

Orbiliberalism in the German institutional discourse on Greece for the Economic Crisis

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Financial and Economic discourse and news have dominated the European public sphere since the beginning of the Global Economic Crisis. Germany seemed to emerge as Europe's dominant power, with the ability to influence political and economic agendas throughout Europe. The developing crisis in the Eurozone has underlined Germany's significant interventions in addressing this crisis, for instance in making stipulations on financial aid to Greece (Bulmer & Paterson, 2010). German national interests have, first and foremost, been defined as European (Duson & Goetz, 2003). Thus the "German model" is the dominant political rhetorical construction not only for Germany but for the Eurozone as well. The German political discourse on economic matters is considered to be the voice of stability and continuation in Europe. Through this discourse images and perceptions are being built for the other countries in the Eurozone.

Though the hegemonic figure of Germany's Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble, the Greek economy has been harshly criticized and its progress constantly evaluated, always leaving more to be wished for. Currently, under the lights of the second evaluation of the Greek program Schäuble stated in the "BildZeitung" that "If Greece wants to stay in the euro, there is no way around it – in fact completely regardless of the debt level". Evaluations such as this divide the Eurozone in two groups. "Us" the stable European countries that excel and prosper and "Them", the problematic countries that hold up and delay European progress. This construction of competitive bipolarism is being examined in this research under "Ethnocentrism" (Sumner, 1906). Through the construction of an in-group and an out-group, processes of in-group favoritism (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2010) ascribe a positive sign to all properties of the "in-group" and at the same time, a negative sign to the "out-group". This differentiation does not only shape the identities of "us" and "them" but also pinpoints Germany's underlying vision for the Eurozone.

This research focuses on how Greek economy is depicted in the public discourse of the German Ministry of Economy during the years of the economic crisis. In particular it is examined to what extent ethnocentrism and in-group favoritism function as mediators in Schäuble's discourse, thus rhetorically extracting Greece from the heart of Europe.