, 2013:30-31). However, some elements of the crisis can be traced back to Ireland's participation in EMU.

### *European Factors*

Although the domestic factors which caused the crisis in Ireland are clear, the crisis was nevertheless facilitated to a certain extent by the so-called 'design flaws' of the Eurozone (Kitromilides, 2012:174; Clancy and McDonnell, 2011:4). The primary problem was the provision of cheap funds from international markets, available thanks to Ireland's membership of the single currency (Connor et al., 2010). Because of the low interest rates provided to Ireland on account of the 'one-size-fits-all' monetary policy, where the interest rate for the entire Eurozone is set centrally by the ECB, Irish banks funded the housing boom with an influx of cheap credit (Kitromilides, 2012:175). As Kitromilides explains, peripheral countries like Ireland 'suddenly experienced a massive surge in the availability of consumer credit which was considerably cheaper than could be justified by their own growth potential' (2012:175; see also Arestis and Sawyer, 2012:8). By 2008, internationally-owed debt held by Irish banks constituted over 60 per cent of GDP (Honohan, 2009:4). The crisis in Ireland can therefore be considered in part the consequence of this so-called 'design flaw' in the Euro. Furthermore, there was very little supervision of banking practices at a European level (Arestis and Sawyer, 2012:24), reflecting another flaw in the design of EMU which left financial supervision entirely to the member states (Donovan and Murphy, 2013:96). Although Ireland had officially run a budget surplus consistently until the fiscal crisis hit, the Maastricht Treaty and SGP had no provision for identifying potential future problems in national fiscal policies, in Ireland's case, the over-reliance on tax revenue from the property sector (Donovan and Murphy, 2013:110). While the primary causes of the crisis were domestic factors, therefore, these factors were facilitated to a significant extent by the design flaws in the single currency.

While there were European factors which played a role in the crisis, however, they were perhaps not a reason to blame the EU. The European institutions might have created the environment in which this collection of domestic policy mistakes interacted, but ultimately it was at the national level that these mistakes were made. Despite the structural inadequacies of EMU that made cheap credit available and allowed bad banking practices to go unsupervised, this did not mean that Irish banks had to avail themselves of the available credit to the excessive extent that they did, or engage in irresponsible practices. Kitromilides maintains that all of the causal factors identified were ‘the result of policy decisions produced by the Irish political system’ (2012:180). Furthermore, the Irish political sphere could have stepped in to curb the development of the housing bubble and lending boom, which the Irish authorities had the power to do (Whelan, 2013:27). Considering the crisis can primarily be considered a domestic crisis with some interacting European factors, therefore, we might ask why the EU has not served as a scapegoat, given that support for the EU in Ireland does not appear to have suffered. Menon, for example, argues that part of the ‘paradox of integration’ is that while national politicians take the credit for policy successes, they blame the EU in the event of policy failures (2008:27). The next section will posit that this did not happen because the crisis is interpreted according to perceived flaws in the Irish politics and society. The crisis represents a repetition of economic crises, poor economic development and corruption seen as endemic to the Irish economy – with its roots in a broken Irish political system.

### **A Domestic Crisis – A Crisis of Irish Identity?**

As in Germany and Poland, the crisis in Ireland reflects existing discourses on Irish identity and European integration. In contrast to Germany and to a certain extent Poland, Europe has a primarily instrumental role for Irish identity and interests. In terms of the crisis frame, the crisis

in Ireland is understood first and foremost as a domestic Irish crisis which reflects existing identities and ideas about Irish society. This construction of the crisis in Ireland can be read in light of a long period of economic underdevelopment and a succession of economic crises during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, leading it to be considered a ‘case study in failure’ (Smith, 2005:37). In the late 1970s and 1980s in particular, Ireland experienced a severe economic crisis when its economy performed ‘worse than that of the other member states of the Union on most dimensions’ and where the possibility of IMF intervention was real and present in political consciousness (Laffan and O'Mahony, 2008:223). More than just a result of ‘poor domestic policy making’ (Laffan and O'Mahony, 2008:224), the crisis of the 1980s was interpreted by academics and commentators as a consequence of the ‘legacy of colonialism and emigration, dependency, political structures, Catholicism and even the character of the Irish themselves’ (Laffan and O'Mahony, 2008:223). Girvin argues that Ireland’s slow economic development can be in part attributed to aspects of the Irish political culture, which failed to adjust to economic modernisation. He claims that a culture of rent-seeking, ‘rural traditionalism’ and ‘intellectual uniformity’ inhibited economic change following independence right through to the 1970s (2008:78-79). While this chapter does not seek to explain the Irish crisis in these terms, it is in the context of such understandings of Irish economic failure that the crisis of 2010-11 must be read – the crisis was experienced with an ‘intense and wrenching sense of economic failure’ (Gillespie, 2012:1) alongside a kind of feeling of returning to normal, that is, the pre-Celtic Tiger era of poor economic development and failure by the Irish to develop and prosper. This section will therefore argue that the crisis was perceived primarily as an Irish crisis, where Europe plays a primarily instrumental role for Irish identity and interests. The following sections will show how the debates about crisis policies reflect the existing Irish

discourses on Europe, where the EU functions to serve or threaten Irish identity, sovereignty and the economy.

In its initial stages, the crisis is understood as a domestic crisis rather than one caused by the EU. Firstly, the crisis is understood as a crisis of the Irish banking sector, as both an expression of sheer anger on the part of media actors and as a strategy by government elites to deflect blame from the government. The collapse of the Irish banking sector is read in the context of a history of corruption in Irish banks. As Ross argues in his popular analysis of the Irish banking system, Ireland has a ‘shameful banking history’ (2009:1). After years of repeated banking scandals, he suggests that ‘banking skulduggery is endemic’ (2009:1). In his speech announcing Ireland’s application for financial assistance, then Taoiseach Brian Cowen explains that the bailout package will provide funding for the banks and instigate a restructuring programme for a banking system that has collapsed:

The agreement will include a fund for potential future capital needs of the banking sector. [...] Put simply, the Irish banks will become significantly smaller than they have been in the past so that they can gradually be brought to stand on their own two feet once more (Cowen, 2010).

The crisis is therefore seen to have originated in the failed Irish banking system, particularly the Anglo Irish Bank, ‘Ireland’s most toxic lender’ (‘Anglo brand to go but its legacy to linger for years’, *Independent*, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2010), one of Ireland’s numerous ‘zombie banks’ (‘Get ready for the great bank restructuring’, *Independent*, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2010). The *Times*, citing then Finance Minister Brian Lenihan, maintains that ‘the issues besetting Irish banks were ultimately too big a problem for this country’ (‘Bank problems just too big – Lenihan’, *Times*, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2010, p.9). However, while The *Times* acknowledges the problem with the banks, an enormously strong sense of anger is discernable particularly in the *Daily Star* and the *Independent* which frequently condemn the ‘reckless’ behaviour of Irish bankers. The *Daily*

Star denounces the ‘Irish wanker bankers’ who ‘haven’t just destroyed this country – they are now on the verge of destroying the entire euro currency’ (‘First they broke Ireland, now they’ll break Berlin’, Daily Star, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2010, p.1). The banks did not just collapse, they destroyed Ireland and also risked destroying the Eurozone altogether. The problem with Irish banks, however, is not a recent phenomenon.

Given that the collapse of the banking system sparked the Irish application for financial assistance, it is not surprising that the crisis is framed in this way. However, it also reflects much wider insecurities about Irish society and can be understood in the context of significant anti-government and anti-politician sentiment in Ireland in the years prior to the crisis (Laffan and O’Mahony, 2008:117, 121). Indeed, the crisis saw ‘massive public outcry’ over the cuts carried out by the Fianna Fáil government in the early stages of the crisis (Hay and Smith, 2013). More than this, however, the crisis is seen to have been engendered by the political elite who have for years been tolerating irresponsible and corrupt behaviour at all levels of the economic and political sphere, especially the government and governing party at the time, Fianna Fáil, deemed to have destroyed the country. In fact, the Irish elite in 2010 appear to have relatively little power to shape the debate because so much of the blame for the crisis is attributed to the Irish political class. The incumbent government collapsed in early 2011 shortly after the Irish bailout and a general election was called for 25<sup>th</sup> February. There appears to be a political consensus that the government had failed and an election must be held, including in *The Times* which calls for a general election and admits the failings of the government and governing elite which ‘have brought the State to its knees’ (‘Was it for this? The state of the nation’, *Times*, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2010, p. 15). This is significant given that *The Times* is considered to be generally supportive of the interests of the Irish political and economic elite (Mercille, 2013:12). Beyond this, an almost indescribable amount of anger is discernible in *The*



The understanding that the crisis originated from ‘within’ means that the crisis, specifically the request for an EU/IMF bailout, was experienced as a national humiliation. In particular, it was seen as the death of the ‘Celtic Tiger’ and required a sobering of national consciousness. One letter published in the Independent maintains that ‘with the Irish begging bowl out once again, we are now being looked at by our euro-neighbours in the same pitiful way as an out-of-control gambler who's just lost his house’ (‘Nothing has changed since the Eighties’, Independent, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2010). It was experienced as a moment of enormous shame for the country. One Fianna Fáil supporter is quoted as saying ‘I feel angry and let down. It’s the saddest time in our history because it’s clear there is no pride left in this nation’ (‘FF lose grassroots’, Daily Star, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2010, p.12-13). Early elections are anticipated not just to clear out the current government but also to ‘mark the first step on the road to recovery of national well-being and self-esteem’ (‘Early election needed to draw line under ignominy’, Times, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2010, p. 13). Beyond this, the crisis sounds the death knell of the beloved Celtic Tiger:

Now, with the Tiger dead and buried under a mound of ever-increasing debt, a silence is falling over the land. This year, the eve of All Saints passed in a deathly hush... There seemed little left to celebrate, with nothing to be seen in the skies save, in the murky distance but approaching ever nearer, the Four Horsemen of our particular Apocalypse: the International Monetary Fund, the European Commission, Brussels and the Iron Chancellor, Angela Merkel’ (‘A silence falls over a nation cowed by an astronomical debt (Independent, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2010)

This is a powerful metaphor which embodies the fear and hopelessness experienced by the Irish people. This ‘death’ or ‘war’ imagery is also continued elsewhere. The Independent again states that ‘Central Bank governor Patrick Honohan said he feels as if he is serving in a war cabinet and most of the country's weary, shell-shocked citizens feel much the same [...] There may even be a need to forge a second republic -- like the French are wont to do -- to blow away the corruption that is a canker in our political system’ (‘We must unite in front of the world’, Independent, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2010). The death and war references represent the desperation felt

in Ireland and the fear that everything that had been fought for both at the time of gaining independence and in the Celtic Tiger years had been lost. The reference to France signals, whether it be a serious call to revolution or not, a desperation to remove the sitting elite from power and return Ireland to the people. There are also instances where Taoiseach Brian Cowen is described as an ‘executioner’ who has ‘sentenced generations of Irish people to a lifetime of debt and misery’ (‘I sentence you all to debt’, Irish Daily Star, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2010, p. 1). The Biblical references also reflect the importance of Catholicism in Irish society.

The effects of the crisis, or its perceived roots, therefore go much deeper than a straight-forward banking crisis, touching on fundamental questions of Irish national identity. The crisis is seen as a domestic crisis not just because the root cause of the crisis can be found in Ireland but because of a perception that there was something fundamentally wrong with Irish society. In this context, the Irish ‘wanker bankers’ and the political elite serve as an internal Other to promote solidarity amongst the ‘ordinary Irish people’. In contrast to Germany and in some cases Poland, solidarity in Ireland is primarily a national solidarity rather than European, further evidence of Europe’s primarily instrumental role in the Irish context. The national humiliation and the metaphor of death and war serve to unite the ‘ordinary’ Irish against a common enemy, the Irish elite. We can see this very stark divide between the political and financial elite and the so-called ‘ordinary folk’ throughout the reporting of the crisis. In the following excerpt from the same article as the image above, one can ascertain a very clear ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ dynamic:

All at the expense of the taxpayers, whom they have betrayed; the social welfare recipients whose payments they’ve reduced; the low-income workers they’ve sucked into the tax net; the employees whose incomes have been gouged by income levies. These incompetent gobshites are being rewarded for ruining our prosperity, destroying our economy, selling our sovereignty at bargain basement prices, bringing back the dole queues, enslaving homeowners to decades of debt and forcing hundreds of thousands of our young people to hit the emigration trail. This is the real scandal that we ourselves have to deal with – not the EU or

the IMF' ('Burn them at the stake for what they have done', Irish Daily Star, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2010, p. 24).

The crisis in Ireland, at least in November 2010, can therefore be considered a crisis not just of the Irish economy or Irish banks, but one which had a profound impact on Irish national identity, on the very state of the nation, the future of the Irish people. The EU is mostly external to the debate at this time. In fact, reports of the crisis sometimes ignored any involvement of the EU itself, referring to the bailout purely as an IMF bailout rather than an EU bailout, or an 'IMF/EU' bailout. This is particularly interesting considering two-third of the bailout funds were provided by the EU or EU member states, but can perhaps be explained by the near-involvement of the IMF in previous economic crises in Ireland.

In some articles, the significance of the IMF's presence is clear, in particular that of Ajai Chopra, deputy director of the IMF's European department and head of the IMF's mission to Ireland. Describing the bailout negotiations, The Times reports that 'the leader of the 12-person International Monetary Fund (IMF) team involved in drawing up the terms of Ireland's bailout will fly back to his organisation's base in Washington DC tomorrow morning' ('An old hand at prescribing financial rescue medicine', Times, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2010, p.1), whereas The Independent reports that the 'IMF swoops in to slash and burn Irish banking' ('IMF swoops in to slash and burn Irish banking', Independent, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2010). Furthermore, the Daily Star talks about the 'the €100billion on offer from the IMF', stating that the IMF specifically 'will take no prisoners when it comes to enforcing cutbacks – their one and only aim will be to ensure they will get their money back' (Irish Daily Star, 'Fianna Fáil brought this ruin upon us', 21<sup>st</sup> November 2010, p. 24). The Times quotes a father telling his children: 'We live in the Republic of IMF now' ('this week they said', The Times, November 27<sup>th</sup> 2010, p. 16). It is clear that the IMF is often seen as the most significant or relevant institution drawing up Ireland's financial assistance programme rather than the EU. The involvement of the IMF/EU is also

sometimes considered a necessary evil to take Ireland out of its home-grown crisis, as an instrument for the Irish economy. They are considered, to a certain extent, as ‘coming to the rescue’, a sentiment which appears across the press, from *The Times* to the *Daily Star*. For example, one letter to the editor in *The Times* states that ‘The IMF experts involved in crafting future strategy will be beholden to vested interests, wafer-thin parliamentary majorities and local political considerations, allowing them to fully pursue strategies for the economic betterment of our country’ (‘Was it for this? The state of the nation’, *Times*, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2010, p.15). Given the absolute loss of confidence in the Irish political class, the IMF is viewed as a credible alternative to fix Ireland’s economic problems.

The instrumental function of the EU for Irish identity and interests becomes clearer by 2011, when the crisis is also constructed as a ‘European’ crisis. Nevertheless, in contrast to Germany where a ‘European crisis’ constitutes a threat to the European idea, to the ‘fate of the community’, and in Poland where it presents a threat to Polish marginalisation in Europe, in Ireland the emphasis is on the ‘fate of the euro’. The ‘European’ crisis is therefore a European *currency* crisis, a European *banking* crisis, or a European *economic* crisis, something which serves to remind the Irish of the original motivations for membership – the Irish economy and independence from Britain. For example, the December 2011 European Council summit is described as a ‘make or break summit to save the single currency’ (‘Summit tension tightened by London and Berlin’ Arthur Beesley, *Times* 8<sup>th</sup> December 2011, p. 14). In the run-up to the summit, *The Times* considers the prospects for a collapse of the single currency:

‘THE 350 MILLION inhabitants of the euro zone face the risk of the money in their pockets ceasing to be legal tender. A collapse of the world’s second most important currency, in a continent that still accounts for more of the planet’s economic activity than any other, would amount to the biggest shock to the global economy in living memory [...] At the very least, there would be a period of disruption to everyday transactions, from buying groceries to paying

electricity bills. A disruption of that kind [...] would have very serious consequences for economic activity. [...] Earlier this week Minister of State for European Affairs Lucinda Creighton spoke of living standards being driven back to levels of the 1950s in a worst-case scenario. ('Crunch time', The Times, 3<sup>rd</sup> December p.1).

Here we can identify a number of fears which play into the need to save the single currency. The risk of not just a collapse of the European economy, but also the global one, the everyday disruption normal people would experience, the effect the loss of wealth would have on the European economies, and, more specific to Ireland, a dramatic fall in living standards, something which had been consistently rising in Ireland until the financial crash of 2008. One quote from a business representative in the Independent suggests that a break-up of the Euro would constitute the 'economic and financial equivalent of a satellite breaking up in space with unimaginable consequences' ('Big companies prepare euro break-up plans', Independent, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2011).

However, this frame also strongly relates to a defence of Irish national interests, reflecting Ireland's motivations for EU membership and a strategy by elites and media actors to defend the interests of the Irish political and economic class (Mercille, 2013:12). It is necessary to 'save the euro' because the Euro is in the best interests of the Irish economy. For example, one article in the Times, discussing the possibility of a new treaty, argues that 'the future of the euro is at stake and, given the calamity that would befall this country if the currency were to collapse, there is really not much of a choice [...] it would be economic madness not to sign up for the discipline required' ('Logic dictates that we support new deal for Europe', Stephen Collins, Times, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2011, p. 15). What is more, the Independent notes that 'the global financial system could be set back 30 years if the euro was to collapse. Speaking yesterday at a briefing on the future of the single currency, Bloxham's chief economist Alan McQuaid said

the collapse of the euro would be “horrendous” for Ireland’ (‘Returning to the punt would be ‘horrendous for Ireland’, Independent 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2011). Therefore, while the crisis by 2011 has evolved into a wider ‘European’ crisis, the issue at stake remains the future of the Irish economy. The utility of Europe for the Irish economy and Irish sovereignty becomes clearer in the debates about EU crisis policies particularly in 2011.

### **Irish Interests and the Utility of Europe**

*“My only counsel to Ireland is that in order to become deeply Irish, she must become European”*(Kettle cited in Laffan and O’Mahony, 2008:199).

The crisis, particularly in 2010, is framed primarily as a domestic crisis in terms of Irish identity, particularly through the lens of historical experience of economic crises. By 2011, there is a greater perception of a ‘European’ economic crisis. This is framed both in terms of the European and Irish economic interest. However, how are crisis policies legitimised? In contrast to Germany and Poland, these debates are not generally framed in terms of European solidarity or the ‘good European’. Rather, they are framed as a question about how best to serve the European economy, and with it the Irish economy and Irish sovereignty, reflecting longer-standing discourses on Europe in Ireland. This section will demonstrate that, while some Irish elites and media actors refer to the ‘European’ interest and ‘European solidarity’, EU policies are primarily framed by the Irish politicians and media in terms economic interests and national sovereignty in order to garner support for EU policies. Europe here plays an instrumental role in strengthening the Irish economy, securing Irish sovereignty, and with it, supporting Irish identity.

### *Economy*

The framing of EU policy debates in terms of economic interests raises the question of how the Irish state and economy can best be served through participation in the EU. As highlighted in Chapter 3, economic interests form a major element of the Irish discourse on Europe. On the one hand, there is a ‘European interests’ frame where the EU institutions, and the ECB in particular, are called upon to defend the common interests in Europe – that is, to show ‘European solidarity’ in the form of burden-sharing, redistribution and for the ECB to act as a lender of last resort to ensure the Eurozone’s recovery. There are some calls in Ireland for ‘federal’ policies including fiscal union and a central bank which acts in a similar way to other national central banks. This can be understood as a strategic discourse by opposition actors to call on the EU to do more to solve the crisis and to criticise the agreements made by the sitting government, particularly in the wake of the bailout agreement in November 2010. The Irish elites’ understanding of European solidarity differs starkly from German elites. However, as will be seen in Chapter 6, there are similarities with the strategic construction of European solidarity by Polish elites, where further integration through the strengthening of EU institutions, and wealth distribution from rich to poor member states, constitute the primary understanding of European solidarity. For example, in the political discourse from, Fianna Fáil leader Micháel Martin, this is even referred to as real ‘solidarity’ in contrast to Germany’s calls for fiscal discipline:

Tighter fiscal rules are reasonable, but only if accompanied by a change in ECB policies, an EU fund large enough to help stimulate economies in need and tight, unified financial regulation. A control-only fiscal union would just entrench flaws which even Jacques Delors says were caused by politicians looking for the quick fix rather than the right solution. Every piece of major progress seen in Europe has come from solidarity and respect between nations. There has been precious little of either in recent months’ (Martin, 7<sup>th</sup> December, budget speech).

Here we see contestation over the meaning of fiscal union and the extent to which integration should go in order to save the Eurozone. In this frame, solidarity constitutes the mutual sharing of debt and redistribution from the richer to poorer states. Micháel Martin also states that:

A genuine fiscal union would involve a dramatic increase in the central budget and in the transfers from wealthy countries to poorer ones [...] The country which has done more than any to build up Europe and which has shown a deep solidarity within the Union now stands as its biggest threat' ('Speech Of Fianna Fáil Leader Micheál Martin TD On Forthcoming European Council Summit', 30<sup>th</sup> November 2011).

Solidarity here involves redistribution of wealth from rich to poor, and Germany is considered to be side-stepping its responsibilities and commitment to European solidarity. This narrative is also present in some parts of the press. One Times article suggests that solidarity must involve 'burden-sharing', where the bailout programme introduces punishment over European solidarity.

Yesterday's bailout of broken and delinquent Ireland is much more Versailles than Marshall. There is no sharing of the burden. There is no evidence of a single thought for the consequences of mass unemployment, mass emigration and war on the most vulnerable. There is no European solidarity. And there is not even a genuine sense of self-interest. The sadistic pleasures of punishment have trumped the sensible calculation that an Ireland enslaved by debt is not much use to anyone ('Abysmal deal ransoms us and disgraces Europe', The Times, 29<sup>th</sup> November 2010, p. 11).

The expectation that the EU institutions express solidarity is extended to the ECB, particularly in 2011, which is seen to have responsibility for helping the Eurozone out of the crisis. One article in the Independent argues that 'anyone with a brain knows the solution is for the European Central Bank to be the lender of last resort, as a central bank should be, and for there to be eurobonds with the requisite treaty changes so as to allow central control of the dysfunctional financial regulatory systems in countries like Ireland, Greece and Italy' ('Another fine mess', Independent, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2011). The Times also calls for fiscal union to stem the

crisis, arguing that ‘agreement on steps towards a fiscal union could have paved the way for the ECB to provide more aggressive support for strained euro zone government bond markets’ (‘ECB to shore up banks as credit squeeze threatens euro zone’, *The Times*, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011, p. 20). Calls for European solidarity on the part of European institutions on behalf of the ‘European interest’ can therefore be considered a strategy by opposition elites and the press to demand action by the EU and other member states to help the Eurozone, and Ireland, cope with the crisis.

On the other hand, however, the debates are also framed explicitly in terms of the Irish economic interest, reflecting existing discourses on the EU rather than changing them. Economic interest here is as a driving force for integration where the utility of Europe for Irish interests is evident. This is explicitly noted in one *Independent* article:

But yes, we have a low corporation tax and yes, we do allow companies to “shunt profits around” to avoid paying tax. It's not nice, it's not neighbourly - Toynbee's right about that - nor is it the European way. But then, we've always been rather disingenuous about our loyalty to the values of the European Union. Remember Boston or Berlin? How strange that we would choose the Boston way while simultaneously insisting that we were all passionately European. Did we do it for the money? Hand on heart, yes, we did (‘Hardly a pause in listing our flaws’, *Independent*, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2010).

This article recalls a speech by former Tánaiste Mary Harney in 2000 emphasising the close links between Ireland and the United States – when she argued that ‘spiritually, we are probably a lot closer to Boston than Berlin’ (2000). In particular, the idea that Ireland’s low corporate tax rate is essential for Irish economic growth remains unchallenged across the political spectrum (Hay and Smith, 2013). Finance Minister Michael Noonan reconfirms in a statement to the Dáil that ‘much of Ireland’s growth at present can be attributed to the attractiveness of Ireland for inward investment. The Corporate Tax Rate of 12.5 per cent and our place in Europe are central to this’ (Noonan, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011). Fianna Fáil leader Micheál Martin maintains

that ‘the only independent study of a consolidated and harmonised tax base shows that it would inflict immediate and permanent damage on Ireland – while adding absolutely nothing to Europe’s growth potential’ (Martin, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2011). This is reflected throughout the press. The Times notes that a common tax base ‘would lessen scope for multinational investors to maximise the profit they record in Ireland to benefit more from the low 12.5 per cent Irish tax rate’ (‘Paris and Berlin revisit tax base plan’, The Times, December 8<sup>th</sup> 2011, p. 10), whereas an Independent article reports warnings given by US technology companies such as Hewlett Packard, Google and Intel that they would consider halting investment in Ireland if the corporate tax rate was increased (Hewlett Packard jobs at risk if corporation tax rises’, Independent, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2010). Crisis policies therefore framed in terms of perceived Irish economic interest and therefore existing motivations for EU integration.

### *Sovereignty*

However, as noted in Chapter 3, the economy has been used to express Irish nationalism since the country won independence in 1922 and has since been closely linked with the question of sovereignty (Hayward, 2009:237). The issue of economic modernisation became important after the 1950s when it was clear that, while Ireland had gained formal independence from Britain, it remained highly dependent economically (Dorgan, 2006:2). The move to join the single currency was a further step towards ensuring economic independence from Britain by detaching the Irish punt from the British pound. In the pro-European discourse, the crisis has continued the re-definition of the meaning of sovereignty which has been taking place since Ireland’s entry into the EU. In order to deal with the implications of pooling sovereignty, the Irish elite began to focus on the ‘*utility* of sovereignty’ versus the ‘*ideal* of sovereignty’ (Hayward, 2009:208). Sovereignty is no longer necessarily viewed in zero-sum terms but rather as something that can be enhanced through participation in international organisations, where

‘pooling sovereignty enhances real independence of action’ (Gillespie, 2012:2; see also Laffan and O’Mahony, 2008:245). As Chapter 6 will show, this is a similar process to that seen in Poland, where pro-European elites draw on the sovereignty discourse in order to justify European integration. Accepting the conditions of the bailout programme is interpreted, therefore, as the sole means by which Ireland can *regain* its sovereignty, by returning to the markets as a ‘sovereign’ nation and recovering its economic independence from the IMF/EU. This reflects Ireland’s original motivations for EU membership and its associated vulnerabilities as a small state in the EU. This finding contrasts with the German perspective, where the bailout programmes have been framed in terms of European solidarity, and bears similarities to the Polish case, where further integration is justified as a means to protect Poland from Russia. The official position of the Irish government and the views of pro-European media actors therefore reinforces this notion of the ‘utility’ of sovereignty and reflects longer-standing narratives on EU membership.

Firstly, policies such as austerity measures introduced as part of the bailout programme are legitimised in terms of sovereignty. Completing the bailout programme and implementing the ‘necessary’ crisis measures will serve to reclaim Irish sovereignty – by allowing it to return to the markets as a sovereign nation. For example, Taoiseach Enda Kenny maintains that:

We were voted into Office with the largest ever majority by the people in order to do a job: to restore our economic sovereignty; to get Ireland working again; to return our economy to growth; and to radically reform our politics and public services. [...] Our ultimate goal now is to regain our national sovereignty by maintaining our fiscal commitments in the years ahead’ (Kenny, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2011).

Fine Gael’s coalition partner the Labour Party also draws on the same notion; one Labour Party minister claims that ‘our over-riding commitment to the Irish people is to restore the economy,

promote job creation and restore our economic sovereignty' (Pat Rabbitte, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2011). The bailout programme here serves as a means by which Ireland can regain its sovereignty and perhaps return to its position as the EU's success story, to be the 'good child' of the bailout programme, differentiating the country from the other 'southern' European crisis countries and reclaiming its Celtic Tiger status. During the Celtic Tiger years, Ireland was seen as the EU's great success story – a 'model' of EU economic development in particular for the new member states that joined in 2004 (Laffan and O'Mahony, 2008:221). In contrast with countries such as Greece, Spain and Portugal, it was 'the only poor state to [have] actually converged with the richer parts of Europe' (Laffan and O'Mahony, 2008:221) and during the 1990s 'accomplished a transition away from peripheral "Mediterranean" status' (Gillespie, 2012:3). Whereas in Germany, implementing fiscal commitments laid down by bailout programmes and the SGP is understood as European solidarity, as every country playing its part in ensuring the stability of the Eurozone, these commitments are therefore understood in Ireland as a path to regaining the sovereignty it lost through the bailout programme and returning to its role as a 'model' for economic success in the EU. Likewise in Poland, contributing to the bailout programmes is presented as a means for Poland to guarantee its security and strengthen its sovereignty by positioning itself at the core of Europe. This is reflected in *The Times*, which argues that

in banding together [member states] did not diminish their individual sovereignty, but created a capacity to act, created a sovereign power where none existed. That is the essence of the European Union in a range of domains [...] where challenges are beyond nation-states acting alone' ('Question of sovereignty', *Irish Times*, 6<sup>th</sup> December, p. 17).

There has therefore been an acceptance of the implications of the globalised world for the capacity of states to be truly sovereign. Thus, Ireland can participate in the pooling of sovereignty to maintain its 'capacity to act' in the international community – another *Times* article asserts that 'to be alone in our current circumstances would be a very cold, lonely and

penurious place to be', and that Ireland needed to 'ensure that the integrity of the EU, at the level of 27 member states, was maintained' ('Gilmore says Ireland may need another EU referendum', Times, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2011 p. 8). Furthermore, just as when Ireland originally joined the European Community, participation in the EU serves to ensure Ireland's independence from the United Kingdom. Bearing striking similarities to the Polish case, where the memories of partition and the historical fear of Russia are reasserted in order to legitimise further integration, the possibility of a collapse of the Euro or Ireland's exit from the Eurozone reignites this fear of British rule and the memories of Ireland's struggle for independence. Remaining within the Eurozone is then justified on the basis of independence from the United Kingdom. Denouncing a 'theoretical, outdated notion of sovereignty', one article in The Times maintains that:

The only alternative would be to leave the euro zone and attempt to peg the Irish currency to sterling. That would effectively amount to an application to rejoin the United Kingdom on the 90th anniversary of the treaty that led to the establishment of this State. [...] It's ironic that Sinn Féin has joined with the burn the bondholders brigade in the Dáil in promoting the argument for leaving the euro and, in effect, throwing ourselves at the mercy of the United Kingdom' ('Logic dictates that we support new deal for Europe', Stephen Collins, Irish Times, December 10<sup>th</sup> 2011, p. 15).

Further integration through fiscal union, the author argues, 'will enhance rather than diminish that freedom in real terms' ('Logic dictates that we support new deal for Europe', Times, December 10<sup>th</sup> 2011, p. 15). Remaining within the Eurozone therefore ensures Ireland's continued independence from the UK and even increases its sovereign power. Pro-European elites and media actors therefore draw on existing discourses on the utility of Europe in order to legitimise their claims about EU crisis. The next section will show how Eurosceptic discourse also reflects this discourse on Irish sovereignty.

## **Irish Sovereignty and the Threat of Europe**

*“What’s this fecking ‘we’ business, all of a sudden?”* (‘EU cannot be serious’, Daily Star, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2011, p. 10).

The previous section showed how the legitimisation of EU policies are framed in terms of Ireland’s existing discourses on Europe, where the EU serves as an instrument for the Irish economy and Irish sovereignty. However, opposition to EU policies is also framed in terms of sovereignty. In contrast to Germany, where even opposition policies are discussed in terms of a particular conception of European solidarity and the ‘good European’, crisis policies in Ireland, as in Poland, are framed in terms of national sovereignty. In the opposition discourse particularly in the conservative and populist press, Ireland is deemed to have lost its (economic) sovereignty, conceded to a ‘foreign power’ in the form of the EU or IMF. In particular, this is expressed through opposition to tax harmonisation (which would result in the loss of Ireland’s low corporate tax rate, demonstrating therefore an unwillingness to express the ‘solidarity’ required for redistributive measures relating to taxation at a European level) and through Othering of Germany and France as representatives of the ‘large’ EU member states who are perceived to be dominating the small, peripheral states.

The bailout programme and the ensuing crisis policies proposed in 2011 were seen as a threat to national (economic) sovereignty, reasserting the collective memory of the fight for independence. References to Ireland’s fight for independence and the ‘betrayal’ of the ‘heroes’ of that struggle evoke not just a perceived loss of economic autonomy but also a dramatic loss of national sovereignty bringing Ireland’s statehood into question. There are strong similarities with the Polish case, where the memory of the ‘heroes’ of Poland’s struggle for independence, particularly during Martial Law of the 1980s, is evoked by conservative political and media

actors to oppose government EU policy. Where the long-standing Others of Polish identity, Russia and Germany, are evoked in such frames, Britain is reasserted as Ireland's threatening Other. For example, the day the bailout was announced was described in both the Daily Star and the Independent as 'the blackest day of the blackest week seen since the Civil War' ('The blackest day...', Independent, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2010). Furthermore, in the run up to the European Council summit in December 2011, Michael Noonan, Fine Gael Irish Finance Minister since 2011, declared that:

On this day 90 years ago, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 1921, the Treaty was signed. The Treaty restored Ireland's sovereignty which for so long had been lost. In the last days of the Treaty negotiations, the British conceded fiscal autonomy to Ireland. This, as Dick Mulcahy said "Gave Ireland back her purse". I am afraid the Fianna Fáil/Green Government gave the purse away again this time last year as fiscal autonomy was conceded to the IMF and the European authorities (Michael Noonan, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011).

Just as conservative actors in Poland argue that Polish independence has come to an end with the Fiscal Compact, some commentators argue that Ireland has lost its status as an independent country. One article in the Independent maintains that 'it is shocking an Irish government might voluntarily agree to a permanent ceding of that degree of sovereignty. If it succeeds, then it would not be credible to describe ourselves as a republic.' (Europe's bullies must be defeated', Independent, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2011). Losing control over economic policies such as taxation, setting the national budget and moves towards fiscal union are not simply understood within the economic sphere, but are viewed as a judgement on the very status of the nation-state. What is interesting to note, however, is that it is the Irish government which is seen to have voluntarily conceded Irish sovereignty to a foreign power, rather than it having been taken forcibly by an external power – something which is also evident in the Polish case. This is further evidence of the notion that the Irish elite constituted the internal Other to the Irish people - Irish politicians 'surrendered' Irish sovereignty to the IMF/EU and in so doing betrayed the 'heroes' of

1916/1922 and again reflects the anti-elite sentiment in Ireland present even before the crisis. As the Daily Star admits, ‘in the midst of all our justified anger about losing our sovereignty, many of us must also have breathed a deep, contented, secret sigh of relief. At long last, this government of gougers have had serious economic decision-making taken away from them’ (‘Burn them at the stake...’ Irish Daily Star, 21<sup>st</sup> November, p. 24). Furthermore, the Daily Star angrily maintains in another article that:

The Biffo bunch has disgraced itself and dishonoured the country by surrendering our economic sovereignty to the EU and the IMF, and we are now faced with decades of debt repayments...And less talk about how our 1916 heroes are spinning in their graves – at least they’re dead and can suffer no more (‘Tell us now, Mr Gilmore...’, Daily Star, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2010).

The ‘Biffo bunch’ (Biffo being a commonly used nickname for former Taoiseach Brian Cowen, standing for ‘Big Ignorant Fecker From Offaly’) has betrayed and dishonoured Ireland and the country’s heroes – who should be glad they cannot witness the shame of recent events. Moreover, an article in The Independent questions the very notion of Irish self-determination:

If self-determination is so important (and it is), perhaps we should ask who this ‘self’ is who has been determining how the country is run? [...] Within this republic, there’s a layer of well-off people who have had an inordinate and unaccountable influence on the running of the country. Golden circles, if you will. They are surrounded by cheerleaders -- professionals and media fans -- who amplify their every wish [...] Have we forgotten all that? It’s a bit rich, now that Mr Chopra has arrived in town, to pretend that a handful of reckless politicians crippled our sovereignty’ (‘Elite stand ready to serve new overlords’, Independent, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2010).

This excerpt clearly identifies the Irish as the perpetrators, that is, not just a small elite in government but a class that extends far further within Irish society than many want to believe. However, while the Irish elite are seen to have conceded sovereignty, it is the EU’s large states, represented by Germany and France, who have seized it, something which also reflects much longer standing concerns that Ireland would end up dominated by the larger, core member

states, expressed by the opposition as early as the 1972 referendum on EEC membership (Laffan and O'Mahony, 2008:222). These feelings were particularly salient in 2011 when the Franco-German alliance was perceived to be dominating decision-making at the European Council summit in December. 'Othering' of Germany and France therefore reveals a core/periphery dynamic which has long been salient in Ireland's relationship to the EU which, in theory, should bolster the position of small states such as Ireland in the international system (Laffan and O'Mahony, 2008:199). This core/periphery dynamic is also present in the Polish case, where Germany is seen to be dominating the peripheral countries. In the crisis, the larger core member states are seen to control the smaller, peripheral states and in so doing threaten the status of those small states as equal partners – as one article names it, Ireland has received 'satellite status' ('Enda settles for satellite status', *Independent*, December 4<sup>th</sup> 2011). Like Poland, Ireland harbours long-standing insecurities about its position in the world and in Europe, which frames the contemporary relationship with the powerful players in the EU.

For example, one *Independent* article maintains that 'that is why it is so deeply regrettable that the 'Merkozy' axis is behaving in such a dictatorial way. Their dogged pursuit of totalitarian capitalism will have catastrophic consequences' ('Remember we are a people...', *Independent* 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011). Furthermore, moves towards fiscal union, in particular the threat of tax harmonisation (and therefore the loss of Ireland's favourable low corporate tax rate) is interpreted as a kind of French 'plot':

Ostensibly, the new powers will grant the right to enforce 'fiscal discipline' over the 17 group members. Behind the arras, the real power will lie with Paris and Berlin, operating through the European Central Bank in Frankfurt, pretending to be Brussels. [...] Unsaid is the real message: 'So in future your economies will all be governed by a central Ministry of France.' Also unsaid is: 'and behind that Ministry we shall be standing calling the shots.' And yes, my friends, it is a coup d'etat by another name -- for if you control the economy you control the country ('Only salvation...', Frederick Forsyth, *Independent*, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2011).

Furthermore, old stereotypes of Germany are evoked in Ireland, and as we will see in Chapter 6, also in Poland. As one article in *The Times* maintains, ‘it is an irony of recent European history that a mechanism designed to contain German power and maintain French influence has done precisely the opposite’ (‘Crunch time’, *Irish Times*, December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011, p.1). In this context, German economic power is presented as a threat to small nations across Europe:

...whereas Germany represents herself as being on a special level, enjoying the solitary splendour of supremacy and dictating the non-democratic terms of its fiscal empire, we are representative of a majority of the other nations. Prodigal, ill-governed, foolish, greedy, blind and above all fearful, we are the norm. We should be standing together, with the majority, both of Mediterranean member states and of central European and Atlantic states (‘Our new place in Europe..’, *Independent*, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011).

This places Ireland alongside other peripheral states including both southern and central Europe in a battle with the threat of German ‘empire’, placing the peripheral countries as the victims of Germany’s perceived economic domination. One article goes so far as to compare Ireland with Czechoslovakia in 1938:

Ireland is, like the poor Czechs in 1938, a small unimportant country in a wrong place that is out of options. The Taoiseach and the Minister for Finance could bluff all they wanted. But, like the Sudetenland in 1938 where the plucky Czechs were told by their irritated allies that Mr Hitler "is a pretty straight guy", only the deluded, the deceitful or the obtuse could mistake the clarity of the message Europe was sending us (‘Our Taoiseach is now Europe's puppet king’, *Independent*, December 21<sup>st</sup> 2010).

The Taoiseach is then reduced to the role of ‘puppet king’ to the new European ‘masters’. (‘Our Taoiseach is now Europe's puppet king’, *Independent*, December 21<sup>st</sup> 2010). Whereas the Nazi past is used in the debates in Germany as a motivation for European integration and saving the European project, in Ireland, and in Poland, it is a reason to be fearful of it.

In the same way as in Poland, the historical question of Irish sovereignty and the self-perception of marginalisation at the periphery of Europe in decision-making terms therefore frame the debate about the crisis in the public sphere. The emphasis on the ‘foreignness’ of the EU and IMF prevents identification with Europe and positions Europe as external to Irish interests – either in terms of its utility or threat to the Irish state. One Daily Star article, responding to calls from Merkel and Sarkozy for joint European action, asks ‘what’s this fecking ‘we’ business, all of a sudden?’ (‘EU cannot be serious’, Daily Star, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2011, p. 10), suggesting that never has there been consideration for the well-being of any European community. Furthermore, what is understood in Germany as ‘European solidarity’, that is, accepting fiscal discipline in exchange for financial assistance for the greater good of the European community, is perceived in Ireland, and Poland, as an exercise in domination, the spread of empire, as economic colonisation. This has implications for the legitimacy of measures touted as necessary in the name of European solidarity.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that the Euro crisis has not acted as a critical juncture of European identity discourses in Ireland. Rather, the crisis is framed in terms of path-dependent discourses on the Irish state – in particular, the struggle for independence in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and repeated economic crises, particularly of the late 1970s and 1980s – where Europe is viewed either as a utility or a threat to Irish identity. As illuminated in the introduction, support for the EU in Ireland has not suffered significantly since the onset of the crisis. Rather, the Irish passed the Fiscal Treaty in a referendum in 2012 and the country successfully exited the bailout programme in late 2013. This chapter firstly argued that this can be explained by the fact that the crisis was understood most widely as a domestic crisis, caused by perceived deep-seated

problems in Irish society, particularly amongst the political and economic elite. Rather than acting as a *European* identity crisis, the crisis in Ireland can be considered a crisis of *Irish* identity, where the Irish elite came to act as a kind of internal Other to the ‘ordinary’ Irish people. Having revealed widespread corruption in the country’s banking, economic, and political system, the crisis was seen as one brought about primarily by the Irish themselves.

The second and third sections of this chapter showed how crisis policies such as the bailout programme and further integration through banking and fiscal union are primarily framed around the issues of sovereignty and the economy. The second argued that the pro-European elite and media actors legitimise EU policy by emphasising the utility of Europe for Ireland. In contrast to Germany, European solidarity in Ireland is understood as redistribution of wealth and strengthening of EU institutions for the benefit of the Eurozone and Irish economy. Furthermore, the best way to Ireland’s actual sovereignty in practice is ensuring that it has a secure place in the international community, within an EU which has improved member states’ capacity to act, through the ‘utility’ of sovereignty rather than the ‘ideal’ of sovereignty (Hayward, 2009). However, the third section showed how actors who oppose such policies also draw on the same themes to justify their claims. The bailout programme and further integration measures are seen to have deprived Ireland of its (economic) sovereignty and in doing so experienced a loss of its status as a republic that the Irish had fought so hard to obtain. Here, the core EU member states, particularly France and Germany, are perceived as Ireland’s ‘threatening Other’, the ones who have deprived Ireland of its sovereignty. Most actors, however, use Europe as a utility or a threat to Ireland in legitimising their ideas, meaning that the crisis reinforces rather than changes Irish discourses on Europe.

The implication of the ‘utility of Europe’ finding is that the Irish are supportive of further integration to the extent that it serves the Irish interest; Ireland is ‘conditionally integrationist’ to the extent that the Irish ‘ask what Brussels could do for the Irish economy rather than the reverse’ (Laffan and O’Mahony, 2008:32). By the time of the referendum on the Fiscal Treaty, the Irish were relatively convinced that ‘Ireland is better off anchored in the EU’ (Laffan, 2013:49). Furthermore, by Spring 2013 48% of Irish people surveyed agreed that they felt closer to other citizens in the EU because of the crisis compared with 40% in Germany (European Commission, 2013a). The Irish have confirmed their interest in being part of the EU because the crisis has highlighted the country’s vulnerabilities and what would be at stake were its participation in the EU and the single currency endangered. It has reinforced the original purpose for European integration and reminded Ireland of the necessity of their participation in the European community. Gillespie asserts that the ‘strategic impulse that originally attracted Ireland towards EEC/EU membership in the 1960s and 1970s as a means of reducing dependence on the UK resurfaces now that the euro is facing an existential crisis requiring deeper integration to save the euro’ (2012:7). Furthermore, supporting further integration in the areas of European banking supervision and fiscal policy to a certain extent provide a way to liberate Ireland from their elite. In the domestic crisis frame, the Irish political system failed; therefore, the pooling of sovereignty in these areas can be legitimised on the basis that this is best for Ireland’s future.

However, it is clear that Ireland differs starkly from Germany and Poland in that there is relatively little conception of Europe as a ‘we’ community. Ireland is not presented as part of a wider European community; rather, Europe plays either an instrumental or threatening role for Irish identity. As Gillespie argues, it makes more sense to talk of a ‘post-sovereign’ rather than

a 'post-national' Europe in the Irish context. While pooling sovereignty can be justified, he argues, 'abandoning nationalism is a much more demanding condition – indeed an unacceptable one – for a country which sees it as a liberating force from imperialism and therefore as a means of realising the international' (2012:8). In contrast to the German case, there is no conception of 'ordoliberal' solidarity in Ireland; rather, the conditions attached to the bailout programme were seen as an erosion of Irish sovereignty by Germany and France. European solidarity in Ireland is understood as wealth redistribution, burden-sharing and the strengthening of EU institutions such as the ECB, as a strategy to demand further assistance from the EU. Whereas some actors in the Polish case sign up to the 'ordoliberal' solidarity, pro-European Polish elites and media actors also understand European solidarity to be the strengthening of EU institutions in order to secure Poland's place in the core of Europe. The next chapter will introduce the Polish case and show how, like in Ireland, the question of Polish sovereignty and the quest for independence constrain Polish elites and frame the debate about the crisis.

## CHAPTER 6: THE BATTLE FOR THE EUROPEAN CORE: POLISHNESS AS EUROPEANNESS?

### Introduction

The previous two chapters presented the results of the first two case studies, Germany and Ireland. This chapter presents the final case study of this thesis, considering the effect of the Euro crisis for European identities in Poland. It will consider the effect of the crisis compared to the other two case studies, and the differences between political and media actors. As in Germany and Ireland, this chapter will demonstrate that the crisis is constructed in such a way that it reflects existing identities as a strategy by elite and media actors to legitimise their claims. In particular, the crisis reinforces deep divisions present in Polish politics. While these divisions generally do not relate to the EU but rather to ‘attitudes towards the past and moral-cultural issues in general, and levels of religiosity in particular’ (Szczerbiak, 2003:741) and election campaigns generally do not deal with European politics (Szczerbiak and Bil, 2009:463), the dividing lines during the crisis can be drawn along a cosmopolitan-nationalist cleavage (Grande and Kriesi, 2014). Adam Michnik, current editor of *Gazeta Wyborcza* and former anti-communist dissident, once claimed that ‘the most important conflict in Polish culture today is being fought between those who see Poland as part of Europe and those characterised as natio-centric’ (cited in McManus-Czubińska et al., 2003). Debates about the crisis are fought on these terms, divided between the economically liberal ruling party Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska - PO), which along with the left/liberal press (particularly *Gazeta Wyborcza* - GW) and the conservative-nationalist party Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość – PiS) and the conservative press, (here *Rzeczpospolita* - RZ). While pro-European actors draw on the ‘return to Europe’ discourse to legitimise their calls for further integration, they are also constrained by the Polish sovereignty discourse. This leads to intensified calls for a federal

Europe on the one hand, and a strengthening of the historical fear of Russia and Germany on the other.

Firstly, this chapter will first outline Poland's experience of the crisis. Secondly, it will explain how the crisis moves from being a crisis located at the margins of Europe, in Greece and Southern Europe, to a crisis about Poland's marginalisation in Europe. When understood as a Greek or Southern European crisis, the crisis sees Poland positioned in the media discourse within the Northern European core of the virtuous, the economically disciplined and responsible EU member states in contrast to its southern European (Greek) Other. By 2011, however, the crisis was a European crisis which became an issue of Polish identity, once again risking marginalisation at the periphery of Europe. The chapter will then proceed to explain how the debates deal with this question of identity. Firstly, like their German counterparts, the pro-European elites and media present Polishness as Europeanness, arguing for a federal Europe and defence of the common European good as an expression of intertwined European and Polish identities. However, they are also constrained by the sovereignty discourse, arguing that the EU is the best way to guarantee the security and sovereignty of the Polish state. EU. Secondly, however, the debates also become an outlet for the construction of divisions in Europe. On the one hand, the Othering of Greece in light of Poland's commitment to contributing to the bailout fund in 2011 creates both a North/South division at the same time as reinforcing the perceived economic division between Poland and the rest of Europe. On the other hand, however, Eurosceptic actors present the EU and Germany as an ultimate threat to Polish sovereignty, calling Poland's very independence into question. This fuels anti-German sentiment and strengthens Germany's role as a historical 'Other' for Poland. The Polish case therefore further

confirms the overall argument of this thesis that crises are endogenised within national contexts and framed according to existing political and social discourses.

### **Poland, Party Politics and the Crisis**

As mentioned in the introduction, Polish politics have long been polarised, particularly around the question of the past. As Haughton argues, in post-communist countries the past shapes not only ‘the terrain on which the battles are fought [...] it provides some of the ammunition and marks out members of the different units with their different uniforms’ (2012a:257). After 1989, party politics in Poland was built around post-communist divisions and attitudes to the Catholic Church – Solidarity Electoral Action (Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność - AWS), the centre-right bloc comprising members of the former Solidarity movement and the Democratic Left Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej), centre-left bloc comprising former members of the communist party (Szczerbiak, 2003:729). After the 2001 election, right-wing blocs collapsed and two new parties emerged - Civic Platform (PO) and Law and Justice (PiS) (Szczerbiak, 2003). While these new parties were based more on socio-economic divisions than the relationship with the past, Szczerbiak argues that these old divisions still remained (2003:731). In particular, the division relates to the belief that Poland belongs at the core of Europe and the nationalist conservative Poland envisaged particularly by Law and Justice, with their campaign to replace the post-1989 Third Republic with a ‘Fourth Republic’ which would introduce a ‘moral revolution entailing a rebirth of religious and patriotic values, an uncompromising decommunization, and the strengthening of collective memory’, comprising the ‘fulfillment of the 1980s Solidarity revolution’ (Brier, 2009:64). As mentioned, the EU has remained relatively absent in party politics in Poland at least in the first four years of EU membership (Szczerbiak

and Bil, 2009). However, this division manifests itself in EU politics in a particular way and, this chapter will argue, has been reinforced by the Euro crisis rather than changed.

Between 2005 and 2007, Poland's relations with the EU were strained, with Law and Justice pursuing a European policy based primarily on the notion of a 'strong, independent Poland with undiluted and undivided sovereignty' (Szczerbiak, 2012b:187). During this time, Poland played the role of 'new awkward partner' in Europe (Szczerbiak, 2012b), particularly in the context of the debates surrounding the Constitutional Treaty and Lisbon Treaty, when Prime Minister Kaczyński famously lobbied for an increase in population-based voting rights for Poland on the basis that the country's population would be significantly higher if Nazi Germany had not murdered so many Poles during World War Two (Mulvey, 2007). Having fought to defend Polish sovereignty within the EU, this nationalist camp generally represents the Eurosceptic elements of Polish politics. Since Civic Platform came to office in 2007, having defeated Law and Justice as governing party and Donald Tusk having replaced Jarosław Kaczyński as Prime Minister (with his twin brother Lech continuing as President until his death in 2010), Poland has transformed into a committed European actor in the EU, in so doing making a decisive break from the Eurosceptic approach of the Kaczyńskis. This led to suggestions that Poland had made a 'second return to Europe' and had positioned itself as the 'new heart of Europe' (Szczerbiak, 2012b:2). The October 2011 re-election of Civic Platform as governing party and Tusk as prime minister saw the party become the first in post-communist Poland to win a second term. Poland's EU Presidency in the second half of 2011 coincided with an apparent shift in Polish elite attitudes to the EU, in particular when Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski gave his now famous speech in Berlin announcing that he 'fears German power less than German inactivity' in the Euro crisis. Both parties benefit from their respective positions along this

cleavage, as Szczerbiak argues, their ‘long-term future cohesion depended upon their ability to frame the kind of broad, integrative ideological narratives’ (Szczerbiak, 2012a:28).

Poland’s experience of the crisis and its role as President of the Council of the EU in 2011 might lead us to expect a shift in the long-standing perceptions in Poland, as outlined in Chapter 3, of being at the ‘margins’ of Europe or as the victim of foreign oppressors. In contrast to Ireland and Germany, Poland is not a member of the Eurozone and has a very different experience of the crisis. Whereas Ireland and Poland have had a similar experience of slow economic development, in contrast to Ireland, Poland did comparatively well during the crisis. The so-called ‘economic backwardness’ of Poland and CEE preceded the communist years (Epstein, 2014) and contributed to Poland’s inferiority complex with the West. Epstein and Jacoby note the view that ‘when the Iron Curtain was constructed, it was as if leaders across the European continent were looking at a much older map of prosperity and lagging development’ (2014:3). The slow economic and technological development in eastern Europe mirrored the fast pace of modernisation and industrialisation in western Europe from the 1400s onwards (Epstein and Jacoby, 2014:6), after which eastern Europe remained rural and agricultural through its dependence on western Europe (Rae, 2007:28). Epstein and Jacoby argue that this historical east-west divide has ‘not yet’ been transcended during the course of ten years of EU membership in central and eastern Europe (2014:12). However, it must be noted that Poland cannot automatically be taken as representative of CEE countries, despite similarities such as the ‘return to Europe’. Although CEE countries in general experienced a very sharp downturn from 2007 onwards (Jacoby, 2014:53), Poland was in a relatively good position to weather the crisis despite a number of economic problems such as increasing unemployment and high public debt (Rae, 2013:411). In 2009, when all other EU member states

fell into recession, Poland's economy grew by 1.7 percent (Connolly, 2012:38). Prime Minister Tusk seized upon this statistic when, in May 2009, he announced that Poland was the 'green island of growth in the red map of Europe'. By 2010, the Polish economy 'continued to grow at a high speed of 3.9 percent compared with the EU average of 2.1 percent' (Kaczyński, 2011:24). In contrast to Ireland, Poland was therefore insulated from the worst of the crisis and experienced living standards 'more in line with the Western European average' (Rae, 2013:411-412).

Given its relative success during the economic crisis, we might predict that the so-called 'inferiority complex' has eased and there is a greater sense of security of Poland's place in Europe and its progress in 'catching up' with Western Europe. As Kaczynski suggests, Poland was 'no longer a poor irritating cousin everybody had to deal with; the message was of a new Poland with a solid economy, political responsibility and social stability' (2011:23). Indeed, during the crisis, EU approval ratings remained high. On the one hand, European elections of 2014 indicated a disillusionment with the pro-European political parties, through the collapse of the pro-European Europa Plus coalition and the success (winning four MEPs) of the radically conservative and Eurosceptic New Right Congress (Kongres Nowej Prawicy- KNP) headed by eccentric and controversial veteran politician Janusz Korwin-Mikke. European elections in Poland also indicate a fundamental lack of engagement in European politics, with turnout remaining painfully low (just 22% in 2014). However, Poles remain amongst the most positive about the EU despite an understandable drop in support for the single currency. For example, a recent Pew Research Center survey of seven large EU member states found that Poland reported by far the strongest support for EU institutions, with 72% favourable towards the EU compared with a median of 52% amongst the other member states surveyed (2014). Poland's experience

of the crisis might therefore have clashed with European discourses that place Poland in a position of marginalisation and economic backwardness. For example, might ask whether Polish elites and the media consider Poland to have finally “returned” to Europe, whether they perceive it to have overcome its political and economic marginalisation in Europe. The empirical sections will show that, contrary to these expectations, the crisis is endogenised and interpreted according to existing Polish identity discourses, especially the ‘return to Europe’ discourse.

### **From Greek Crisis to European Crisis – The Threat of Poland’s Marginalisation in Europe**

*‘The crisis is not just in our banks, it is also in our hearts’ (Tusk, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011, Strasbourg).*

While the early stage of the crisis in 2010 suggests a reconstruction of European identities comparable to the ‘Northern European’ community identified in the German case, by 2011 the crisis becomes a question for Poland which reinforces existing discourses on Europe. Between 2010 and 2011 there was a noticeable shift in the perception of the crisis in Poland, something which was less clear in Germany and Ireland. The framing of the crisis shifted from being a crisis on the margins of Europe, when it was primarily viewed as a (self-inflicted) Greek debt crisis where Greece functions as Europe’s Other, to a crisis about Poland’s marginalisation in Europe, when it was framed as a broad European institutional crisis. At this time, the country faced political marginalisation as a non-Eurozone member state during its EU presidency, bringing Poland’s place in the EU core into question. This reinforced existing discourses on European identity in Poland, which strengthened the existing divisions in Polish politics and the existing competing discourses outlined in Chapter 2 of “return to Europe” and national sovereignty. Altogether, findings show that the crisis touches on fundamental questions about Poland in Europe and serves to reinforce existing divisions on Europe.

*Greek and Southern European Crisis – Poland in the Northern European Core*<sup>10</sup>.

In 2010 in particular, the framing of the crisis constructs a Greek Other for a mostly European core. This was particularly the case in 2010 when the focus was on the Greek sovereign debt crisis and EU bailout, but was also present in 2011 when Poland agreed to contribute to the European Stability Mechanism (ESM). This frame endogenises the crisis within the EU and leads to a re-drawing of the boundaries of Europe through the creation of a ‘Northern European’ community of ‘good Europeans’ who act with economic discipline. On the one hand, there is a clear perception in 2010 that the crisis will impact on the whole of Europe and Poland together (Markiewicz, 2012:21). The crisis is experienced as a common European experience where Poland, as part of the EU core, suffers alongside the Eurozone against a common threat - Greece. Despite being outside the Eurozone and not in recession, the złoty is vulnerable to market confidence and dropped in value in the wake of the Greek crisis. For example, GW begs: “‘Please God, save the euro’”: it seemed that there will not be any help for the euro and the złoty’ (‘Boże, Broń Euro’, GW, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2010, p. 15). There is a threat to the Polish economy, with the Polish currency, the złoty, weakening alongside the Euro, as GW notes, ‘investors are therefore liquidating their investments in the European currency, bonds and shares not just in countries directly afflicted by the crisis, that is, Greece, Spain and Portugal, but also, for example, right here in Poland’ (‘Złoty zjeżdża po równi pochylej przez... Grecję’, GW, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2010, p.23). RZ also notes the common fate with the Eurozone, arguing that ‘our currency is already strongly associated with the European one and when that is in trouble, the złoty will weaken fast’ (‘Euroland: ekskluzywny klub bez wykidajły’ RZ, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2010).

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<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that there is a lack of salience in Poland with respect to the Greek sovereign debt crisis. Very few speeches were given on this topic during the 2010 time period. This can in part be attributed to the presence on the political agenda of other highly salient domestic issues during April-June 2010 will have detracted attention, the most momentous of which was the tragic aeroplane crash of 10<sup>th</sup> April 2010 in Smolensk, Russia.

On the other hand, the blame for Poland and the Eurozone's problems is placed squarely with the Greeks, excluding them discursively from Europe and creating a common threat for the rest of Europe. Given the direction of the Polish economy, Poland has been considered a 'Northern European' member state and supporter of German austerity policy (Łada, 2013:6-7). Chapter 4 argues that the crisis has created a new Northern European identity in Germany based on an ordoliberal solidarity where financial aid is provided in exchange for compliance with EU rules on budgetary discipline, the implementation of austerity measures and structural reforms – a community to which Poland also belongs. In the Polish case, this is evident particularly in the Greek/Southern European frame which positions Poland and other CEE member states alongside Germany as part of the Northern European core. For example, GW talks of the 'Greek disease' where the country needs an IMF/EU bailout 'without which the indebted country will go bankrupt', maintaining that it is 'the careless effect of successive Greek governments which falsified financial statistics' ('Grecka Choroba', GW, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2010, p.1). Another article argues that Europe has been 'taken hostage by Greece' but maintains that 'regardless of the harsh rhetoric, especially from Germany's side which looks unsympathetically at the Greeks living beyond their means at Europe's expense as it cuts its own social programmes, alternatives for the aid package were less digestible than the package itself' ('Grecki poker czy domino?' GW, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2010, p.28). RZ also criticises the Greeks who were 'protesting because they had to lose some of their privileges' ('Krach państwa socjalnego', RZ, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2010). Greece is therefore blamed for the crisis for not complying with proper European economic standards.

Where Greece is Othered against the rest of Europe, Poland is included in the European core. Highlighting Poland's economic success during the crisis, GW describes Poland as the new 'tiger of the EU' which, as the only member state to avoid recession, 'maintains the position

of the EU's model student' ('Polska tygrysem Unii', GW, 6th May 2010, p. 23). Here Poland is clearly placed within the EU core of 'good Europeans' who achieve economic success. This framing incorporates not just Poland, but also other CEE member states into the Northern European core. For example, the above article in GW notes that 'there are countries which accept austerity calmly – amongst them Latvia, but the Greeks are not Latvians. Nationwide strikes are paralysing the country' ('Grecki poker czy domino?' GW, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2010, p.28). There is a clear distinction made between the culture and behaviour of the Latvians and the Greeks. The Latvians, also hit hard by the crisis, are seen to have borne the consequences of the crisis quietly and honourably. The Greeks, on the other hand, have risen up and brought the country to a standstill. Other articles present the willingness of the CEE states to conform to EU rules in contrast to Greece, for example, RZ notes Slovenia's suggestion to exclude Eurozone members not complying with the convergence criteria and quotes the Slovakian prime minister who states that "I don't trust the Greeks" ('Grecy szukają oszczędności', RZ, 7th May 2010). While it must be emphasised that Poland cannot be taken as representative of the CEE states, there are some comparable aspects. There are significant differences between Poland and Latvia, first the fact that Latvia experienced a severe economic crisis, and secondly the fact that as a large member state and as a result of its history, Poland sees itself as a core EU member state. However, there are some similarities, in particular, the reluctance to contribute to bailout funds for Greece, something which brought down the Slovakian government in 2011. Altogether, the crisis in 2010 creates a Greek Other positioned against Poland and other CEE countries as part of the core of Europe.

#### *European Crisis – Poland's Marginalisation in Europe*

However, where Poland was safely part of the European core in 2010, by 2011 the political implications of the Euro crisis for Poland became much clearer, putting the country's place in

Europe at risk. By this time, the crisis served mostly to reinforce existing discourses on Europe in Poland and strengthen divisions in Polish politics. In particular, the framing of the crisis by Polish government elites, that is, Civic Platform leaders, and many parts of the media, especially GW but also RZ and Fakt, first and foremost reflects the ‘return to Europe’ discourse. Like in Ireland and Germany the crisis is constructed in such a way that it reflects the original motivations for Poland’s membership of the EU – ‘returning to Europe’ after decades, and even centuries, of marginalisation at the European periphery. Firstly, as in Germany, the crisis constitutes a common European crisis, one which affects the future of Europe as a whole. This framing exogenises the crisis to create a kind of ‘external Other’ for Europe, promoting a sense of shared European experience in the face of a common threat. As then Prime Minister Donald Tusk states in a speech to the *Sejm* (the Polish Parliament) at the inauguration of his second term, the changes taking place in Europe ‘make for a dramatic, disturbing political landscape, a new political landscape in Europe’ (Tusk, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2011). Furthermore, in his speech in Strasbourg to close the Polish Presidency of the EU, he labels the crisis the ‘most serious crisis to have afflicted our continent in the history of the united Europe’, warning that Europe is at a crossroads (Tusk, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011). He emphasises the importance of European unity, arguing that the debates engendered by the crisis about the EU’s very foundations signals that ‘the crisis exists not just in our banks, but also in our hearts’. As in Germany, political leaders in Poland emphasise the importance of protecting European unification for the purposes of legitimising European action.

This construction of the crisis found resonance in the pro-European media during this time. This frame constructs an exogenous threat to the European institutions and in doing so reinforces European identity, particularly through the threat of war. For example, GW writes

on the day of the summit that ‘today the fate of Europe will be decided’ (Walka o rewizję traktatów. O co chodzi w szczycie UE?’ GW, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2011). Rather than it just being an economic and banking crisis, a collapse of the Euro would mean ‘a step towards the break-up of the European Union’, resulting in populist parties who ‘can treat us to a return to the situation before the Second World War – that is, nation-states, protectionism etc. And what then? It remains to say, what minister Rostowski and Chancellor Merkel said – war’ (Fakt, 29<sup>th</sup> November 2011, p. 2). Europe’s violent past is evoked to warn against the break-up of the EU as a whole. The crisis posed the threat of a break-up of Europe, which would mean ‘its decline or renationalisation, relying on each country concentrating only on its own fate’ (Fakt, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2011, p. 2-3). Indeed, former Finance Minister Jacek Rostowski warned the European Parliament in Strasbourg in September 2011 that the crisis was ‘making wars in Europe imaginable again’ (Novonite.com, 2011). Quoted in GW, then President of European Parliament (and former Prime Minister) Jerzy Buzek cites Rousseau in recalling historical instances of the fall of empire: ‘if Sparta and Rome perished, what state can expect hope to endure forever?’. GW notes that he was trying to ‘make the audience aware that the European Union can also fall if Europeans do not come to its rescue’ (‘Przewodniczący Buzek się żegna’, GW, 16<sup>th</sup> Dec 2011 p. 10). The threat of war therefore serves as an external Other to consolidate European identity and joint European action to ‘save’ the continent.

In the German case, the threat presented to the future of the EU reinforced Germany’s post-war European identity, where European integration serves as a means to overcome the country’s Nazi past. Likewise, the framing of the crisis in Poland also reflects and reinforces Poland’s European identity and the ‘return to Europe’ discourse, where membership of the EU was touted as a means for Poland to return to its rightful place in Western/Central Europe. The crisis was

understood to pose a significant threat of marginalisation at the periphery of Europe. This was reinforced by Poland's experience as President of the EU during this time, when, as a non-Eurozone member, it found itself excluded from core decision-making processes in the EU (Lauenroth and von Ondarza, 2014:61). As Gebert argues, the division of the EU into two-speeds, Eurozone and non-Eurozone, would involve 'relegating Poland to where its absolute economic size and Eurozone non-membership [...] suggest it should be: the European periphery' (Gebert, 2012:6). This is particularly evident in Tusk's speech to the Sejm in November 2011. He argues that in the current debate about the EU:

we do not have, in my opinion, a political dilemma of whether to be at the centre of Europe, or to be at its periphery [...] The real dilemma for Poland is how to be at the centre of Europe, how to be a real, major player on the European stage, and not, as a result of the crisis, to find ourselves at the margins, at the periphery, or outside the European Union [...] Today we often hear about the concert of powers in Europe that is difficult to accept. Today at the European table, or as some witty politician said, at this political meal, either you are at the table, or you are on the menu. Poland has to be at the table (Tusk 18<sup>th</sup> November 2011).

In both Germany and Poland, the possibility of multi-speed EU risks the very motivations they have for EU membership. In Germany, multi-speed EU threatens the unity of Europe and the project of European integration. In Poland, it represents the risk of political marginalisation. The fear of marginalisation through two-speed Europe is expressed strongly in the press. In GW it is noted that 'countries of the first speed, that is, the Eurozone, will be able to marginalise the rest in decision-making, as well as in the distribution of funds from the EU budget. And this will be very dangerous for us' ('Unia Według Polski', GW 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2011). Mikołaj Dowgielewicz, Minister for European and Economic Affairs warns that the summit could result in the 'division of Europe into several groups of countries – the better ones, which will adopt new rules on budgetary discipline, and those who will be at the tail end of the EU', expressing the concern that Poland may not end up in the first group (cited in 'Walka o rewizję traktatów.

O co chodzi w szczycie UE?’ GW, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2011). There is also explicit expression of the desire to be in the European ‘core’, that is, in the ‘first speed’ of the EU: ‘Has Chancellor Angela Merkel pledged that the treaty change pushed through by her will not result in the marginalisation of Poland? The Community is preparing for treaty change which will create two groups of states. Poland wants to be in the better one’ (‘Nowy traktat podzieli Unię?’ RZ, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2011). By 2011, therefore, the crisis has become a European crisis reflects the long-standing ‘return to Europe’ discourse. The crisis reinforces a fear of marginalisation at Europe’s periphery and a desire to secure its position in the European core.

The next sections will show how the debates about crisis policies deal with this fear of marginalisation, highlighting how the crisis has reflected the polarised nature of identity in Poland. While the crisis presented a window of opportunity for pro-European Polish elites to call for further European integration, these actors reinforce longstanding discourses on Europe and the past in order to legitimise their claims rather than instigate change. As a result, the crisis strengthens existing divisions in Polish politics. The first section will show how this framing of the crisis opened up an opportunity for pro-Europeans in Poland to argue in favour of a federal union, expressing dual European/Polish identities where being a ‘good European’ is simultaneously to be a good Pole. They are, however, constrained by opposition discourses on Europe. Whereas Poland is understood as an integral part of Europe, Europe is presented as an instrument for the benefit of Polish sovereignty and Polish security. The second section will show how the crisis has also served to reinforce divisions firstly between Poland and the southern European countries, but secondly and especially between Poland and Germany. In their fierce defence of Polish sovereignty and the historical battle for independence, conservative-nationalist actors express strong anti-German sentiment which further reinforces

the core/periphery divide present in the Irish case.

### **Europeanness as Polishness – A Federal Europe and a Secure Poland**

This section will show how pro-European elite and media actors call for further integration and the positioning of Poland in the EU core in order to manage this threat of marginalisation presented by the crisis. As mentioned in the introduction, it must be first be noted that Europe plays relatively little role in Polish politics in general. In a study of the EU's impact on Polish party politics prior to the crisis, Szczerbiak and Bil find that 'very little evidence of the EU or the European issue being used increasingly or impinging upon patterns of inter-party competition' (2009:462; see also Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2013). However, when confronted with the issue of Europe, pro-European actors express a Europeanised Polish national identity where being European is simultaneously to be Polish, and vice-versa. As in Germany, where being German is simultaneously to be European, this reflects a 'contemporary Polish *hybrid* identity' (Bayley and Williams, 2012:255). Defining Polish identity, that is, what it means to be Polish, has become an important task for post-communist Poland (McManus-Czubińska et al., 2003). McManus-Czubińska et al. differentiate between 'nested', dual European-Polish identities and exclusive Polish identity. The pro-European elite in Poland use the crisis as a 'window of opportunity' to call for further European integration to solve the crisis on the basis of this dual European and Polish identity. However, constrained by the nationalist discourse based on an exclusive Polish identity, pro-European actors are drawn into a debate about Polish sovereignty which instrumentalises Europe for the purposes of Polish sovereignty.

In contrast to Ireland, where European integration is framed solely as a means to strengthen Irish interests and identities, and compared with Germany, where crisis policies are framed in

terms of being a ‘good European’, the pro-European elite and media, particularly GW, call for further integration, and indeed a federal Europe, in the name of the common European good and European solidarity. While the call for unity and strengthening of the EU institutions is possibly driven by a concern that without them Poland’s interests will not be taken into account, the framing in terms of European solidarity reflects the European identities of the pro-European actors. This compares to Germany but stands in contrast to Ireland, where policy debates tend to be framed in terms of the national interest. Firstly, as explained in Chapter 3, one element of the discourse on European identity in Poland draws on Poland’s historical role as ‘bulwark’ to the East. In his Berlin speech, Sikorski explains Poland’s historical role as a nation that upheld the values of democracy, religious freedom, inclusiveness and protected Western Europe from invasion (28<sup>th</sup> November 2011) in order to justify his vision of a federal Europe. Drawing on a discourse which ‘identifies Poland with European culture and, conversely, Europe with Polish culture’ (McManus-Czubińska et al., 2003), Sikorski presents a particular vision of intertwined and inseparable European and Polish identities where Poland has an important role to play in defending and protecting (Western) Europe. This idea is also reflected particularly in GW, where Sikorski’s speech is warmly welcomed as a reflection of Poland’s important role in helping Europe overcome the crisis, defend its unity and uphold its democratic values. For example, GW noted that ‘Sikorski recognised the need for the democratic support of Europeans for EU reform. And he defended the unity of 27 countries when he appealed to all leaders and finance ministers to always debate at the community table’ (‘Europa mówi Sikorskim’, GW, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2011). Furthermore, another GW article explains that

For the first time Poland, perceived up until now as a country only interested in union funds, offered Europe a new role - architect of the new order. “Now we can and want to make our contribution,” said Sikorski. Alongside the experience of transformation and the fact that the Polish economy coped quite well with the crisis, Poland brings trust and confidence to the Union. And that is something in

short supply in the West today ('Sikorski i nowa rola Polski w Europie', GW, 30th November 2011, p. 5).

The warm reception Sikorski's speech received across Europe is also reported in the GW in an article entitled, 'Europe is proud of Sikorski'. They report such praise as

"Poland is standing guard over a yet more integrated Union in order to strengthen the Community methods", "If every European country now thought about the common Europe like Sikorski [...] we would be on the verge of exiting the crisis", "The Poles are lucky that they have politicians of such calibre who really care about the common good" ('Europa jest dumna z Sikorskiego!', GW, 1st December 2011).

Europe therefore needs Poland to overcome the crisis, and Poland is understood to be playing a vital role in helping the European economy and keeping European integration on track. Europe is seen to be benefitting both from Poland's vision and commitment to European values as well as its resilient economy, export opportunities and commitment to fiscal discipline. It is the protector and defender of the common European good, guarding European interests when all other European states fail.

Secondly, strengthening EU institutions such as the European Parliament is presented as an expression of European solidarity. On the one hand, the call for the strengthening of EU institutions reflects Poland's need to ensure it is not excluded from the decision-making core, and also reflects events surrounding the Fiscal Compact, in which the United Kingdom refused to allow the use of core EU institutions for administering the deal, something which would threaten Poland's influence over EU policy-making. On the other hand, this construction of European solidarity can be understood both as a reflection of the particular historical meaning of solidarity in Poland. Solidarity immediately recalls the *Solidarność* (*Solidarity*) trade union movement which, led by Lech Wałęsa, developed in the 1980s in opposition to the communist

regime. As a result of the Round Table discussions between *Solidarity* and the communist Polish United Workers Party, the movement ultimately secured the introduction of partially free elections in 1989 and led to the ‘first fully democratic parliamentary elections’ in 1992 (Davies, 2005:506). In advance of the elections in June 1989, it also achieved the right to publish its own independent newspaper, *Gazeta Wyborcza* (which means ‘electoral newspaper’) headed by *Solidarity* activist Adam Michnik, still the paper’s editor today (Davies, 2005:503-504). The link between solidarity and democratic institutions is evident during the crisis amongst the pro-European elites and in GW. For example, Tusk argues at the beginning of the Polish EU Presidency that

I am certain that the answer to the crisis is more Europe and more European integration, and this requires strong European institutions. I believe this profoundly, but that belief is also underpinned by the experience of an entire generation of millions of Europeans who once lived on the other side of the former Iron Curtain (Tusk, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2011).

Solving the crisis through strengthened institutions is therefore called for on behalf of all Europeans. Furthermore, in his November 2011 speech Sikorski advocates for a strengthening of the power of the institutions, especially the European Parliament, maintaining that ‘we have a united Europe. We have Europeans. What we need to do is to give political expression to the European public opinion’ (Sikorski 28<sup>th</sup> November). Here we can see that Sikorski sees the existence of a European people which simply needs representation in the form of a federal parliament. The supranational EU institutions such as the Parliament are therefore presented by the Polish government and GW as the institutions ‘defending solidarity in the EU’ (‘Unia fiskalna czy unia transferów?’ Bielicki, GW, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2011). Having called for increased powers for the Commission and EP, Sikorski argued that it would be ‘possible to strengthen the role of the common EU institutions, whose job it is to care about solidarity and decreasing the difference between strong and weak’ (‘Europa Mówi Sikorskim’, Bielecki, Tomasz and

Michnik, Adam, GW 30th Nov 2011, p. 1). Moreover, another GW article highlights Sikorski's promise of Polish solidarity in 'building a federal union, possessing institutional strength and social support' in return for German action on solving the 'European' crisis ('Niemiecka odpowiedzialność, Polska solidarność', GW, 30th November 2011, p. 6). Here, there is a very particular understanding of solidarity which refers to the building of strong, democratic institutions, which, similar to the meaning of solidarity in Ireland, contrasts with that ascribed to solidarity in Germany. German elite and media actors present a particular ordoliberal variety of solidarity as exercised through a reciprocal arrangement of bailout funds on the condition of fiscal discipline and structural reforms. In contrast, Irish elite actors refer to the responsibilities of institutions such as the ECB to show solidarity through redistribution and burden-sharing. In a similar way, the Polish case reflects the existing European identities held by social and political actors, where the call for European solidarity through the strengthening of European institutions positions Poland in the core of Europe.

Where Poland is in the interests of Europe, however, Europe is seen to be in the interests of Poland. While these understandings of solidarity reflect existing identities and ideas in the national contexts, they also reflect the view that Poland is best served as part of Europe. At the same time as promoting the common European good, the same actors also call for further integration for the well-being, security and prosperity of Poland. On the one hand, this presents European and Polish interests and identities as two sides of the same coin - the 'dual European and Polish identity' discussed earlier. On the other hand, it reinforces the opposition sovereignty discourse and exclusive Polish identity. Firstly, then, the prosperity of Europe and Poland are seen as inseparable. For example, Tusk declares that 'the future of the European Union is, as I understand it, practically synonymous with the future of Poland. The future of Poland outside

the European Union is difficult to paint in bright colours' (15<sup>th</sup> December 2011). While Europe is understood to need Poland, Poland needs Europe for a prosperous and secure future. By ensuring the unity of the EU-27, Poland would therefore not just contribute to the well-being of Europe as a whole, but also guarantee its own security. Janusz Palikot, leader of the secular, pro-European party the Palikot movement (now called Your Movement – Twój Ruch) summarises this succinctly:

The advantages for Poland will be the survival and development of the federation, through membership of which we realise our needs for security and prosperity. We do not want to wrench out some privileges just to escape with them to the periphery, rather, as patriotic Poles and patriotic Europeans, we just want to have seen to it that the federation worked well on the one hand, and that we respected our national identities on the other ('Suwerenność to tylko retoryczna figura', RZ, 9th December 2011).

By contributing actively to the development of (a federal) EU, Poland would be simultaneously ensuring its own security as well as the survival of Europe. This is, in his words, to be simultaneously European and Polish.

However, in order to legitimise European integration, the pro-Europeans are constrained by, the nationalist, Eurosceptic discourse on Polish sovereignty. Although they begin with a defence of European unity and European solidarity from a decidedly European perspective, they soon enter into a debate about sovereignty and in particular draw on long-standing fears of Russia. As in Ireland, the pro-European elite in Poland emphasise the 'utility' of sovereignty as opposed to the 'ideal' of sovereignty (Hayward, 2009:208), where Europe is utilised for the primary benefit of Polish sovereignty. Like in Ireland, the debate is no longer about Europe but rather the survival of the nation-state. The Polish government elite target long-standing historical fears to legitimise their actions on the European stage. Where Irish elites and pro-European media actors argue that implementing the bailout programme can restore Irish

sovereignty, for Polish elites sovereignty can best be guaranteed not by isolating Poland outside of the EU but by participating in European integration. Firstly, the notion of financial sovereignty becomes important. Whereas the conservatives were calling for the so-called 'repolonization' of the banking sector', that is, the repatriation of Poland's banks controlled by foreign investors using Polish capital (Piotrowski, 2012), the overriding message from Sikorski's Berlin speech was that 'the biggest threat to the security and prosperity of Poland would be the collapse of the Eurozone' (28<sup>th</sup> November 2011). Tusk associates sovereignty with the health of a country's debt, as he announces to the Sejm, 'sovereignty today is measured less by the number of guns and more by the level of debt and the profitability of debt securities, bonds' (15<sup>th</sup> December 2011). Signing up to the Fiscal Compact was, therefore, in the words of the Civic Platform leaders, actually a defence of Polish sovereignty rather than a surrendering of it, as the opposition argue. To sign up to such agreements, then, is to do what is best for Poland. Tusk goes on to ask: what does 'the fact that so much European debt is held today by China or Russia mean for the sovereignty of Europe and member states of the European Union?' (15<sup>th</sup> December 2011). He also reminds his audience of the plight of Iceland during the economic crisis:

the first who were ready to buy up debt, to "save Iceland" [...] was Russia. Today, when we look at in whose disposal and in what proportions the debt of many European countries could be in the near future, we have to seriously consider whether the most important guarantee of our Polish sovereignty will be looking for such mechanisms to prevent the recurrence or advancing of this process. I do not have any doubts that the first, absolutely necessary condition of Polish sovereignty is maximum financial security. Ours, all of Europe and the Eurozone (Tusk 15th Dec 2011)

On the one hand this creates a notion of a European sovereign alongside Polish sovereignty and supports a form of European federalism. Tusk links the financial sovereignty of Poland with that of the EU and the Eurozone, and the threat from Russia constitutes a threat not just to

Poland but also to all European countries which have been made vulnerable through the build-up of high levels of debt. Just as earlier sections of this chapter demonstrate the perception of a common European fate, here we get a hint of a common European sovereign. On the other hand, Tusk plays on the existing fears of Russia so present in Polish society in order to legitimise his signing of the Fiscal Pact. As demonstrated, a new understanding of warfare or occupation has been constructed – in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the biggest threat posed by external powers is economic rather than military. Here, then, the possibility that Russia will buy up the debt of European countries to wield power over them is presented as the justification for agreeing to the new fiscal rules in a ‘federalising’ Europe.

Beyond a redefinition of the meaning of sovereignty, these actors therefore threaten the very existence of the Polish state altogether. By supporting further integration, Poles can also ensure that Poland is not dominated by external powers, whether they be Europe, large EU member states such as Germany, or Russia, as seen above. When Tusk argues that ‘the future of Poland outside the European Union is difficult to paint in bright colours’, he is drawing some very powerful implications about what could happen to the Polish state if Poles fail to support further integration. The EU offers protection from the ‘domination’ of large powers where a failure to integrate more deeply would signal ‘a return to a model, a model that would appear archaic, but constantly very active, full of verve, that is, a concert of powers or, as some fear, one power’ (Tusk 15th December 2011). Furthermore, he argues that ‘we will try to avoid the situation in which, faced with this powerlessness of the Union as we all so painfully feel, this community is replaced by the dictat of one, two, three or four capitals’ (Tusk, 15th December 2011). Here the crisis threatens the development of a ‘concert of powers’ in Europe – a term that in itself invokes Poland’s experience of partition by the great European powers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Sikorski also paints the following picture with reference to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth:

Our 3rd May Constitution of 1791 abolished unanimity, unified the state and created a permanent government. But reform came too late. We lost the war to defend the Constitution and in 1795 Poland was partitioned for over a century. Moral of the story? When the world is shifting and new competitors arise, standing still is not sufficient. Institutions and procedures that have worked in the past are not enough. Incremental change is not enough. You have to adapt fast enough even to retain your position. I believe we have the duty to save our great union from the fate of Yugoslavia, or the old Polish Commonwealth (Sikorski, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2011).

Here Sikorski effectively warns that if the EU does not become more closely integrated, it, and by implication Poland, will cease to exist in its entirety, just as the former Yugoslavia or the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Polish elites therefore use the crisis as an opportunity to argue that Poland should be a pro-active, committed European player, by presenting it as necessary to overcome the risk of marginalisation in Europe, and even the risk of losing sovereignty. The next section will show how opposition to EU policies both represents existing divisions in Polish politics and reinforces divisions within Europe, either between Poland and southern Europe or between Poland and Germany.

### **Polish Sovereignty and Divisions in Europe**

The previous section showed how support for further European integration in the context of the crisis is framed in terms of a dual European/Polish identity, reflecting the ‘return to Europe’ discourse where Poland seeks to be in the European core. As part of this, it reflects the idea of Poland as the ‘bulwark to the east’, the protector of the common European good. However, it showed how Polish elites are also constrained by the Polish sovereignty discourse in order to legitimise their claims. This section will show how opposition to the government’s EU policies

is also framed in terms of existing discourses and reinforces divisions in Polish politics, but in this case in relation to perceptions of economic marginalisation and the Polish sovereignty discourse. Firstly, despite Poland's relatively successful weathering of the crisis, there is still awareness that Poland is one of the poorer EU member states. This manifests itself in opposition to Poland's contribution to the bailout programme promised in December 2011, where Poland is considered much more deserving of aid than the 'rich' Greeks, Italians and Portuguese. In particular, this reflects a common understanding in Poland of European solidarity as 'the transfer of funds from wealthier Member States to poorer ones' (Copsey and Haughton, 2009:275). In comparison with Ireland, where redistribution in Europe is expected to flow from the richer states to the poorer ones, the Polish tabloid press in particular expresses indignation that a poor country such as a Poland is expected to subsidise the southern European 'life of luxury'. Furthermore, just as opposition actors in Ireland criticise the notion that Ireland, a country in deep economic crisis, should carry the burden of responsibility instead of EU institutions such as the ECB, the Polish press criticise the idea that richer states should have recourse to a poorer country's funds. In response to Poland's contribution to the ESM agreed in December 2011, headlines over a number of days dealt with the question of the so-called 'luxury lifestyle' enjoyed in Greece and Italy:



“For unemployed Italians: 4000 zł. 2000 zł for a Greek pension. Spanish pensioner: 2500 zł. For the Greek women on child support: 4400 zł. 700 zł for a child in Ireland. For the poor Portuguese: 2500 zł. Poles, this is what you will have to pay extortion money for!” (“Za to zapłacisz Polakowi haracz”, Fakt, 14<sup>th</sup> December, p. 4).

**Ratujemy Greków i Włochów, którzy mają się lepiej od nas**

	Pensja minimum	Minimalna emerytura	Renta minimum	Dobroć	Dodatek za urlop na dziecku	Minimalny zasiłek dla rodziny	Dodatek rodziny	Wiek emerytalny	Wpłata na chorobowym	Zasiłek dla bezrobotnych
<b>Włochy</b>	<b>2700 zł</b> Włosi pracodawca nie może zapłacić swojemu pracownikowi mniej	<b>2600 zł</b> Włoski emeryt nie może mieć niższej emerytury niż przewidziana suma	<b>2100 zł</b> Każdy włoski pracodawca może liczyć na dodatkową, roczną rentę	<b>4500 zł</b> Zwyczajnie tej wysokości wypłacane jest za dziecko i każde kolejne dziecko	<b>30 proc.</b> Porównanie: dziecko kosztuje 100 zł miesięcznie w Polsce, w Włochach jest to 30 proc.	<b>2200 zł</b> Włoski zasiłek dla rodziny jest 20 proc. wyższy niż w Polsce	<b>80 proc.</b> Taki procent zasiłku rodzinnego otrzymują Polacy	<b>65 lat</b> Taki wiek emerytalny w Polsce	<b>75 proc.</b> Od 40 do 75 proc. ostatniej pensji dostają na chorobowym	<b>4000 zł</b> Włoski zasiłek jest 20 proc. wyższy niż w Polsce
<b>Grecja</b>	<b>3900 zł</b> Grecy pracodawca nie może zapłacić swojemu pracownikowi mniej niż za swoją pensję	<b>2200 zł</b> Wysoka minimalna emerytura w Grecji	<b>2200 zł</b> Grecy rentę nie mogą mieć niższą niż w Polsce	<b>4400 zł</b> Zwyczajnie tej wysokości wypłacane jest za dziecko i każde kolejne dziecko	<b>50 proc.</b> Taki procent zasiłku rodzinnego otrzymują Grecy	<b>2000 zł</b> Taka wysokość zasiłku rodzinnego w Polsce	<b>900 zł</b> Taki zasiłek rodzinnego w Polsce	<b>65 lat</b> Taki wiek emerytalny w Grecji	<b>72-130</b> Zasiłek na chorobowym w Grecji	<b>2100 zł</b> Zwyczajnie tej wysokości wypłacane jest w Grecji
<b>Polska</b>	<b>1400 zł</b> Tylko tyle wynosi minimalne wynagrodzenie, jakie można płacić robotnikowi	<b>730 zł</b> Polski emeryt musi przeżyć za 730 złotych	<b>730 zł</b> Minimalna wysokość renty w Polsce	<b>1000 zł</b> Zwyczajnie tej wysokości wypłacane jest za dziecko i każde kolejne dziecko	<b>20 tygodni</b> Taki jest zasiłek rodzinnego w Polsce	<b>350 zł</b> Tylko tyle wynosi minimalny zasiłek rodzinnego w Polsce	<b>500 zł</b> Taki zasiłek rodzinnego w Polsce	<b>65 lat</b> Taki wiek emerytalny w Polsce	<b>80 proc.</b> Zasiłek na chorobowym w Polsce	<b>742 zł</b> Zwyczajnie tej wysokości wypłacane jest w Polsce

(‘I my mamy płacić na ich luksusy?’ Fakt, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2011, p. 3).

In particular, the articles compare the average earnings and social welfare payments received by Poles, Greeks, Italians, Portuguese and the Irish, and concluding that there is little justification for the expectation that Poland contribute to the bailout mechanism. For example, Fakt maintains that it is the Poles who are working hard for very little money while the much richer Greeks and Italians take advantage of their earnings:

**And we have to pay for their luxury?** Polish workers have to slave away for a measly 1400 złoty. But we have to save Greece's privileges, where the minimum wage is 2.5 times higher. A pensioner north of the Vistula, living on minimum benefits of a measly 730 złoty has to lend money to Italians who receive a state pension of at least 2600 zł every month! The countries with citizens much richer than us will be saved using the reserves of our national bank. And taking advantage of privileges that we, Poles, can only dream of! Is this supposed to be that ideal European justice? ('I my mamy płacić na ich luksusy?' Fakt, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2011, p. 1).

Opposition to Poland's contribution to the bailout therefore reflects the continuing understanding of Poland as an economically weak, poor EU member state, which results in new divisions between North and South, or between Poland and Greece. On the one hand, this can be compared to the German case, where 'being a good European' means respecting the 'European' values of economic discipline and individual responsibility. In the event that a member state is perceived to have infringed on these values, they are excluded from the European community. This sees Poland positioned within a similar 'ordoliberal' Northern Europe present in the German case. On the other hand, it reflects the understanding that Poland is still a poor EU country and therefore the continued perception of the country's economic marginalisation in Europe. There is a strong sense of injustice in the notion that a richer country such as Greece would have to be 'bailed out' by a poorer country like Poland that has tried so hard to develop a sound and modern economy – the difference perhaps between the deserving and the undeserving poor.

However, the crisis also reinforces divisions based on Polish sovereignty, which in turn reinforces the divisions within Europe seen in the Irish case, particularly between Poland and Germany, and core and periphery. One article in RZ notes that 'the dispute about Polish sovereignty and attitudes to change in the European Union will become the main axis of conflict in Polish politics' ('Polski spór o nową umowę w UE', Stróżyk, Jarosław and Olczyk, Eliza,

RZ, 13th December 2011). Sikorski's Berlin speech in November 2011 sparked considerable debate in the Polish media about exactly this issue, particularly his controversial statement that he 'fears German power less than German inactivity' in the Euro crisis. Following this, the Polish government's signing of the Fiscal Compact at the December 2011 European Council Summit initiated discussion about its implications for Polish independence. Opposition actors therefore frame this debate primarily in terms of national sovereignty, which turns the crisis into an exclusively exogenous national crisis that reinforces exclusive Polish identity with Europe, Russia and Germany as Poland's external Others.

As noted in Chapter 3, the question of sovereignty is central to the opposition discourse on Europe in Poland. This is marked by Poland's historical experience of partitions, given that Poland was partitioned for 125 years prior to the end of the First World War. Furthermore, it spent decades under communist rule behind the Iron Curtain, what Kundera describes as the 'tragedy of Central Europe', the disappearance of these countries from the map of Western Europe (1984). As this section will demonstrate, the fear that the country will once again cease to exist as a sovereign nation therefore drives the response to European policy and informs the discourse of the opposition, conservative-nationalist actors. There are comparisons to be drawn here with the Irish case, where the crisis is framed in terms of Irish sovereignty, and where both countries differ starkly from Germany. Observing the common historical experience of colonisation or occupation, Norman Davies notes the 'fascinating discrepancy between the objective circumstances of modern Ireland and modern Poland, which are somewhat different, and the subjective psychology of the two nations, which is remarkably congenial' (2006:24). He maintains that 'the temper of the Irish is indisputably close to the Poles [...] the Irish are distinctly *Polskowaci*, the Poles distinctly *irlandizujący*' (2006:24), that is, the Irish are 'Polish-like', the Poles 'becoming Irish'. Through the discourse on the crisis, an insecurity or self-

consciousness about the national cultures is revealed, as well as a sense of victimhood, of oppression by more dominant powers, which in particular results in strengthening anti-German sentiment. Primarily, the crisis instigates a concern about the future of the respective nation-states. In both countries, the debate focuses on the potential loss of economic sovereignty, and the future independence of the nation-state. In Ireland, the Irish elite are seen to have betrayed the heroes of Ireland's fight for independence and risked handing over sovereignty either to Britain or the EU core. In Poland, Polish elites are accused of capitulating to the demands of Germany and the threat of Russia, in so doing presenting a serious danger to the very existence of the country.

It is worth noting that the conflict surrounding the issue of sovereignty arguably intensified in the wake of the Smolensk tragedy in 2010 which killed 96 people, including President Lech Kaczyński and high-ranking members of the Polish political and intellectual elite<sup>11</sup>. For Sokołowski, Smolensk created a new political cleavage around the notion of sovereignty (2012:463), where the incumbent government was a party supportive of further European integration, and where questions of Polish independence were particularly significant and emotionally-charged (2012:472). Furthermore, Sokołowski claims, the Polish media became strongly partisan and supportive of one of the two main parties after Smolensk (2012:463).

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<sup>11</sup> To commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Katyń Massacre of World War Two, when approximately 20,000 Polish army officers were murdered by Soviet forces, the plane carrying the Polish delegation to the anniversary commemorations crashed prior to arrival. The crash killed Polish President Lech Kaczyński and his wife Maria, as well as other senior political figures such as President-in-Exile Ryszard Kaczarowski, the deputy foreign secretary, the deputy defence secretary, the head of the National Security Office, the deputy speaker of the Sejm (Lower House of the Polish Parliament), the deputy head of the Law and Justice Party (PiS), the Governor of the National Bank of Poland, the chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces, and head of the Polish Olympic Committee, along with members of the Solidarity movement, leading historians, relatives of victims of Katyń and other MPs (Spiegel Online, 2010; BBC News, 2010; Prezydent.pl, 2010).

Particularly from the Polish right, that is, primarily Law and Justice and its supporters, came suggestions of a Russian conspiracy, along with accusations of negligence by the Tusk government to both prevent the disaster as well as sufficiently investigate it (Koczanowicz, 2012). The catastrophe therefore touched upon historical notions of sovereignty, victimhood and suspicion towards their Russian neighbours, which have long formed dominant understandings of Polish identity, serving as an occasion when ‘Poland once again was betrayed by a foreign power and abandoned by its allies’ (Koczanowicz, 2012:825). This is important context for the onset of the Euro crisis in the period following the tragedy.

In both Poland and Ireland, opposition actors argue that the government elite have betrayed their national heroes who fought for independence. On December 13<sup>th</sup> 2011, the week following the European Council Summit when the Polish government agreed to support the Fiscal Pact, Law and Justice organised a ‘March for Independence and Solidarity’ in Warsaw on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the imposition of Martial Law (Markiewicz, 2012:11). This demonstration saw around 10,000 people gather on the streets (TheNews.pl, 2011) chanting such slogans as ‘Wake up Poland! We have had enough!’ ‘Honour and glory to the heroes’; ‘Independence is not given once to Poles for ever’ (Jarosław Kaczyński: PiS stanie na czele walki o Polskę suwerenną’, 13th December 2011). The demonstration and rally included speeches from Kaczyński and other members of his party, alongside a reading of the list of names of victims of martial law. Those who died following martial law are the ‘heroes’ of the fight for independence – as Kaczyński says, those who imposed it and helped enforce it are culpable along with those actors who, after 1989, also failed bring them to justice. Kaczyński declared at the march that 13<sup>th</sup> December 1981 was the ‘beginning of Poland’s war of independence’, still being fought with a government, in his view, set on selling Poland’s hard won sovereignty to ‘foreign’ powers

(TheNews.pl, 2011). These elites are therefore understood to have put the very existence of the nation-state at risk. As the most vocal critic of Sikorski and the government in general, Law and Justice leads the conservative-nationalist opposition to Civic Platform's European policy on the basis of the damage to Polish sovereignty. Claiming that the government is bringing independence to an end, Kaczyński argues that 'it is very sad, it could mean that Polish sovereignty was another 20 year episode' ('Wywiad Jarosława Kaczyńskiego...', 29th November 2011). The Polish government is therefore seen as having betrayed the nation and conceded Polish sovereignty.

Furthermore, the government leaders have not just dismantled Polish sovereignty; they have also exhibited servitude to Poland's historical oppressors. This bears striking similarities to the Irish case, where the Irish government is seen to have dismantled the republic and betrayed the 'heroes' who achieved independence from the British. Following Sikorski's speech in Berlin, Anna Fotyga, Law and Justice foreign affairs spokesperson and former foreign minister of Poland, delivers some extremely vocal criticism. She argues that, while Donald Tusk had cited 'improving relations with Poland's neighbours' as a major foreign policy objective, the 'symbol of improving this relationship is, firstly, Minister Sikorski's speech in Berlin, and secondly, the Minister Sikorski's presence in Moscow on the 30th anniversary of the introduction of martial law in Poland' (Fotyga, 15th December 2011). His absence from Warsaw on this date, she argues, indicates his subservience to Russia and Germany and his disrespect for Polish interests, even claiming that Poland has 'become the spokesperson for Russia in the European Union'. This understanding of Sikorski's actions in Berlin led Law and Justice to call for Sikorski's effective impeachment, by bringing him to the State Tribunal, the Court in Poland responsible for trying politicians accused of violating the Polish Constitution. At a press conference

following the Berlin speech, Kaczyński cites the articles of the Polish Constitution that Sikorski is accused of breaking, in particular, the article which reads that ‘the Republic of Poland shall safeguard the independence and integrity of its territory’. Kaczyński maintains that Sikorski had ‘no constitutional, legal or any other grounds’ to give this speech and that it ‘is simultaneously offering Poland (...) a subordinate position which we had for decades’ (‘Jarosław Kaczyński: Sikorski zasłużył na Trybunał Stanu’, 29th November 2011).

Like in Ireland, the Polish government, and Sikorski in particular, are seen to have conceded sovereignty to the external power. The debate is centred on the fear of a return to the situation, well within living memory, of Poland as a country essentially occupied by the Soviet Union during the communist era, as well as the prospect of partition, an experience which remains ever-present in Polish collective memory. In both countries, this fear of losing independence is expressed in particular in terms of anti-German sentiment. Bayley and Williams note that the Polish-German relationship has normalised in recent years, and that ‘whatever suspicion, distrust, or resentment is still there, it is fairly marginal, limited to nationalistically-minded groups’ (2012:244). While the pro-European elites have demonstrated this shift in attitude towards Germany, the conservative-nationalist actors still exhibit extreme distrust of Germany. In Ireland, this sentiment is led primarily by the concern about a core/periphery dynamic where the small peripheral states are dominated by the more powerful ones. In Poland, while this core/periphery relationship is important, given that the crisis presented the threat of Polish marginalisation in Europe, anti-German sentiment in Poland draws on the very specific historical relationship between the two countries. Indeed, McManus and Czubińska find that ‘exclusive identifiers are 22 percent more likely than dual identifiers to distrust Germany, most probably for historic reasons that have little to do with the EU’ (2003).

Law and Justice still, therefore, combines ‘the historical fears of the Polish population with their real concerns about the consequences of EU integration’ (Rae, 2013:149-150). Along with the conservative press, the party has long been generating controversy in its accusations towards Germany, particularly during the party’s time in government from 2005 to 2007 when it offended Germany on a number of occasions, in particular when it demanded increased voting rights on the basis that Germany had murdered large numbers of Poles during the Second World War and in a stream of offensive media representations, such as the front cover of the conservative magazine *Wprost* in 2007 which, with the headline ‘Europe’s Step Mother’, depicted a nude Angela Merkel breast-feeding the Kaczyński twins (Hawley, 2007). The opposition and the conservative press, here *Rzeczpospolita* and *Fakt*, therefore draw heavily on this fear of Germany in crisis debates. The EU and Polish government’s policies are viewed as German hegemony in Europe and domination over Poland. In calling for the march in Warsaw, Kaczyński states that it is to oppose further ‘vassalisation’ towards Germany because ‘Germany’s domination in Europe is striking, and it is in the Polish interest that we oppose them’ (‘13 grudnia Marsz niepodległości i solidarności’, PiS Press Release, 1st December 2011). Arguing against the federalisation of Europe along the lines of the USA, he notes that American states have only certain elements of sovereignty and lack the ‘key attributes required for the actual exercise of sovereignty, like fiscal policy, armed forces, foreign policy’. Rather, he argues, in his call for a federal Europe, Sikorski is presenting ‘simply a project to turn us into a colony’. He continues that

Surrendering to the guardianship of Germany does not protect us from the humiliating subjection to Russia at all. Because Germany is not strong enough. [...] Germany will be a weak hegemon, taking self-determination from us, not giving anything in return. Remember that the state is conducting traditional pro-German policy [...] the policy of the current government, so openly surrendered

to Moscow and Berlin, has unfortunately deprived us of a lot of our credibility ('Wywiad Jarosława Kaczyńskiego ...', 29th November 2011).

Just as in Ireland where there are concerns about the spread of 'German fiscal empire', then, there are concerns in Poland about German domination and even colonisation. One Law and Justice MP, Joachim Brudziński, argues that the independence of the Polish state has been brought into question and even suggests that the Prime Minister and Sikorski have ensured a 'return to the Fourth Reich' (cited in IV RP kontra IV Rzesza', GW, Wroński, Paweł, 30th November 2011, p. 4). Another Law and Justice MP, Krystyna Pawłowicz, was cited as accusing Sikorski of 'taking part in a hostile takeover of Poland, which previously she associated with the Taliban, but now with the Germans' ('Po co nam euro, po co Unia', Wroński, Paweł, GW, 16th December 2011, p. 6). Nevertheless, these claims about Germany are by no means limited to Law and Justice party members and are not just fringe views, as Bayley and Williams (2012) argue. They are also to be found particularly in the more conservative press. One article in RZ argues, in a section entitled 'domination or vassalisation', that Germany has lost support even in France, where Nicholas Sarkozy is a loyal partner. He quotes a variety of French political actors who chastise Germany for its role in the crisis. Most strikingly, they quote a former advisor to François Mitterrand who apparently claimed that "Europe has already committed suicide two times: in the first and second world wars. Now the tools for collective suicide again are in the hands of the Germans" The third collective suicide caused by Germany? Is that possible? Wäre das denkbar?' ('Trzecie samobójstwo Europy', Magierowski, Marek, RZ, 29th November 2011). Another RZ article notes that Germans are responsible for imposing austerity measures in crisis countries, given that Germans head the important institutions involved. It argues that

admittedly France pretends that it is contributing to the new architecture of Europe, but we see that in practice Germany is creating the future legal

framework of the new European Union, which is to be created in the image and likeness of Germany. In past centuries diplomacy was supported by military strength, hence after all the name ‘gunboat diplomacy’, that is, using the threat of military intervention in order to obtain political concessions. In the 21st century money and economic power has assumed the role of armed ships and military power [...] But the progressive economic Germanisation of Europe is about to awaken past ghosts that have been dormant for 60 years (‘Geopolityczne skutki Eurogedonu’, RZ, Rybiński, Krzysztof, 2nd December 2011).

As in Ireland, and as has been witnessed in other member states, especially countries such as Greece (see e.g. Ntampoudi, 2013), Germany finds itself unable to escape from its past. Poland and Europe’s relationship with Germany is viewed, by the conservative-nationalists in Poland, through the lens of history, as occupiers, as war-mongers, as a nation to be viewed at all times with suspicion that they are renewing their quest for occupation of Poland and indeed the rest of Europe. In this frame, therefore, Germany is Othered mostly against an exclusive Polish identity where Poland is the victim of German occupation. The Polish nationalist discourse on victimhood, as identified in Chapter 3, is therefore reproduced and reflected in the crisis debates. Poland’s historical experience as a victim of foreign oppression, particularly by Germany and Russia, is connected with its long-running battle for independence. There is therefore no ‘new’ Other in this discourse, and Europe remains foreign, little more than a threat to Polish sovereignty. This section has shown that, while there are some instances of a new Greek ‘Other’ and a new North/South divide in opposition discourse, this nevertheless reflects existing perceptions of economic underdevelopment and economic ideas. Moreover, the opposition to EU crisis policies are primarily framed in terms of long-standing path-dependent discourses on Polish sovereignty, with the historical ‘Others’ of Polish identity – Germany and Russia – ever present. The Euro crisis in Poland therefore primarily reflects existing identities rather than changes them.

## Conclusion

The Polish case study confirms the overall argument of this thesis that change to identities at a time of crisis is likely to be minimal. Contrary to what the existing literature on European identity and ‘critical junctures’ suggests, crises are not external events, exogenous to local identities and interests. Rather, they are socially constructed and framed by political and social actors who construct them in such a way that they resonate with the local populations. In Poland, the crisis reflects existing discourses on Europe – both the ‘return to Europe’ and the ‘Polish sovereignty’ discourses. After outlining the existing divisions in Polish politics and the country’s experience of the crisis, this chapter argued that the crisis went from being an external ‘Greek’ or Southern European crisis in 2010, where Poland was part of the ‘virtuous’ Northern European community, to a question of Poland’s place in Europe. By this point, the crisis came to represent the ‘return to Europe’ discourse, presenting a risk for Poland of marginalisation at the periphery of Europe, particularly as it found itself excluded from the Eurogroup, swiftly becoming the core decision-making body in the EU.

At this point, the crisis came to reinforce existing divisions in Polish politics. The next section showed how this risk of marginalisation represented a ‘window of opportunity’ for Polish elites to argue for further integration. On the one hand, they frame their arguments in terms of dual European and Polish identities. They call for support for EU policies on the basis of the common European good, where Poland takes the role of ‘bulwark’ of Europe, and on the basis of European solidarity through strong institutions. However, they also argue that Europe is the best way to secure the security and prosperity of Poland, demonstrating the inseparability of European and Polish interests. On the other hand, they are constrained by the nationalist discourse on Polish sovereignty. Similarly to the Irish case, they argue that Poland’s

sovereignty, and even its existence as a nation-state, is best ensured as part of Europe. The final section showed how the crisis reinforces these divisions in Poland. Firstly, Poland's contribution to the bailout programme is read on the basis that Poland remains an economically weak and poor EU member state. Secondly, however, conservative-nationalist actors express exclusive Polish identities, where European integration presents a fundamental threat to Polish sovereignty. While the Polish government is seen to have conceded Polish independence, it is Poland's historical enemies, Germany and Russia, which have taken it. In both cases, the crisis primarily serves to reinforce existing discourses on Europe – the 'return to Europe' discourse in the case of the pro-Europeans, and the Polish sovereignty discourse in the part of the opposition.

As the final empirical case study chapter of this thesis, it therefore opens up a number of questions for comparison and consideration. Firstly, the findings of this thesis raise questions about the quality of democratic debate in the EU. In Germany and Poland in particular, EU action on the crisis is legitimised through the explicit threat of European war, through the collapse of European institutions, the failure of the European project and in Ireland through the threat of the collapse of the single currency and European economy. In Poland and Ireland, it is also legitimised by the threat of a loss of independence, a loss of sovereignty, and even the disappearance of the nation-state altogether. While this certainly succeeds in achieving support for EU policies, what does it say about the prospects of an open, democratic debate in the European public sphere, one that encourages participation in EU-level democracy? In the Polish case, this may go some way to explain low turnout in EP elections, and perhaps also the relative success of Korwin-Mikke as a new target of Euroscepticism and disillusionment amongst young people. In EU public debates, the EU is often a question of Polish sovereignty and security, where pro-Europeans imply that to oppose European integration essentially to oppose

Polish security, sovereignty, and even the very existence of the Polish nation-state. This perhaps makes the necessary contestation of EU policy difficult. In light of the results presented in the previous chapters, the following comparative chapter will bring together the key similarities and differences between the three case studies and outline the main factors preventing identity change in the three countries.

## **CHAPTER 7: EXPLAINING CONTINUITY: EUROPEAN IDENTITIES AND CRISIS**

### **Introduction**

As its primary research focus, this thesis has investigated the extent to which the Euro crisis has affected the construction of European identity discourses. As part of this, it has considered whether, how and why the effect of the crisis differs between Germany, Ireland and Poland and between political and media discourse. The previous three chapters have presented the empirical findings for the three case studies and argued that, rather than acting as a 'critical juncture' for European identities, the crisis has reinforced existing discourses on Europe due to the fact that political and media actors need to construct the crises in a way that resonates in their respective national contexts in order to gain support for or oppose EU crisis policies. While there has been a lack of change with regard to national discourses on Europe, however, this has strengthened particular divisions in Europe, especially those between core and periphery, and resulted in a new division between North and South. This chapter will highlight the main similarities and differences in the way identities were constructed in the discourse on the crisis between case studies and types of discourse and explain these in terms of the legitimisation strategies of actors and domestic constraints. The first section will explain the continuity in identity discourses in terms of the strategies by political and media actors to legitimise their claims about the crisis. While actors can frame the crisis in a strategic way, the crisis is framed to reflect existing identities rather than to engender dramatic identity change because of the need to find resonance in the debates between the elites and the media. It will also show how political and media actors, pro-European and Eurosceptic, largely draw on the same themes to make sense of their claims. The second section will explore in detail the domestic constraints present in the three countries that limit these strategies. There are a variety of national

institutional constraints which demand particular understandings of the crisis and crisis policies, which results in different meanings accorded to Europe and European solidarity, in particular, national historical narratives, economic ideas and interests, party politics and structural factors. Altogether, this chapter argues that the crisis has not changed European identities because of the actor dynamics and domestic constraints in the three case study countries.

This chapter will therefore compare and explain the main findings from the three case study countries in light of the theoretical framework. Broadly speaking, the crisis has reinforced existing identities in all three case study countries and strengthened divisions in ideas about Europe between political and media actors. In Germany, the crisis is constructed in terms of Germany's post-war European identity, where European integration served as a means to overcome the country's Nazi past and reunite Europe after the trauma of the Second World War. Nevertheless, the crisis continued the ongoing incorporation of ordoliberal values into understandings of Europe that has been taking place since the Maastricht Treaty. Contrary to the claims in the so-called 'normalisation' debate, opposition to the bailout programmes and hostility towards Greece should not be read in terms of a strengthened German identity but rather in terms of a Northern European identity based on an ordoliberal ethic. Ireland offered the opportunity to study a country on the receiving side of the bailout programme. In contrast to Germany, the crisis is not primarily understood in terms of European identity and solidarity but in terms of the 'utility' of Europe for Irish interests. Whereas the crisis was first and foremost understood as a domestic crisis, the construction of a European crisis in 2011 reflects Ireland's original motivations for EU accession – economic interests and national sovereignty. These motivations are reflected throughout the crisis debates, where the EU is seen to serve or to challenge Irish identity, the Irish economy and Irish sovereignty. Whereas the crisis reminded of the need for Ireland to be in the EU and single currency on the one hand, it also strengthened

the divisions between core and periphery on the other in light of long-standing concerns about domination of the smaller states by the larger ones.

In Poland, the crisis primarily reflects the ‘return to Europe’ and ‘Polish sovereignty’ discourses and strengthens existing divisions in Polish politics. For pro-European actors, the crisis presents a threat to Poland’s perceived rightful home in Western Europe, as it faces exclusion from the core decision-making bodies. As a result, the crisis presents these actors with an opportunity to call for a federal Europe on the basis that European and Polish identities are two sides of the same coin. However, these actors are constrained by the Polish sovereignty discourse and drawn into claims that suggest the very future of Poland as a nation-state is at risk. They anticipate the discourse of the opposition actors, who express exclusive Polish identities and see the EU and Germany as a threat to Polish national sovereignty. As part of this, the crisis serves to strengthen the fear of Poland’s historical enemies – Russia and Germany – seen as external powers threatening the integrity of the Polish state. The next section will explain these findings in light of the theoretical framework laid out in Chapter 2.

### **Actor Legitimation Strategies**

All three case studies showed that the crisis served to reinforce existing identities rather than change them. Hay and Smith find that, in terms of the neoliberal model, the crisis turned out to be ‘paradigm-reinforcing’ rather than ‘paradigm threatening’ (Hay and Smith, 2013:290). Likewise, this thesis has argued that the crisis has primarily served to strengthen existing identities in the case study countries rather than dramatically change them. Chapter 2 outlined how crises do not exist as material, ‘objective phenomena’ (Risse, 2010:33) but are interpreted according to existing ideas and identities in order to make sense of them and to resonate in the political culture in which they need to be understood. As expected, the crisis was a moment at

which identities became salient, where the meaning and boundaries of the community were rearticulated. However, rather than allowing for the construction of new or radically different identities, the crisis saw a strengthening or reinforcement of existing identities. In Germany, the crisis served to both reinforce its post-war European identity, where European integration serves as a means overcome the trauma of the Second World War, and strengthen the process of incorporation of ordoliberal values into Germany's European identity that has been ongoing since the Maastricht Treaty in particular. In Ireland, the crisis reflects the utility of Europe for Irish identity that has been part of the Irish discourse on European integration since its accession in 1973. On the one hand, pro-European actors emphasise Europe's instrumental function for guaranteeing Irish economic interests and Irish sovereignty. On the other hand, Eurosceptic actors highlight the threat posed by the EU to Irish sovereignty during the course of the crisis. In Poland, the crisis reinforces existing divisions in Polish politics, particularly between those who see Poland as a core European country and those who see Poland as continually under threat from their European neighbours. This division reflects both the 'return to Europe' and 'Polish sovereignty' discourses. While there have been new divisions, particularly in Germany and Poland between North and South Europe, or Northern Europe and Greece, this primarily reflects existing ideas present in those countries about 'being a good European'. Given the dramatic descriptions outlined in Chapter 1 about the nature and consequences of the crisis for Europe, why has there been so little change to European identities?

#### *Legitimation and the Construction of Crisis*

The continuity in identity discourses can be understood first and foremost in terms of the legitimation strategies by actors in the national contexts. The literature on European identity and crisis posits that the path-dependence of existing identities constrains political actors and limits change. But how exactly this takes place and what constitutes such constraints is little

understood. This thesis sought to gain a fuller understanding of the processes of continuity and change in identity discourses by using constructivist/discursive institutionalist approaches to crisis. This approach emphasises a focus on actors to understand the prospects for change - an 'agent-centered constructivist approach' to crisis (Widmaier et al., 2007:756). As outlined in Chapter 2, actors can be considered to have 'foreground discursive abilities' which allow them to act strategically to legitimise policy, something which helps to explaining change 'because they refer to people's ability to think outside the institutions in which they continue to act, critique, communicate, and deliberate about such institutions' (Schmidt, 2011b:56). In the 'communicative discourse' between elites, media and citizens (Schmidt, 2008:310), leaders engage in a process of legitimation by communicating to the public (Schmidt, 2014:189). A focus on different actors is therefore necessary to understand how crises are constructed and how identities might be reconstructed. However, whereas actors can use discourse strategically (Waever, 2009:165), they are limited in their ability to introduce new ideas and alter identities because of the need to persuade the public. They have to construct the crisis in a way that makes sense by drawing on ideas and identities available in their particular contexts. Elites, for example, 'must consider what ideas will be persuasive and establish institutional and political support for ideas to translate into policy action' (Widmaier et al., 2007:754). Schmidt argues that

If sentient (thinking and speaking) agents are the drivers of change, and their ideas (what they think and argue about what to do) and discourse (what they say about what to do) are the vehicles of change, then the institutional context is the setting within which their ideas have meaning, their discourses have communicative force, and their collective actions make a difference (if they do what they say they think about what to do)' (Schmidt, 2012:17).

During the crisis, then, actors drew on existing national discourses on Europe, 'Europeanised' nation-state identities and motivations for EU membership in their respective social, political

and institutional contexts. These ideas both gain resonance and are contested and reframed by media and opposition actors, when discussion of the crisis focuses on ‘the persuasiveness of claims concerning the necessity of change’ (Widmaier et al., 2007:753-754) where the public is able to ‘reject elites’ attempts to legitimate or naturalize changes made during periods of crisis’ (2007:755). Elites and media actors are therefore ‘often key to framing the terms of the communicative discourse, creating narratives, arguments, and images that become determinant of interpretations of a given set of events’ (Schmidt, 2012:16) and feed back into the elite discourse – the media constitutes a ‘key communication platform connecting citizens to political elites in today’s ‘mediatised’ democracies’ (de Wilde et al., 2010:5). The elites and media therefore engage in a process of legitimation and contestation of particular policy action. In calling for and contesting policy action, then, they draw on particular understandings of European and national identity in order to justify and legitimise their claims. Furthermore, the findings show that the main differences lie not between political elites and the media, but between those who are supportive of European integration and those opposing EU policies. Despite this, they draw on similar themes, something which further limits the possibility of change.

#### *Pro-European Elite and Media Actors*

During the crisis, and particularly by 2011, the EU had to act quickly in order to ‘save the Euro’ and lead the single currency out of crisis. This action has often demanded a significant sharing of sovereignty and sacrifice on behalf of the member states, in particular through the Fiscal Compact, which strengthens existing budget deficit rules and introduces provision for economic policy coordination, and the EFSF followed by the ESM, which constitutes the primary financial assistance programme for member states. Given the action these policies have

warranted, there has been a need for elites to legitimise the EU policy action to which they have agreed, to ‘sell’ their policies to their national constituencies, something which often sparked vociferous debates in the public sphere. In order to ‘save Europe’, however, it is necessary to rearticulate why Europe needs to be saved, and what Europe is for. This differs starkly between member states and explains the way in which the crisis frames reflect different national discourses. In Germany, government elites evoked Germany’s post-war European identity in order to garner support for the Greek bailouts and EU bailout mechanisms. By constructing the crisis as a threat not just to the Euro but Europe as a whole and to the ‘idea of European unification’, elites legitimised the crisis measures as necessary for the European project of reconciliation, justice and democracy which had secured peace in Europe since the Second World War. In so doing, they invoke the long-standing Other of Germany’s European identity – the Nazi past. Furthermore, crisis policies are framed in terms of European solidarity and what it means to be a ‘good European’ – here, somebody who contributes to the stability of the Euro through an ‘ordoliberal’ ethic of individual responsibility and economic discipline. The incorporation of ‘ordoliberal’ values into the meaning of ‘Europeanness’ continues a process that began as early as the Maastricht Treaty. Still, the framing in terms of ‘Europeanness’ reflects the overall perception that Germany is fundamentally European. The ability of the crisis to dramatically change Germany’s European identity is therefore minimal because it is ‘endogenised’ into existing European identities in Germany.

In Ireland, particularly in 2011, Irish government elites construct the crisis as a ‘European’ crisis. They need to gain public support for the bailout programmes which involve harsh austerity measures and call upon EU leaders to show solidarity. However, just as a ‘European’ crisis in Germany and Poland reflects the respective European identities in those countries, a ‘European’ crisis in Ireland echoes the country’s original motivations for EU membership. The

crisis becomes a ‘European currency crisis’ or a ‘European banking crisis’ or a ‘European economic crisis’, reflecting the economic motivations for EU accession and ongoing justification for EU and EMU membership. Where there is discussion of European solidarity, this often relates to the expectation that the ECB and other member states should share the burden and themselves ensure the stability of the currency, in particular for the ECB to act as a lender of last resort and for the fair redistribution of wealth within the Union, reflecting the utility of Europe for Ireland and the country’s interest in this kind of crisis programme. Whereas in Germany crisis policies are legitimised and debated in terms of European solidarity, however, in Ireland, as in Poland, they are also framed in terms of national sovereignty. As Europe’s great ‘success story’ during the Celtic Tiger years, completion of the bailout programme would return Ireland to the markets as a sovereign nation as well as guarantee the unity of the EU and Eurozone, seen as essential to guaranteeing Ireland’s participation in a community which increases the ‘capacity to act’ of smaller member states. As in Poland, pro-European elites in Ireland need to use the sovereignty and economy frames in order to justify why such harsh measures implemented as a condition of Ireland’s bailout are necessary.

In Poland, government elites frame the crisis as a European crisis which threatens Poland’s place in Europe in order to justify signing the Fiscal Compact and promoting further European integration in the form of strengthened supranational institutions. Like in Germany, it is understood to pose a risk to European institutions with the threat of war should the European project collapse. However, it is also framed by Polish elites as a threat to Poland’s very place in the European ‘core’. Faced with exclusion from core decision-making processes as a non-Eurozone member, Poland must fight the risk of marginalisation at the European periphery that it is perceived to have occupied over centuries, particularly during its time behind the Iron

Curtain, when it was excluded from its perceived home in Western Europe. This frame reinforces the multiple European/Polish identities held by the pro-European elite and media. Going beyond this, however, Polish elites draw on the question of sovereignty and Poland's traditional 'Other' of Russia to justify participation in a federal EU and fend off the opposition arguments that come from the conservative-nationalist parties and media. More than just hinting at the risk marginalisation, then, Polish elites go so far as to suggest that the crisis could lead to a complete loss of sovereignty if the country does not secure its place at the core of the EU. In all three countries, the crisis therefore became part of the national discourse on Europe and served to reinforce existing identities rather than change them. However, it is discursively exogenised, creating an external threat to Europe and posing a risk to European institutions. Opposition actors often endogenise the crisis within Europe which opens up a limited possibility for gradual change.

#### *Opposition Elite and Media Actors*

The various constructions of a European crisis find resonance and are reinforced in the media in the different national contexts, but they are also contested during discursive interactions between elites and the media (Schmidt, 2014). The thesis has compared political discourse such as speeches and press releases from government and opposition political elites with media discourse including liberal and conservative broadsheet newspapers alongside tabloids. It has found that elite and media actors draw on broadly the same ideas and identities within the national context which primarily serves to reinforce existing identities, with some gradual changes. The primary differences lies with those who are supportive of EU policy measures, and therefore also European integration more broadly, and those who oppose them. It has shown that there is strong interaction between the elite and the media, in which elites are conscious

that their arguments must ‘resonate’ in the public sphere and media actors engage in contestation of these ideas. This interaction serves to reinforce the existing ideas and identities in the national contexts. However, there are some differences amongst opposition actors and within the media which reveal national political cleavages important to the debate and the framing of the crisis, where the main divide revolves around a debate about the precise meaning of solidarity and sovereignty and what kind of community the EU should be. This interaction leads not to dramatic shifts in identity but primarily to the reinforcement of existing national discourses and the strengthening of divisions in Europe.

Opposition discourse and media debates therefore primarily reinforce existing identity discourses, although new divisions in Europe can be identified. As Schmidt argues, at a time of crisis the ‘mechanisms of change are often understood as incremental’ and involve the ‘layering of one new idea onto the other’ (2014:198). In terms of identity, this involves the development of new internal ‘Others’. Whereas pro-European elite and media actors construct an exogenous European crisis that reinforces existing European identities by functioning as a kind of external Other, opposition actors construct an endogenous European crisis, where the failure or threat is attributed to both the crisis countries in ‘southern Europe’, to the EU institutions for allowing such failure to take place or to core EU member states such as Germany for violating the sovereignty of weaker member states. This creates internal Others for Europe and in so doing strengthens divisions within Europe. A crisis located within the existing community and attributed to particular failures within Europe opens up the possibility of change to the existing European identity. Some changes can therefore be identified particularly in Germany when Greece and ‘Southern Europe’ or the single currency itself can be blamed, but these are not dramatic shifts in identity. Rather, they can be understood as incremental changes which add to, rather than overturn, existing identities.

On this basis, what has been described as further evidence of the ‘normalisation’ of European identity in Germany towards a stronger national identity should therefore be understood as a much more subtle change because of the continued importance of European identity amongst German political and media actors. Furthermore, it is a change that began not with the Euro crisis but much earlier, most likely with the Maastricht Treaty. These changes have been driven by differences between the ‘traditional’ pro-Europeans and the ‘ordoliberal’ who have long had concerns about the viability of the single currency, particularly by BILD Zeitung in 2010, which constituted the main opposition to government policy on Greece, and FAZ. In particular, the crisis in Germany has strengthened challenges to its post-war European identity which have been present in the German context for a long time, but particularly since the introduction of the single currency with the Maastricht Treaty in the early 1990s. Through a re-definition of the meaning of European solidarity, Germany’s ordoliberal economic tradition has allowed ordoliberal ideas to be grafted onto Germany’s existing European identity. Through this, ordoliberal values of stability, economic discipline and individual responsibility become not just economic values, but define the meaning of the ‘good European’. In this sense, European solidarity is defined by many in Germany as compliance with an ordoliberal ethic, meaning that any bailouts offered to struggling member states should always be accompanied by strong conditionality on the part of the receiving country, exercised through a commitment to budgetary discipline and structural reforms. Amongst the most ‘Euro sceptic’ actors in Germany, then, this meaning of Europeanness translates into the creation of a Northern European identity through the exclusion of Greece or Southern Europe from the Northern European core. Through this, countries such as Poland, formally considered to be part of ‘eastern Europe’, are incorporated into what FAZ describes as the ‘Northern European stability culture’.

Such change, albeit not dramatic, is not found to such an extent in the two other countries. It can, however, be identified in the Polish context. Positioning Poland as part of the Northern European core, some media actors place Greece and southern Europe as the Other of Poland and northern Europe, representing the undeserving recipients of EU financial aid. Recalling Poland's relative success during the crisis, becoming what Donald Tusk described as the 'green island of growth in a red map of Europe', this frame places Poland in a Northern European community of the economically virtuous. This should, however, also not be read as a dramatic change to European identity in Poland. Although this frame constructs Greece and southern Europe as the new 'internal Other' of Europe, it also stems from a desire to be part of the northern European 'core' on the part of the pro-European actors in Poland, as well as a perception of being economically weak. It therefore does not represent a shift in discourses but instead constitutes a new manifestation of the existing ones. Primarily, though, the crisis in Poland reinforces long-standing divisions in Polish politics, particularly a cleavage between those holding dual European/Polish identities who see Poland's rightful place in the core of Europe, and the conservative-nationalists who are passionately defensive of an exclusive Polish identity and Polish sovereignty. Opposition to government EU policy is primarily expressed in terms of national sovereignty. The conservative-nationalist opposition party Law and Justice and the conservative press, *Rzeczpospolita* and *Fakt*, often frame the crisis as a threat not just to Polish sovereignty but to the very existence of the nation-state. Government elites are accused of conceding Polish sovereignty to 'external' powers, the long-standing 'Others' of Polish national identity - Russia, on the one hand, and Germany on the other. Here Germany functions as an external, threatening Other for the Polish nation, and the Polish elite, having agreed to 'hand over' Polish sovereignty to an external power, are threatening the Polish nation from within. In both cases, though, the crisis simply reinforces rather than challenges the

existing Polish national discourses on Europe. Opposition discourse therefore strengthens divisions between Poland and Germany, but this is a reflection of long-standing discourses rather than a change in discourse.

In Ireland, however, the debate first centres primarily on Irish identity where Europe functions in opposition discourse as a threat or challenge to Irish interests and Irish sovereignty. The main cleavage here is between the elites and the 'ordinary' Irish, something which is present in all newspapers, the Independent, the Daily Star, and even the generally pro-European Times which ultimately calls for the resignation of the government and new elections in 2010. The crisis is understood firstly as a domestic crisis amongst the opposition (which became the government in 2011) and in particular the populist press. Particularly in the Irish Star and Independent, the crisis reflects a much wider problem in Irish society, read even as a deep and persistent flaw in the Irish politics and society. This reflects longer-standing insecurities about Irish identity and the trauma of previous economic crises which were perceived to be home-grown. Here the Irish elite become the 'internal Other' of the 'ordinary' Irish, sparking a re-examination of the national character. By 2011, the debate serves to reinforce Ireland's national discourse on Europe. Just as elites and the pro-European media actors such as The Times 'use' the theme of sovereignty to garner support for their policy positions, so 'Eurosceptic' elites and media actors such as The Independent and the Daily Star frame their opposition in terms of Irish independence and national sovereignty, drawing heavily on Ireland's historical experience of colonisation. The bailout and new treaties are framed as yet another attack on Irish sovereignty and threaten the country's very existence as a republic. In order to contest EU policies, therefore, opposition and Eurosceptic media actors use the same frames as government elites and pro-European actors in order to justify their claims. In particular, opposition actors in Ireland strengthen a core/periphery divide where Germany and France, as core EU member

states, dominate the smaller states such as Ireland. Like in Poland, this does not represent a shift in identity discourses in Ireland but rather reinforces longer-standing divisions in Europe between the larger, core EU countries and the smaller, peripheral ones.

In all three countries, therefore, the crisis serves to reinforce existing identities rather than change them. While there are some changes that appear to have occurred as a result of the crisis, namely, the development of a Northern European identity with a Greek or Southern European Other, this has developed on the basis of existing identities and ideas about the economy present long before the crisis started – in the case of Germany, the importance of the ordoliberal economic model and the incorporation of ordoliberal values into ideas about Europe, and in Poland, the belief that Poland belongs in the core of Europe alongside the understanding that Poland remains a poor EU member state. These findings have shown that crises have limited power to change identities because they are endogenised into existing discourses by the actors who construct them in the national contexts. Whereas actors have the ability to act strategically in order to legitimise policy, they draw on existing identities in order to justify their claims. This means that the crisis then becomes part of the identity it is expected to change. The next section will explore in greater detail the constraints in the different national contexts which limit the ability of actors to introduce new ideas and identities and lead to differing conceptions of Europe, solidarity and national sovereignty.

### **Institutional Contexts and Domestic Constraints<sup>12</sup>**

This thesis has shown that existing identities and national discourses on Europe are mostly reproduced in the crisis debates so that actors can persuade the public and their readers of the

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<sup>12</sup> This section draws on conclusions from my article entitled ‘Has Germany “Fallen out of Love” with Europe? The Eurozone Crisis and the ‘Normalization’ of Germany’s European Identity’, forthcoming in the journal *German Politics and Society*.

merits of their arguments. This means that there are significant differences in how the crisis is understood, and how crisis policies are framed, particularly with regard to the meaning of Europe, European solidarity, and national sovereignty. These differences can be explained by considering more closely the nature of the constraints that limit the ideas elites and media actors can use. Chapter 2 argued that institutional contexts affect the way crises are constructed and can constrain change (Widmaier et al., 2007:755), but how does it do this, and what factors come into play? This thesis has identified a variety of constraints in the different case study contexts that reduce the possibility of identity change. Some are more important than others depending on the country. Their institutional contexts can affect which ideas are selected in a number of ways, from ‘intersubjective understandings’, ‘mass political views’, ‘formal structures [...] and more diffuse norms’ and the ‘lessons of history’ in a particular context (Widmaier et al., 2007:754-755). In particular, the Euro crisis has served to reinforce long-standing vulnerabilities closely linked with each country’s relationship with the EU. Copsey and Haughton argue that the perceived vulnerabilities of member states, such as historical experience, size, economic position, shape their preferences in the EU (Copsey and Haughton, 2009). These different contexts, political dynamics and vulnerabilities limit the possibility for change and ensure that existing identity discourses are reinforced in the national contexts. The following will outline the different constraining factors identified in the three countries, including collective memory, economic ideas and interests, party politics, structural and social factors. These factors work together to ensure that existing identities are reproduced at a time of crisis.

#### *Collective Memories: The Dominance of National Historical Narratives*

The constructions of the crisis reveal the importance of national historical narratives for the framing of the crisis and crisis debates and especially for identity and making sense of ‘who we

are' (Triandafyllidou, 1998:603). Widmaier et al. note that research into how crises are constructed would allow for a deeper understanding of 'expressive struggles over the "lessons of history," as intensified debate over the meaning of contemporary events often fosters reinterpretations of past wars and crises' (2007:755). In all three countries, the importance of history becomes clear in understanding the crisis and legitimising claims in debates about crisis policies. This history is not a shared 'European' history, however, but is particular to each case study country. In the German case, the framing of the crisis and discussions about European solidarity draw on the experiences of the Second World War, German reunification and inflation of the Weimar period. At a time when Germany has considerable (economic) power, German leaders are attempting to re-assert and prove their commitment to a common European project. If Germany needed indirect institutional power to be considered 'less threatening' in post-war and post-reunification Europe (Bulmer and Paterson, 2010:1058), then that is still the case in the context of the Eurozone crisis. German elites and the left/liberal media in particular frequently refer to European integration as a project of peace, reconciliation and economic recovery in the aftermath of the Second World War. Merkel, Schäuble and Westerwelle speak of the 'idea of European unification', the end of the war and the legacies of former German leaders considered the 'founding fathers' of European integration. Given that the agreement to the single currency was in part a concession to France in exchange for German reunification, the achievements of these 'founding fathers' are understood to have been integral to bringing about German reunification (Westerwelle, 2010). Media actors also refer to the importance of the Franco-German relationship for ensuring European reconciliation and to save the *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* (community of fate) of the post-war era. Some articles also call for 'solidarity' in the form of financial sacrifice on Germany's part with reference to the destruction of the Second World War. However, the 'ordoliberal solidarity' framing of crisis policies in

particular relates to memories not just of the Second World War, but of the experience of hyperinflation during the Weimar period and the Great Depression. Calls for price stability in the Eurozone and in the debate about Eurobonds in particular are marked by fears about inflation, with the concern that the ‘currency union’ will become an ‘inflation union’. All in all, crisis debates in Germany are marked by the country’s particular experiences of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which frame the implications and dangers of the crisis.

In the Poland and Ireland cases, however, the historical narratives are quite different and reflect the collective memory of occupation and fight for independence in both countries. Furthermore, the debates in both countries reflect an awareness of economic underdevelopment in some way, either through the trauma of past economic crisis as in Ireland or the experience of slower economic modernisation in Poland. In Ireland, therefore, debates about crisis policies are first and foremost framed in terms of national sovereignty, invoking the history of colonisation by the British and the important moments in the struggle for independence, in particular, the Easter Rising of 1916 when armed Irish republicans demanded Irish independence from the British, the declaration of the Irish Republic in 1919, the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 which established the Irish Free State in 1922 and the ensuing Irish Civil War. Both political elites and media actors evoke these memories, remembering the sacrifices made by those who fought for independence in 1916 and 1922 and the achievements of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. In particular, the Fianna Fáil government which signed the bailout programme is seen to have betrayed the ‘heroes’ of 1916/1922 to the extent that they ‘signed away’ Ireland’s fiscal sovereignty. This frame is used by pro-European and Eurosceptic actors alike – for the former, leaving the Euro would once again result in Ireland’s dependence on the United Kingdom, for the latter, the possibility of tax harmonisation and economic governance is tantamount to

occupation by France and Germany and threatens the very existence of the Irish Republic. In addition to this, the collective memory of economic and banking crises informs the crisis debate. The experience of the economic crisis of the 1970s and 1980s has particular salience, understood then, as the Euro crisis was today, as a result not of external economic circumstances but of the Irish themselves – a ‘flawed’ political culture which was not able to lead Ireland through a process of economic modernisation. The potential break-up of the Euro also invokes a fear that Ireland would return to the long period of economic hardship it experienced for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Similarly in Poland, debates are framed in terms of sovereignty. As in Germany, a potential collapse of the European project is understood as risking war in Europe once again. However, the implication of a potential European war is a loss of Polish sovereignty through partition by neighbouring powers. The experiences of 125 years of partition, the traditional enemies of Germany and Poland, the Solidarity movement and fight for independence during the 1980s and the experience of communism all feed into the debates about the crisis. Both pro-European actors and the conservative-nationalist opposition draw on fears about Poland’s security and very existence as a state in order to justify their claims. As in Ireland, the Polish government, and Foreign Minister Sikorski in particular, is considered by the opposition to have betrayed the ‘heroes’ of the 1980s who fought for Polish independence after the imposition of Martial Law in 1981 by agreeing to the Fiscal Compact. However, the pro-European actors draw on historical fears of Russia and of partition in order to garner support. In arguing in favour of the Fiscal Compact, Polish elites and pro-European media actors remind Poles of the importance of financial security, positioning European economic coordination as protection from the economic power of Russia. In addition to this, they justify further integration and Poland’s position in the core EU institutions on the basis that, were they to remain outside the new

institutions, Poland risks domination and even eradication by the large and dominant EU member states in the model of the 19<sup>th</sup> century ‘concert of powers’ that saw Poland’s long partition. In addition to this, Poland’s historical position in central Europe as a ‘bulwark to the East’ is also evident in the crisis frames, used as a justification for Poland playing a key role in the European institutions and crisis solutions. By emphasising Poland’s historical ‘defender’ role, Polish participation in measures to solve the crisis can be understood as a Polish contribution to saving the European economy and future of European integration.

In both Poland and Ireland, memories of the Second World War translate very differently when compared with Germany. Instead of recalling the importance of European integration, the Second World War functions as a ‘reminder’ of the danger of German domination. Emerging from a strong sense of victimhood and oppression in both countries, strong anti-German sentiment can be identified particularly in the conservative and populist press. This sentiment expresses, in both countries, fears of ‘German fiscal empire’ and the ongoing ‘Germanisation of Europe’, accusations of capitulation to Germany by both countries’ elites, and predictions of the Fourth Reich and the destruction of Europe by German hands. As small ‘peripheral’ states (be it in terms of actual size or perception of size) with a history of colonisation, the concerns about being dominated from the core are extremely real. Whereas the experience of the Second World War in Germany is used to rearticulate Germany’s commitment to European integration, in Ireland and Poland the memory of the Second World War gives reason to be sceptical of European integration and in particular German leadership in Europe. This suggests that while German and EU elites seek to construct a particular narrative of the crisis which calls on Europeans to remember the post-war motivations for European integration, this narrative does not necessarily resonate across the EU, particularly in countries which were not founding members and which have particular historical reasons for defending national sovereignty. The

importance of national historical narratives is therefore a primary constraint on change, as they play a strong role in helping different actors give meaning to the crisis in the national context. These historical experiences feed into a number of other factors which limit change.

### *Economic Ideas and Interests*

Related to historical experience, economic ideas are important to understanding the dynamics of change and continuity in the case study countries, but particularly in Germany where ordoliberalism and the ‘social market economy’ have long been associated with the post-war German identity. The attachment to this model relates to the *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle) of the 1950s as well as to the memory of inflation during the Weimar period. Schmidt argues such dominant ideologies are the hardest to change even during a crisis (2014:196). As discussed in Chapter 4, the German economic model of ordoliberalism is extremely important for shaping both Germany’s European economic policy and the meaning of European identity. During the course of the crisis, ordoliberalism has come to determine not just the perceived cause of the crisis, but also how European solidarity and the ‘good European’ are understood. As argued in Chapter 4, it constitutes not just a purely economic model, but also a value system permeating the political and private spheres (Bonefeld, 2012:651; see also Hillebrand, forthcoming). According to this model, there is a moral obligation to be debt free and exercise economic discipline and responsibility; those who have failed in this duty have failed not just in their moral duty, but also their duty to the European community. It is therefore primarily ordoliberalism rather than nationalist sentiment which explains the anger and resentment in Germany towards the Greeks, considered the ‘bad Europeans’. The Federal Constitutional Court in Germany plays an important role in enforcing this economic model particularly when it comes to EU policy and has a significant influence particularly over elite discourse. In order to avoid a challenge to the bailout programmes by the Constitutional Court, German elites

needed to justify why they were necessary for Europe as a whole in order to defend a violation of the so-called ‘no-bailout clause’. As shown in Chapter 4, it was originally the Constitutional Court in the early 1990s which ruled that the EU/EMU must remain a ‘stability community’. The court also stipulated that all major EU legislation must be approved by the Bundestag on the basis that the EU does not have a single ‘demos’ and therefore all major changes in the EU must have the support of national parliaments.

Perceived economic interests also play an important role in determining the framing of the crisis. While there might be some outspoken critics of the single currency in Germany, the crisis has also reminded Germany of the interdependence of European and German interests. Indeed, Germany has always been acting in its interests in Europe, even if it has not always framed them in this way. A recent study by the Bertelsmann Foundation found that Germany has been the biggest winner of the internal market, with a 2.3% boost to the country’s GDP which can be attributed to European integration since 1992 (2014:2). Furthermore, with German banks holding significant debts in Greek banks, Germany needed to ensure that Greece does not default. As the primary beneficiary of the single currency and with an export-driven economy, therefore, Germany wants the Euro, and with it the EU, to survive. Pooling more sovereignty particularly over budgetary matters, as stipulated for example by the Fiscal Compact, will take some pressure off Germany to be the ‘paymaster’ of the EU as well as ensure the survival of a single currency vital for allowing Germany’s trade with its European neighbours. In contrast to other member states, it has also been in the position of being able to shape the development of the EU since the beginning – designing the ECB to be modelled on the *Bundesbank* is a case in point.

Germany’s ‘ordoliberal ethic’ also seems to have resonance in Poland which positions itself as part of the ‘virtuous’ Northern European community of good ordoliberal Europeans. On the one

hand, Poland's relative economic strength as the 'green island of growth' has given the impression of Poland as the new 'model student' in the EU. On this basis, there is support for Germany's European economic policies in Poland. On the other hand, there is still the perception that Poland is a poor, economically weak country which fuels a sense of injustice that a country such as Poland should have to contribute to a bailout for a 'richer' country which has failed to exercise the proper economic responsibility. As a poor member state, Poland's interests in redistribution from richer to poorer member states for their economic recovery and economic development also underpins the understandings of 'solidarity' in these terms – particularly in terms of financial assistance from the ECB and the development of strong EU institutions.

In Ireland, the utility of Europe for Irish interests remains important. Indeed, Mercille argues that the Irish media 'shares the views and interests of the political and economic elites' (2013:24) and therefore supports policies that favour corporate interests. Furthermore, the neoliberal model remains dominant throughout the crisis which determines policy responses (Hay and Smith, 2013). The original success of the 'Celtic Tiger' model drives concerns that Ireland will be forced to let go of the low corporate tax rate seen as vital to Ireland's economic success and the continued inward flow of direct foreign investment. Both the corporate tax rate and membership of the single currency are understood to have contributed to Ireland's success during the Celtic Tiger years and are therefore vociferously defended in Irish public debates. The prospect of tax harmonisation in the EU is perceived to jeopardise Ireland's economic recovery and fuels both the sovereignty and economic interest frames that define Ireland's identity and relationship with the EU. However, it also sparks contestation about how Irish sovereignty and economy can best be served, which sees a reassertion of the importance of being in the Euro in this context. Furthermore, the view, opposed in Germany, that the ECB

should act as the lender of last resort for the Eurozone results in an alternative conception of 'European' solidarity than that seen in Germany.

In all case studies, external economic factors play a role in the framing of the crisis. Marsh notes that the strategic importance of the Euro for China in particular, along with the US and Japan constituted 'one development helping the bloc to hold together' (2011:50). This reality also impacted on the construction of the crisis and representations of European identity. There are calls by the international financial elite for Europeans to 'save the Euro' and further European integration, along with persistent downgrade threats from US-based rating agencies unless the EU reassures the markets that no country will be allowed to default its debts. Likewise, the 'save the Euro' framing by German elites can be considered part of what Schmidt describes as 'speaking to the markets' (2014) in order to provide assurance that there will be financial assistance for Greece and that the country will not default on its debts. Furthermore, there is also an awareness in all countries of globalisation and that the EU is the best way for countries to deal with the challenges of a globalised world, particularly one in which China, the USA and Russia have much more economic power than individual European countries. European integration provides protection from these economic powers and helps Europe to compete in the international community. In Poland, for example, Polish elites play on fears of Russia to legitimise EU policy on the basis that Russian economic power is now the greatest threat to Polish security rather than its military power. In Ireland, the recognition of the country's dependence on investment by US companies drives attachment to its economic model. Economic ideas and perceived economic interests therefore feed into particularly elite constructions of the crisis. However, there are other considerations at play, particularly party politics.

*Party Politics*

The party political landscape can also be a constraining force in domestic politics. This has shown to be particularly important in Poland, where the pro-European governing elites are constrained by the conservative-nationalist discourses. There is a strong cosmopolitan-nationalist cleavage found in Poland, with recent national elections and polling resulting in relatively close contests between the liberal Civic Platform and the right-wing Law and Justice party. Because of the outspoken Eurosceptic and nationalist actors in Law and Justice and the conservative press, therefore, pro-European actors are forced to frame their arguments in terms of national sovereignty in order to persuade the population of the importance of their EU policy positions. In Poland, then, whereas pro-European elites and media frame their arguments in terms of Poland as a core European country, they are also drawn into sovereignty frames which reinforce the conservative-nationalist discourse. Sikorski and the Polish government are often accused by Law and Justice politicians of violating the Polish Constitution and handing over Polish sovereignty to an external power. Pro-European actors are then obligated to draw on sovereignty frames in order to justify their policy decisions. This turns the crisis into a question of the 'utility' of sovereignty – Tusk, for example, claims that sovereignty today can be measured by debt rather than guns.

The party political landscape is also a constraining factor in Germany, although it is not as polarised as in Poland. Domestic politics are considered to be placing increasing constraints on German European policy in general (Bulmer and Paterson, 2013). However, these constraints also limit the possibility of identity change. The FDP, some wings of the CDU/CSU and later, the emergence of a new anti-Euro party, the AfD, constrained the way in which Merkel was able to discuss the crisis particularly in a European context due to the salience of the ordoliberal model amongst these particular actors. With a regional *Landtag* election on 7<sup>th</sup> May, Merkel

was conscious of the unpopularity of a Greek bailout and the need to avoid, if possible, any extra reason for a fall in support for the CDU. With its particularly vociferous anti-Greek campaign, the *BILD Zeitung* was also a constraining factor and shaped public opinion on the Greek bailouts during the election campaign period. Furthermore, European policy in Germany has arguably become more politicised with increased party political contestation on Europe due to the Constitutional Court rulings that the *Bundestag* must approve of all major EU policy changes in order to be deemed legal (Bulmer and Paterson, 2013:1399). Merkel's discourse particularly during the first half of 2010 should therefore not be read necessarily as a sign that she, and Germany overall, is less committed to the European integration project but rather as evidence that she needs to consider the practical constraints of party political contestation and the Constitutional Court when 'selling' EU crisis policies at home. In order to satisfy her potential opponents in her own party, her coalition partners and her voters, Merkel, along with her government, had to continue to incorporate ordoliberal values into understandings of Europe and European solidarity. In contrast, however, the other parties, particularly the SPD and the Greens, as well as a strong federalist wing of the CDU, retain the primary focus on Germany's post-war European identity and commitment to European integration. They are especially critical of the German government for failing in their duty towards Europe and the project of European reconciliation. In needing to satisfy both the ordoliberals and the 'federalists', German government elites incorporate ordoliberal values into existing conceptions of the European community. Beyond party politics, however, there are structural and social factors at play.

### *Size*

Size and geography are important for shaping national preferences on Europe (Copsey and Haughton, 2009) but also for identities. Ireland and Poland are both peripheral countries in the

EU and both small in some respect: Ireland in terms of land and population and Poland in terms of its economy. Along with historical experience, these factors reinforce the core/periphery divide and the perception of ‘victimhood’ faced with stronger, larger and more powerful EU member states. They strengthen long-standing insecurities about both countries’ role in the EU and their ability to shape EU policy. However, the small size of Ireland and Poland’s economy also ensure that support for EU membership remains high to the extent that small and economically weak countries benefit economically and politically from being within the EU. It also refers back to the original motivations for EU accession in both countries – the opportunity to be in the core of the EU and have greater decision-making power in an international organisation. Moreover, the fact that Poland is not a member of the Eurozone strengthens long-standing concerns about marginalisation in Europe amongst the pro-European actors, thus fuelling opposition to the possibility of a ‘two-speed EU’ and reinforcing discourses on Poland’s rightful place in the European core. It also goes some way to explain the focus on strengthening the core European institutions as opposed to the Eurogroup as a core decision-making body and the connection made between institutions and European solidarity in the Polish debate. Finally, it is worth considering how social factors such as religion feed into identities.

### *Religion*

Religion also plays a role in how the crisis is framed in the different case study countries. Firstly, different understandings of the meaning of solidarity are underpinned to a certain extent by religious concepts. As discussed in Chapter 4, the French concept of *solidarité* emerged from Catholic notions of ‘collective guilt’ compared to German notions of *Solidarität*, which can be understood in the context of a ‘Protestant notion of individual responsibility for one’s sins’ (Fiegle, 2007:54). In Ireland, there is a clear sense of this ‘collective guilt’ informing

understandings of the crisis, with the belief that everyone in Ireland was ultimately responsible – whether they were directly involved or simply let it happen. While it must be noted that Catholicism is equally strong in Germany as Protestantism, ‘ordoliberal’ solidarity is related to Weber’s concept of a Northern European Protestant ethic and the modern capitalist spirit (Weber, 2003). Furthermore, opposition to the EU in both Poland and Ireland has some roots in concerns over the EU’s influence over social policy such as abortion and same-sex marriage strongly opposed by the Catholic Church. This further fuels the debate about national sovereignty and how far the powers of the EU should extend. However, support for European integration in Poland is related to the idea of Poland as the ‘bulwark to the east’, in particular, Poland as a defender of Christian Europe vs. Islam (see e.g. Sikorski, 2011). This is also important for the crisis debates and reasserts a particular understanding of Poland as the ‘guardian’ or ‘protector’ of Europe to the extent that by supporting EU crisis policies, the strengthening of EU institutions and reforming the European economy, Poland is playing a vital role in helping Europe overcome the crisis. There are therefore a variety of domestic factors that feed into the crisis debates and determine how the crisis is understood and constructed by political and media actors.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that the Euro crisis has not led to significant change in European identities in the three case study countries because of the strategies by national political and media actors to legitimise their claims and the variety of domestic constraints which limit their options in doing so. While the literature on European identity stipulates that identities can change at times of ‘critical juncture’, this chapter has argued that change becomes difficult when crises are constructed by elites and the media in the national context. As soon as the crisis

is constructed, it is 'endogenised' into the national discourse so that it reflects existing identities. While elites can act strategically to a certain extent in their 'communicative discourse' with the public in order to legitimise EU crisis policies, they are constrained by their national institutional contexts in terms of how they can frame these policies. Although some gradual changes are possible, such as the development of a Northern European identity, these are more so reflections of existing ideas in a new form rather than dramatic shifts in identity.

The first section summarised the contribution of discursive institutionalist concepts to understanding the possibility of identity change at a time of crisis. It firstly reiterated the need for an actor-focused approach for understanding change. It argued that actors construct crises strategically in order to legitimise their policy claims and to 'resonate' with the public. When communicating their ideas with media and citizens, they consider what ideas will make sense and be persuasive. Because of this, however, it showed how they are, in turn, constrained by their national institutional contexts which limit what ideas are likely to resonate and what ideas need to be expressed. It then explained how pro-European elite and media actors drew on existing identities and motivations for European integration to create an exogenous threat in order to justify the need to 'save the Euro'. It showed how elite ideas found resonance in some parts of the media, but that they are also contested in the media and by opposition actors. Here, the construction of the crisis as an endogenous crisis to Europe opens the door for new ideas to be introduced. Nevertheless, it shows that political and media actors, both pro-European and more 'Eurosceptic' ones, draw broadly on the same themes to legitimise their claims. The second section explored in further detail the domestic institutional constraints that make change difficult at a time of crisis and identified a number of different constraints, including collective memory, economic ideas and interests, party politics, size and religion. While actors do act strategically when framing crises, they are limited in the ideas they can draw on by a number

of factors. For example, national historical narratives prove essential for giving meaning to the crisis. Because there is no single European history, but rather multiple national histories, there are significant differences in understandings of Europe, European solidarity and sovereignty between member states. Furthermore, economic ideas and interests, particularly in Germany and Ireland, party politics, particularly in Poland and Germany, country size and religion are extremely important for shaping the debate in those countries.

This chapter also opens up new questions about the so-called ‘normalisation’ of European identity in Germany. On the one hand, it begs the question of how can we really know what is ‘normal’? The ‘normalisation’ thesis works on the assumption that Germany was or is ‘abnormal’ because it is so driven by its past in its approach to the EU. This chapter has shown, however, that all three countries’ European identities are shaped by their past and long-standing discourses on European integration which are difficult to change. Each country has its own national discourse on Europe with its own historical and strategic motivations for EU membership. It also works on the assumption that Germany was not acting in its national interest from the beginning. On the contrary, Germany’s interests have been tied closely with European interests from the early days of European integration, to the extent that it is difficult to disentangle them. On the other hand, Germany does seem to be an outlier in terms of how far the debates are framed in terms of ‘Europeanness’. The debates in Ireland and Poland revolve much more around the issue of national sovereignty. The fact that actors in Germany consistently frame the debates in terms of the European interest suggests that, despite suggestions that they are moving away from Europe, Germany might still be considered the most committed European country compared with other member states. In this respect, it is important to consider to what extent these countries can be considered representative of the other 27 EU member states. If Germany can be considered an outlier in some respects, it is

important to examine additional countries and place Germany in a wider group of member states for comparison. The concluding chapter will highlight the value and contribution of this in-depth case study approach, but also indicate such limitations within the scope of the research.

## CHAPTER 8 – CONCLUSION

### Introduction

Chapter 1 showed how the Euro crisis has been considered one of the most significant crises of European integration to date – signalling an ‘existential crisis for Europe’ (Jones, 2012:54) or the ‘unravelling of the European project’ (Auer, 2012:82). Against this background, this thesis set out to examine the effect of the Euro crisis for the construction of European identities in three case study countries – Germany, Ireland and Poland. Within these case studies, it was also interested in differences in the effect of the crisis between political and media discourse. This thesis has argued that, contrary to what we might have expected, the Euro crisis has not led to significant change in European identity discourses. Instead, crises have to be constructed by political and media actors who draw on existing identities to give them meaning and to ensure that they ‘resonate’ with the public, thereby ‘endogenising’ the crisis into existing discourses on Europe. In all three case studies, the crisis is primarily understood in terms of existing identities and discourses on Europe in each country. Although there have been some changes through the construction of a ‘Northern European’ identity in Germany and to a certain extent Poland, these can be understood as subtle and formed on the basis of existing identities. This thesis has therefore contributed to theoretical literature on European identity and crisis and made a contribution to existing empirical data on European identities in Germany, Ireland and Poland. The following sections firstly outline the empirical findings of the thesis, before leading into a discussion of the theoretical contribution of the study. In light of the findings, it will then consider the limitations of the study and the possibilities for further research. Finally, it will outline some wider implications of the findings.

## Summary of Empirical Findings

### *Germany*

Chapter 4 considered the extent to which the Euro crisis has affected European identity in Germany. This chapter argued that, rather than signalling a dramatic shift in European identity, the crisis instead reflects existing identities and ideas, in part due to the strategic goals of German elites to legitimise crisis policies and find resonance with the public. While the Euro crisis opened a ‘window of opportunity’ for German opponents of EMU to oppose it more than they have done in the past, the ideas expressed reflect a longer process of incorporation of ordoliberal values into the values of the European community since the Maastricht Treaty. The Euro crisis therefore did not open the door to new ideas about Europe and European identity in Germany per se, it continued a process that began long before the crisis. Firstly, the chapter showed how the crisis reflects Germany’s post-war European identity where the Nazi past functions as the ‘Other’, ensuring an identity based on peace, democracy, justice and European reconciliation. Secondly, it showed how particular understandings of European solidarity reflect a continuation of efforts to incorporate ordoliberal values, the German ‘stability culture’, into conceptions of Europe and Europeanness which has been ongoing since the introduction of EMU. In the final section, it showed that what is often considered evidence of Germany’s strengthened national identity, that is, anti-Greek sentiment and opposition to EU bailouts, can actually be considered a reflection of this alternative conceptualisation of the European community, where the ‘good European’ contributes to the stability of the currency and exercises proper economic discipline. This translates into a ‘Northern European’ community of the economically virtuous in contrast to the profligate southern Europeans.

*Ireland*

Likewise, Chapter 5 argues that the Euro crisis has not acted as a critical juncture of European identity discourses in Ireland. Rather, the crisis is framed in terms of existing discourses on Europe, where Europe is viewed either as a utility or a threat to Irish identity. This chapter firstly argued that the crisis was understood particularly in 2010 as a domestic crisis, perceived to have been caused primarily by a corrupt political and economic elite. Here, the Irish elite came to act as a kind of internal Other to the 'ordinary' Irish people. By 2011, however, the crisis was also understood as a European crisis, but in contrast to Germany, it is understood a European economic or currency crisis, reflecting Ireland's economic motivations for European integration. It then showed how crisis policies are framed in terms of sovereignty and the economy. On the one hand, pro-European elite and media actors legitimise EU policy by emphasising the utility of Europe for Ireland. In contrast to Germany, European solidarity in Ireland is understood as redistribution of wealth and strengthening of EU institutions for the benefit of the Eurozone and Irish economy. Furthermore, the best way to Ireland's actual sovereignty in practice is ensuring that it has a secure place in an international organisation such as the EU. On the other hand, actors who oppose such policies see the bailout programme and further integration measures as depriving Ireland of its (economic) sovereignty and threatening its status as a republic. Here, the core EU member states, particularly France and Germany, are perceived as Ireland's 'threatening Other', the ones who have deprived Ireland of its sovereignty.

*Poland*

Chapter 6 presents the Polish case study and further confirms the overall argument of this thesis that change to identities at a time of crisis is likely to be minimal. In Poland, the crisis reflects

existing discourses on Europe – both the ‘return to Europe’ and the ‘Polish sovereignty’ discourses. This chapter argued that, while the crisis in 2010 was seen as an external ‘Greek’ or Southern European crisis, where Poland was part of the ‘virtuous’ Northern European core, by 2011 it became an issue of Poland’s place in Europe. The crisis came to reflect the ‘return to Europe’ discourse, where the crisis presented a risk of marginalisation at the periphery of Europe. At this point, the crisis came to reinforce existing divisions in Polish politics. On the part of the pro-European elite and media actors, crisis policies are framed in terms of dual European and Polish identities. They call for support for EU policies both on the basis of the common European good and European solidarity and on the basis that Europe is the best way to secure the security and prosperity of Poland. Nevertheless, they are constrained by the nationalist discourse on Polish sovereignty, arguing that national sovereignty is best ensured by being part of Europe. The chapter then showed how the crisis reinforces these divisions in Poland and within Europe. Firstly, Poland’s contribution to the bailout programme is read on the basis that Poland remains an economically weak and poor EU member state. Secondly, however, conservative-nationalist actors express exclusive Polish identities, where European integration presents a fundamental threat to Polish sovereignty. While the Polish government is seen to have conceded Polish independence, it is Poland’s historical enemies, Germany and Russia, which have taken it. In both cases, however, the crisis primarily serves to reinforce existing discourses on Europe.

### **Theoretical Contribution**

Chapter 2 outlined the theoretical foundations of this thesis. Firstly, it identified the limitations in the existing literature on European identity and crisis. It explained how identities are understood to change at times of critical junctures, which can open up ‘windows of opportunity’

for elites to change identities, if the crisis clashes with existing identities (see e.g. Marcussen et al., 1999; Risse, 2010). However, it argued that there is a problem with this literature to the extent that a crisis is always understood as an ‘exogenous’ shock (Marcussen et al., 1999; Morin and Carta, 2014). Because crises have to be constructed by social and political actors, they are interpreted according to existing ideas and identities in the national contexts. DI concepts of ideational change therefore become useful for understanding how crises are constructed, particularly the role of actors and the discursive interactions between elites and the media when framing crises and reconstructing identities (see e.g. Hay, 1996; Widmaier et al., 2007; Schmidt, 2008). On the one hand, actors have ‘foreground discursive abilities’ which enable them to think outside the existing discourses. However, in order to legitimise policies and make sense of the crisis, they have to draw on existing identities so that their ideas ‘resonate’ in their national context, which can, in turn, be contested by the public. By examining the ‘communicative discourse’ between elites, the media and citizens in legitimising and debating EU issues (Schmidt, 2011a), it is possible to better understand the dynamics of identity change and continuity between and within EU member states at a time of crisis for the EU.

This thesis has argued that the Euro crisis has not led to significant change in European identities in the three case study countries because of the strategies by national political and media actors to legitimise their claims and the variety of domestic constraints which limit their options in doing so. While the literature on European identity stipulates that identities can change at times of ‘critical juncture’, this thesis has argued that change becomes difficult when crises are constructed by elites and the media in the national context. As soon as the crisis is constructed, it is ‘endogenised’ into the national discourse so that it reflects existing identities. While elites can act strategically to a certain extent in order to legitimise EU crisis policies, they are constrained by their national institutional contexts in terms of how they can frame these

policies. Although some gradual changes are possible, such as the development of a Northern European identity with a Greek or Southern Other, these are more so reflections of existing ideas in a new form rather than dramatic shifts in identity.

This thesis has therefore made a contribution to the theoretical literature on European identity and crisis. In particular, it has addressed the gap in the existing literature which insufficiently conceptualises the dynamics of continuity and change at a time of crisis. While this literature argues that identities can change at times of critical juncture, if the crisis is perceived as such (Marcussen et al., 1999), there has so far been relatively little theoretical exploration of European identities and crisis. This thesis has shown that, perhaps contrary to the expectations of this literature, European identities are difficult to change at times of crisis, allowing only for subtle change in some cases. Instead, crises primarily serve to reinforce existing identities because of the fact that they are constructed by actors at the national level. Chapter 7 outlined the reasons why identities can be considered difficult to change and identified a variety of domestic constraints which limit change. These could form the basis of future research. Although this thesis puts forward the theoretical argument that identities are particularly difficult to change at times of crisis, the findings suggest that they are liable to change over a longer period of time. This is highlighted particularly well by the German case, where ordoliberal ideas have been incorporated into European identity over many years, particularly since the introduction of the Euro. Instead of sparking sudden change, the Euro crisis strengthened and continued this process by leading to new, ordoliberal conceptions of European solidarity. Despite the fact that the crisis has led to institutional changes and new policies, then, this thesis has found that identities and discourses are much harder to change. Despite this contribution, however, there are a number of limitations to this study which could be tackled in future research.

## **Limitations and Future Research**

This thesis has therefore made both a theoretical contribution to the literature on European identity and crisis, and an empirical contribution, providing new data on European identities in Germany, Ireland and Poland. However, there are some methodological limitations which can be dealt with in future studies. Firstly, the thesis only focused on the early stages of the crisis in 2010 and 2011. While the findings are informed by an understanding of news about the crisis over the entire period, the thesis has benefited from an in-depth study of specific times at the high points of the crisis. This allowed for an exploration of the ways in which the crisis was constructed and served to reproduce existing identities. It would, however, be interesting to explore dynamics of change at later points in the crisis to track further developments. By September 2014, it was clear that the Eurozone's economic problems were still ongoing, with Eurozone inflation 'at a five-year low' and unemployment remaining at 11.5% (BBC News, 2014). Furthermore, following the 2014 European Parliament elections, Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk has been appointed President of the European Council, which raises questions about Poland's role in the EU and future developments in Polish politics. Given the finding that identities are more likely to change over a longer period of time rather than suddenly at a time of crisis, it would be valuable to continue tracking developments in European identity in the context of the Euro crisis.

Secondly, with three case studies, the findings cannot necessarily be generalised to the EU-28. The three case study countries presented an interesting and valuable comparison, with one larger creditor state, one debtor state, and one new EU member state which is not part of the Euro but still committed to join. The in-depth nature of the study allowed for detailed interpretation of the processes of change and continuity in the three countries. However,

generalising to other countries must be undertaken with caution. How far can Ireland be considered representative of the debtor countries, Germany of the large creditor states, and Poland of CEE? Incorporating additional case studies was beyond the scope of this thesis. Further research could, however, extend to other countries, particularly other crisis countries such as Greece, and other larger states, particularly those with more substantial Eurosceptic movements such as France. Furthermore, it is important to look at other countries that are often neglected in academic research, such as Scandinavian countries or smaller CEE states. Nevertheless, this thesis has provided an important starting point for exploring the effect of the Euro crisis on European identities.

### **Wider Implications**

Firstly, the theoretical findings have wider relevance for questions of identity beyond Europe. This research opens up questions about identity, crisis and change not just at the European level, but also at the regional and sub-national level as well. This thesis has shown that identities are multiple and overlapping and that they are more likely to develop slowly over longer periods of time than suddenly at a time of crisis. At a time when regional independence movements have been gaining strength in the EU, particularly in Scotland and Catalonia, an understanding of how such multiple identities are strengthened or changed at times of crisis can shed light on the dynamics of such movements. While the reasons for the development of these movements are undoubtedly highly complex, the identity dynamic would be an important area of interest particularly at times of economic crisis.

Secondly, this research opens up questions about European integration particularly in terms of EU legitimacy and democracy. The findings have shown that the debate about European integration is not simply a question of being European or not, or in favour of integration or not,

but rather what kind of Europe people want (see e.g. Tsoukalis, 2005). In particular, the crisis has highlighted a division between the proponents of a federal EU and those who want to limit it to a looser intergovernmental association. While many scholars argue that a European identity is required for EU-level democracy to function (see e.g. Cederman, 2001; Cerutti, 2010; Weiler et al., 1995), the findings of this thesis suggest that the EU does not necessarily require one single European identity to be perceived as legitimate, but rather the EU can be incorporated into existing national identities (see e.g. Risse, 2010). Each country has its own reasons for EU membership and its own understanding of what it means to be European. To a certain extent, the debates about the crisis can be considered part of a wider process of increased politicisation of EU policy since the so-called permissive consensus of the early days of European integration started to break down (Hooghe and Marks, 2009:67).

However, one of the problems with so many conceptions of Europe is that, during an economic crisis, such different visions of Europe can have real and practical consequences. One of the problems is that EU elites call upon 'European solidarity' to deal with the crisis, but findings show that European solidarity is understood in different ways depending on the context, and is shaped according to perceived economic interests, historical experience and economic ideas in the different countries. Such a mismatch in understandings of solidarity can lead to divisions and resentments between EU member states, and complicate the policy-making process. As Grande and Kriesi argue, the crisis has created 'new re-distributional conflicts between member states' (2014:18). Furthermore, elite strategies to construct the crises in a way that gains support for EU crisis policies raises questions about the quality of democratic debate on EU politics. Findings show that elites called for support for further integration by drawing on long-standing fears in their respective countries - fears of Russia in the case of Poland, of the Nazi past or inflation in the case of Germany, or of Britain in the case of Ireland. What options are there for

open, democratic debate when, according to the national elites, to oppose European policy is to stand in conflict with the very values and norms of the national discourse and, even, the very existence of one's country? Given the consistently low turnout in European Parliament elections (22% in Poland in 2014, for example), improving participation in democratic debate about EU politics is of utmost importance. The relationship between European identities, democracy and legitimacy can be one focus of future research.

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