

Corvinus University of Budapest
Doctoral School of Sociology and Communication Science

THESIS SUMMARY

to the Ph.D dissertation of

Ágnes Jele

titled

The rhetoric of Otherness in the euro area

The European Central Bank and the German media's hierarchical view of
Europe during the euro crisis

Supervisor:

Dr. József Böröcz, DSc, PhD

Budapest, 2023

Department of Communication and Media Studies

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1. Research background and rationale for the topic

Phenomena fraught with complex problems and forced solutions fit under the label of "euro crisis". The recent history of Greek society bears witness to the transformation of macro-economic processes into a daily living problem. In Western European countries, where credit is a source of comparative advantage, creating highly unequal market conditions globally, the economic policy responses to the crisis have dealt out the judgment of the day. In the same 'West', the judgement of troubled southern European countries was reminiscent of that of African borrowing colonies trapped in debt traps. However, while indifference to the Global South is a 'self-evident' attitude, no more than a distant, 'uninteresting' slice of Western Europe's external relations, the exclusion and treatment of the Southern states by the 'richer' half of Europe is already shaking the belief in the idealized internal relations. I will explore the driving forces behind this internal treatment, the antipathy towards the region that is emerging in the blink of an eye, using concepts that the Global South has given the world precisely in order to provide a fuller picture of 'Europe'¹, of 'European' mechanisms.

This topic is important to examine because Member States have responded to integration tensions, inequalities, asymmetric surplus value flows and ethnic tensions in essentially cultural, 'civilizational' and racial terms. Relative power relations and power asymmetries have similarities with the colonial discourse of Western Europe, with the difference that here the category of 'Us' and 'Them' is not in the discourse of the 'first' world and the 'third' world, but in the 'western' half of Europe.

The European internal Other may at a certain time be the opposite of its Eastern counterpart, at other times – as we have seen during the crisis – it may be accentuated towards Southern Europe. This practice of Otherness draws a symbolic boundary between northern (mainly German) and southern societies under strong discursive pressure. In this discourse, the South is lazy, unreliable people, not doing their homework, but living better than they deserve for how little they work. It is also part of this discourse that the German would deserve to live a prosperous and secure life if the South did not threaten their well-deserved model citizen life. And the countries in trouble have only themselves to blame for their situation, and while they

¹ In the dissertation, the multiplicity of the concept is revealed, often representing a narrowed conceptual field (Europe=West) in global academic knowledge production, and in Western European knowledge production it is mostly used as a global distinctive term applied to Western Europe, or the European Union, or just the Eurozone.

must be constantly reminded of this, they must also be punished for this behavior in order to make a lasting impression, while honest Germans deserve to be rewarded and recognized.

The internal relations of the Eurozone are examined by exploring the main narratives of the power struggle over monetary policy, focusing on one phase of the euro crisis (2010-2014). The dissertation examines the communicative features of intra-eurozone relations with the premise that global-historical attitudes and drivers underlie the regional conflicts experienced during the euro crisis. In other words, the internal Other is embedded in a broad geopolitical-power relations framework that assumes that the discursive behavior prevailing at a given historical moment cannot be examined by reducing either geographical or temporal boundaries.

In my dissertation, both media knowledge production and technocratic communication are involved, and my aim with both studies is to present discursive practices that help to highlight the practices and characteristics of representing Otherness in the Eurozone as "the most European" Europe, and the social processes behind the hierarchical images of Europe that emerge. I will examine the events of the Euro crisis through the filter of a specific individual: in the German press I will discuss articles about Mario Draghi, the then president of the European Central Bank (ECB) and analyze his speeches and interviews as ECB president. The study covers a heightened period of economic policy during the eurozone crisis. I approach the analysis of diversity representation and hierarchicalism from two directions, with Mario Draghi at the center of the analysis in both cases:

(1) From 2010 onwards, I carry out a thematic analysis of two press products on the judgements about Draghi, who was then a presidential candidate and was elected president in 2011, applying discourse analysis during the examination: the online editions of the tabloid *Das Bild* and the weekly *Der Spiegel* (2010-2014); and

(2) I will thematically examine and analyze the speeches (official speeches, press conferences, other conference speeches) and interviews with Mario Draghi published in the international press during the period between 2011 and 2014 when he was the President of the ECB.

My thesis draws on several disciplines to understand mediatized social relations, including historical sociology, postcolonial theories and political economy, and discusses the consequences of crisis management in the South. At a conceptual and empirical level, my thesis draws on postcolonial global historical tools and decolonization theories, and briefly discusses the nature of the European Union (and within it the Eurozone) as a system of public power over member states, the organizational-economic problems arising from the imperfect overlap

between supra-state sovereignty and the single currency, and the consequences of the intertwining of political power and monetary power.

The main thrust of my research is the study of the representation of Otherness, and although the critique of modernity is only briefly and implicitly presented in the thesis, the critical relation to it is the main axiom of the dissertation. The post- and decolonial concepts allow us to focus on the regional embeddedness of meaning in activities such as press appearances and speeches, while also highlighting the 'backstory' and drivers of meaning production itself. From my research point of view, the two tendencies support each other and shape the narrative in dialogue with each other: exploring and analyzing the relations and intricate networks of power, discourse, representation, meaning and identities closely related to them. This perspective is also a researcher's engagement: the relations and relationships explored and analyzed are embedded in the history and structure of global socio-economic relations. ²

2. Methods applied

The thematic analysis³ involves the researcher looking for patterns of meaning and potentially interesting questions. The aim is to identify patterns (themes) in the data set, resulting in a kind of thematic map of the selected empirical material. In addition to describing the linguistic features of the empirical material and interpreting discursive processes, the detailed analysis aims to complement the analysis with the wider social practices and contexts, using the method of critical discourse analysis⁴. This approach focuses on the inequalities and abuses of power perpetuated by the discursive strategies of the elite and their negative effects on society.

The justification of inequalities is based on two complementary discursive strategies: the representation of one's own group (Us) and the negative representation of the Other. The difference between the Us and the Other is expressed in terms of the tolerance and helpfulness

² Go, J. (2018) Postcolonial possibilities for the sociology of race. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 4(4), 439-451. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332649218793982>

³ Braun, V. - Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 2, 77-101.

⁴ Fairclough, N. (1995) *Critical discourse analysis: the critical study of language*, Van Dijk, T. A. (1993) Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis, *Discourse & Society*, 4(2) 249-283, Weiss, G. - Wodak, R. (Eds.) (2003) *Critical discourse analysis: Theory and interdisciplinarity*, Palgrave Macmillan, Wodak, R. (1995) Critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis. In Verschueren, J., Östman, J-O. and Blommaert, *Journal of Handbook of Pragmatics Manual*. pp 204-210., Wodak, R. (2007). In Wodak, R. and Meyer, M. *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, London: Sage Publications Ltd. pp 1-13.

of the Us, while social and cultural differences are put at the center, and the deviance and threatening attributes of the Other towards the Us.⁵

The discourse of power/dominance is thus the effort of those in power and their associated elite groups to represent their own point of view as reality, while suppressing and marginalizing other discourses.

Invoking Carlo Ginzburg's evidential paradigm, we focus on discovering the most trivial details in discourse analysis, and we pay attention to seemingly irrelevant details that do not fit into the supposed, imagined, somehow expected logic of things.⁶ According to Ginzburg, we should look for evidence that is often imperceptible or seemingly insignificant, and "if the causes cannot be reproduced, there is nothing we can do but build from the consequences."⁷

The choice of the empirical material for this dissertation was guided by the popularity of the respective press products (in this subsection I refer to it as "Study A"), and thus the online publications of *Das Bild* and *Der Spiegel* were chosen. The empirical material for the second half of the research (Study B) consists of speeches, press conferences and interviews with Mario Draghi during the period under review. The latter material is publicly available on the official website of the European Central Bank.

The thematic study was developed by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis provides a flexible and theoretically free research option that is easily compatible with the basic research tenets of both critical discourse analysis and the evidential paradigm, and contributes to a rich and detailed analysis of the data. In the following, I present the thematic analysis in conjunction with the details of the empirical material of the research that are relevant for the final analysis.

The data corpus was collected by splitting the data of the research project into two large empirical units: in the case of the data collection of "Study A", the articles of the online publications *Das Bild* and *Der Spiegel* published between 2010 and 2014 were the ones that appeared in the search results for the word "Draghi". For the data collection of 'Study B', (1) Draghi's speeches and (2) interviews with him and (3) texts of press conferences formed the data corpus. In the case of (1), mandatory hearings before the European Parliament, conferences and other more informal events are included. In case (2), leading business newspapers (such as the *Financial Times* or the *Wall Street Journal*), political newspapers (e.g. *Le Monde*,

⁵ Van Dijk, T. A. (1993) *Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis*, *Discourse&Society*, 4(2) 249-283.

⁶ Ginzburg, C. (1989) *Clues, Myths and the Historical Method*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 106.

Süddeutsche Zeitung, Handelsblatt), magazines (e.g. Der Spiegel) and tabloids (Das Bild) are also subjects of the corpus. Corpus (3) consisted of the material from monthly press conferences.

From the corpus of data, the texts of interest to the research and selected will form the dataset. Two approaches to the management of the dataset can be combined: in the case of a preliminary topic/question, those texts from the corpus that address the topics based on the preliminary hypotheses are included in the set to be analyzed; on the other hand, the number of topics can be expanded when the texts of the data corpus are examined (an example of this is the examination of data on self-representation in the German press in "Study A", while in "Study B", the analysis of the texts on the definition of Draghi's political role was supplemented by an examination of questions on Draghi's "vision of Europe", based on the knowledge of the text corpus).

In thematic analysis, the researcher looks for patterns of meaning, potentially interesting questions, and the aim is to identify patterns (themes) in the data set that can be explored through active and repeated reading (Braun - Clarke, 2006). Coding can be data-driven or theory-driven; while in the former, themes are data-dependent, in the latter, data are approached by focusing on specific questions around which coding is organized. In the present research, a theory-driven approach to coding was taken, as established in the theoretical chapters of this thesis, oscillating between very strong underlying assumptions and a data corpus. Coding allows the identification of broad themes in which the codes form a coherent pattern with each other, and finally a kind of thematic map is available to the analyst, and after the necessary refinements, processing can proceed with detailed analysis.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the task of thematic analysis is to be able to tell the complex story of the data in a way that makes its validity clear to the reader and to present sufficient evidence on the issues to make the analysis relevant. Extracts (verbatim quotes from the dataset) are good if they can illustrate the 'story' being told about the data and can support the argument of the research.

3. Scientific results of the dissertation (in bullet points)

3.1. *How is the representation of the Southern European internal Other⁸ presented in the German press in relation to Draghi?*

One could also call the countries within the band that received financial 'assistance' under the Troika during the financial and economic crisis of the 2000s, which included Ireland at the time, in addition to the four southern European countries, as semi-periphery, edge of center or even 'troubled' and 'problem' countries. The paper examined the German media's attitude towards Mario Draghi, the then Eurozone central bank president, and two of the most popular products of the German press, with the four southern European countries in mind.

Just like the PIGS narrative, the mention of "origin" and the suggestion or concrete utterance of negative connotations is a symbolic distinction that runs throughout the euro crisis. This distinction is part of the hegemonic narrative that has helped to legitimize the austerity policies that have hit southern Europe and to portray it as a region incapable of social development, unable to accommodate the right institutions and thus an obstacle to economic growth. Draghi has been portrayed in the press as 'that Italian', who can in no way be president of the ECB. The prejudice of a southern mentality has become so deeply embedded in western discourse that, almost unnoticed, Greece, for example, has become 'Balkanized' and the official narrative has changed from a financial and economic crisis to a euro crisis to a sovereign debt crisis. Musliu (2015) points out that in the latter narrative, responsibility could be shifted to certain states without any further questioning of the responsibility of the markets, while in the Western discourse, the country that became 'European' with Greece's accession to the EU was labelled 'Balkan' with the euro crisis. Around this time, the press started to write that 'the German: pays taxes', a statement which implies that the Other - the 'South' - does not pay taxes. The reference to the German who pays taxes is a convincing argument because, without any proof, the German reader knows that the German, unlike the Other, is someone who pays taxes, i.e. who takes responsibility and lives honestly. The German is also able to point out the responsibility that the Other must also assume and would 'introduce strict rules of the game' that would allow these countries to improve. In contrast to the German, Draghi is presented as embodying a whole list

⁸ There are many different versions of the Other, all of which have played an important role in the process of (Western) European identity formation, whether it is the discrimination against Islam, the discrimination between colonizers and colonized, or even the creation of an internal Other, from the ethno-culturally marginalized minorities to the former external Other, which became an internal Other during migration, to the regionally differentiated Other. My dissertation focuses on the study of the internal Other in Southern Europe.

of Southern stereotypes, a symbolic figure of an 'incorrigible' region that is inherently 'corrupt' and 'ungovernable' (Musliu, 2015: 36).

According to the press, the people of the South are: lazy and dirty, unreliable, sexually overheated, wasteful and backward. Such irrationally behaved people, who are driven only by their emotions, appear in the German press. In contrast, Germans are hard-working, rational, thrifty and modern. As a consequence, the South should be patronized by the Germans, but also punished for their negative qualities, while the Germans should be rewarded for their positive qualities (Ervedosa, 2017).

During the Euro crisis, a common discursive dehumanizing mechanism of the 'South' ('Südländer') can be detected, as it is not by chance that scholars use the parallel with colonial discourses to describe relative power relations and asymmetries (e.g. Dainotto, 2011; Ervedosa, 2017; Musliu, 2015).

The empirical evidence would be sufficient to support this even if, following Ginzburg, it were to seep into people's minds in a barely perceptible way by telling them a stereotypical story about exotic Spanish dancers or the Italians' sense of dolce vita, or the Greeks' sense of worklessness. However, the empirical analysis in this thesis proves that in the current economic climate, there has been a much more conscious press attack on the countries of the South. This can even be demonstrated by the fact that the main focus of the study was on one man, Mario Draghi.

There are two movements in the German press: exclusion, because they find the undesirable half of the eurozone countries unworthy of being in the same group (they would rather leave the Eurozone than stay with the undesirable half), and ascension, by which they morally elevate their own society as the embodiment of goodness and decency.

3.2. What are the colonial discourses that the press in question activates in this process of Otherness formation?

Hierarchical images and internal modes of representation of Otherness that map the discursive space occupied by Western European ("center", "rich") countries in the world. This study seeks to draw conclusions about internal relations, which, when compared with the main authors of the available post- and decolonial literature, show striking similarities with the external relations of the European Union. All the key narrative moments that create the forms of power and objective knowledge of 'the West', which appear to be natural and seem to be imperial epistemes, and which nullify the global 'non-West' by making it its eternal opposite, also

manifest themselves in internal binaries, portraying the countries outside the center (internal) as less good, less sufficient.

The press studied shows how stereotypes, often centuries-old, are activated and how colonial discourses can shape public discourse. The characteristics of colonial discourse are also present in these internal relations, and its knowledge forms, which appear objective, are capable of determining the way discourse is shaped in the long run, whether in the collective consciousness of societies at the top of the hierarchy or in the collective consciousness of subordinate societies.

Europe's *longue durée* practice is to create an internal, weaker version of itself, which is more pronounced to the east or south, depending on the situation. During the euro crisis, these emphases have shifted southwards, revealing social conflicts that draw an invisible line between northern societies (with the Germanic peoples at the forefront) and southern societies. Southern people thus become lazy, unreliable, people who live far better than they deserve on the basis of their work. And so the German becomes the model citizen, the rational and thrifty one, who by his work and diligence has earned the right to live in the prosperity he has been given. Thus the countries in trouble during the crisis have only themselves to blame for their near bankruptcy, and so they should be punished for their behavior, while the Germans should be rewarded and recognized.

The crisis showed how entrenched stereotypes can become active with the support of the press, and how these colonial discourses can shape public life. In a new set of relations and a new context compared to the colonial context, these discourses of power, with their apparently objective forms of knowledge, shape the way of speaking, whether at the top of the artificial hierarchy or in the subordinate, by penetrating deep into cultures. This self-racialization (Balibar, 2002) keeps the objective boundaries of the European Union in constant flux. We have seen the movement of this border, this conditional social admission and exclusion, in the case of the German press when it wrote about ECB President Mario Draghi. The Italian president, initially culturally ('racially') rejected, was briefly brought within this invisible border, because the German press judged him to be sufficiently German (Prussian) to support him. However, when Draghi made monetary policy moves apparently contrary to ordoliberal principles, the German press immediately excluded him from the Us circle.

In the dialectical relation between the Us and the Other, the Other is the opposite of totality, ontologically unmentionable, less valuable, second-order – it should almost not exist in the world of the *Über-Ich*. The Other can only be accepted if it follows our model of the Us, i.e. becomes like Us. In this logic, the ECB president is sometimes desirable and like Us – i.e. "the"

German – and sometimes undesirable, and the discursive degradation mechanism of the press excludes him from this moral-ontological totality.

3.3 How does German self-representation appear in this discourse of Otherness, what does it mean in the antithesis of the Us the Other?

A common feature of the societies at the top of this hierarchy is the unquestionability of their universalism, which is complemented by the omnipotence of this superior view. That is to say, not only are they at the top of the hierarchy, from this point of view of power, their own position offers the only acceptable vision and point of view, in which the Other, the subordinate, the subaltern, the weaker, can only aim to touch from below, to approach, to make itself somewhat similar to this upper reference point. Looking down from this top entails a series of complex cognitive steps that determine every aspect of social life, whether it is a matter of life practice or of ontological meaning.

From this point of view, space in the world is inherently ordered, in which small movements can be imagined. According to these movements, the boundary between the Us and the Other can be defined, the emphases of which (precisely which Other is the one against which I must define the boundaries of my own society) and the distance between the Us and the Other are dynamically changing, so that the formation of Otherness is not static, but is an ever-changing, dynamic formation of otherness. The Us is a reference point in two respects: on the one hand, the Other, even if he does not know, quickly becomes aware of where he is in this hierarchy of Otherness, must know exactly how far he is from the optimum, from the perfect at any given moment; on the other hand, in the appearance of universality and objectivity, the Us is untestable, unquestionable, unjudgeable, its place of power and epistemicity unquestionable.

This position of power is also coupled with a moral superiority that views the world from the position of ego sum bonitas, from the top of humanity. Its accessibility depends on the degree of sacrifice, but the steps required to achieve it hover over these societies as unattainable goals due to geopolitical positions, power relations, semi-peripheral forms of existence. The ontology of diversity in these societies is a way of being that affects all areas of life, generating constant social tensions, while at the same time constantly reinforcing its identity as a global social actor with a lack of morality, knowledge and ambition, which requires a higher order of guidance.

According to the logic of the German press, German society is the model that all other countries should become, and it finds essentially no positives in these countries (the mocking exoticization, the Orientalist discourse that emerges, cannot be considered a positive), in which

case German itself is the totality that represents the whole of reality, thus a kind of "imperial ontology" and hegemonic discourse appears in the press.

In addition to the attribute of goodness, the categorical imperative of the good, which is represented in the EU discourse by the "good European" approach, should be mentioned. The "good European" in German self-representation can be equated with values associated with ordoliberalism.

The German press, in its way of speaking, thinks of German society as a kind of advanced, more modern civilization, the "real" European, while the image of Southern Europe is that of a society "in need of civilization", an underdeveloped society.

So, the German press surveyed clearly believe that their own society is more advanced, that they are essentially the only ones in the world to adhere to the principles of ordoliberalism rather than Keynesian money printing. They will do so at any cost if it means the break-up of the Eurozone and the demise of the euro, and all other member states should follow their example if they do not want to get into trouble and cause trouble for the responsible German society. The Bundesbank is referred to as the "Über-Ich" of the ECB⁹, a clear reference to the superiority of German economic policy over others.

Ordoliberal principles make it impossible to support those in need at the risk of price stability and inflation. However, their 'greatness', their superiority, obliges them as a categorical imperative to uplift, to 'civilize' the Other. In the crisis management of German society, this has meant the following: they should not expect support from German taxpayers, but they are happy to give advice on how to change entrenched behaviors. Countries are often referred to as "children" who are reluctant to do their homework. So, German society is willing to show these childish, wayward countries the way, but it requires them to do the lessons they have been taught (for example, to implement structural reforms and to accept without a murmur that governments have no say in their own fiscal policies).

3.4. How can the mechanisms of conditional social exclusion and admission be demonstrated in the press through the example of Draghi?

By elevating its own society to the top of the hierarchy and expressing its superiority, it relegates the Italian Draghi and the problem countries to the bottom of the hierarchy. Using the notion of the border as a social fact (Böröcz, 2022), I show how the German press employs the

⁹ Ordnungspolitik: was ist das? Der Spiegel, 2012. 02. 15. <https://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/s-p-o-n-die-spur-des-geldes-ordnungspolitik-was-ist-das-a-815405.html>

mechanism of conditional social exclusion and admission against non-German society. I will show how the German press, by narrowing its concept of Europe completely, excludes societies that do not live in a way it likes, i.e. those that are not good enough according to the identity and cultural criteria it considers desirable.

Draghi is a good example of how talking points can change when the press detects a divergence or rapprochement between the parties. The pattern can be clearly discerned: first, we see a 'race' attack (highlighting the group-specific qualities of the individual as something to attack), second, the individual is stripped of his original group specificity and redefined as to what makes him authentic, and third, a kind of economic xenophobia (group identification as an informal door-closing mechanism) is manifested towards him.

Based on the empirical evidence, attitudes towards Draghi can be divided into three distinct phases, which can be used to identify changes in social door-closing and door-opening processes. The German self-representation presented here gives a good sense of the movements that are possible when the circle of those within is almost completely narrowed. As a social institution, the border forms invisible curtains that ultimately become visible in the analysis through the mapping of power relations in the press. However, the tendencies behind these mechanisms are not easily discernible, but rather infiltrate everyday discourses, for example through the press. However, this can have serious social consequences, ranging from the racist manifestations that can be instantly evoked from latent prejudice to the closely related, unnoticed essentializing, quasi-orientalist discourse. One of the most striking findings of the empirical material examined is that there is no significant difference in the way the tabloid Bild and Der Spiegel (or other elite press quoted on the subject) talk. Most obviously, the articles on Draghi published in 2011 and 2012 show that the German press published their articles in a coordinated, complementary and reflective manner (for example, Spiegel quoted Bild more than once in articles discrediting Draghi), with a focus on Draghi, who was negatively perceived. This concerted action ceased when Draghi temporarily enjoyed the confidence of the press under scrutiny, during which time Draghi, having been brought into the circle of the Us, possessed the qualities of an insider and was presented in the press as a positive example, despite his 'origin'. During the first period of Draghi's candidacy for the presidency, the press immediately became hostile to "the Italian" Draghi. Its arguments were based on Draghi's 'origin', i.e. there are clearly identifiable racial statements in the articles. However, racialization has opened up the possibility of activating seemingly innocent everyday discourses and of saturating covertly racist structures with overtly racist meanings. Although in the short period

after his election Draghi was written about in a laudatory tone, this was mainly because Draghi was placed in a different position in the racial dimension, presented as much closer to the German mentality and spoken of as one of them, as a professional with German qualities, as a source of confidence and hope. The defining comparative attribute of these two periods was cultural-racist in nature. In the third period, the negative attitude shifted from a racial dimension to an economic-ideological one, with the consequence that the differences between the economic mentality of the South and the vigor of the North were emphasized in the press.

Examining the press, we can see how the economic policy conflict between the member states was leaked, how the "southern mentality" became a topic of discussion through Draghi, how stereotypes were reinforced by the media because of the fear of German savings from the decisions of "the Italian" central banker. The fear of ideological rivalry and loss of power was translated in the press into arguments based on racial logic and the incitement of economic xenophobia.

The crisis has shown how entrenched stereotypes can become active with the support of the press, and how these colonial discourses can shape public life. In a new set of relations and a new context compared to the colonial context, these discourses of power, with their apparently objective forms of knowledge, shape the way of speaking, whether at the top of the artificial hierarchy or in the subordinate, by penetrating deep into cultures.

3.5. What is Draghi's public role and how does it fit in with the traditional role of the central bank president?

The second part of the research looks at Mario Draghi's role in the public sphere. Draghi acted as president of the whole institution during the height of the crisis, he was the ECB himself and, compared to his predecessor Jean-Claude Trichet, he attached much greater importance to public speaking and aimed to reach as wide an audience as possible. Although central bankers have traditionally shied away from political statements, Draghi has also spoken out on issues that went well beyond the traditional role of central bank president.

The Spiegel points out that Mario Draghi has become the most important contact for "the Americans" when it comes to "Europe". In this context, Spiegel notes that this development is particularly interesting because Draghi is not an elected politician and therefore it is not his job to represent Europe. Draghi, however, is clearly the heir to Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet (and other 'founding fathers'), with solidarity, cohesion and political unity being frequent watchwords in his speeches.

Draghi is not a political actor in the traditional sense, but a technocratic leader who has emerged as capable of providing a clear and effective response to the Eurozone crisis. However, his responses to the crisis have been increasingly bold and have moved further and further away from the possibilities offered by the usual monetary policy mandate. This included continued calls for reform by EU governments and institutions, as well as support for fiscal policy and institutional reforms that could provide a bulwark against future crises in the EU.

The analysis of the empirical material shows that Draghi went public in a way that represented not only the ECB, but the whole "Europe" project. This included urging EU governments and institutions to implement the necessary reforms and sort out their fiscal problems. It also involved calling for collective action and solidarity among member states, and trying to reach out to representatives of conflicted member states through past common integration successes, while focusing on common challenges for the future.

Although central bankers traditionally shy away from political statements, Draghi has also spoken out on issues that go well beyond his mandate as central banker. I sought evidence of this through the question of whether a systematic examination of the empirical evidence would allow Draghi to be described as a charismatic leader. With regard to the attributes of a charismatic leader, it can be concluded that Draghi's speeches show him to be a charismatic politician according to the characteristics described by Shamir et al. (1994). All of these attributes were characteristic of his speeches, especially during the deepest period of the crisis.

3.6. What is Draghi's image of Europe and how does it fit in with the hierarchical image of Europe that characterizes the press?

Draghi's speeches, as one of the most important defenders of the whole "Europe" project in the crisis, have the characteristics of a Eurocentric discourse. The most obvious sign of this is the systematic logical error with which Draghi tends to refer to the European Union and the Eurozone as Europe. This reductionist vision of Europe refers to a hierarchical conception of Europe that is defined as 'Otherness' in postcolonial literature. In this dimension of Otherness, a reduced Europe is at the top of the hierarchy, where a country matures into a 'true' European by joining it. In this respect, Draghi reinforces the universalism of Eurocentrism, i.e. whoever joins the Eurozone is at the 'heart of Europe' and at the same time at the top of the world – the moral top. According to this logic, non-eurozone members are somewhere on the periphery of Europe, and non-EU countries are not part of Europe.

Draghi, as the representative of the European Central Bank, brings everyone under the umbrella of a common, united and peaceful "Europe", thus conferring on himself a function that is essentially non-existent, making the institution the leader of the supranational European Union for the external actors of the EU (international politics, financial markets, economic experts). Draghi's way of speaking follows the official way of speaking of the supranational European Union, on issues that go far beyond his mandate.

While Draghi contributes to the construction of a 'Europe' that follows the EU's bureaucratic but romantic 'unity in diversity', the German press deconstructs this image and removes its own society from this unity in the name of goodness. Draghi, following the universalism of Eurocentrism, dismantles the legacy of colonialism and its current 'externalized' conflicts (looking at 'Europe' as a vehicle of peace) from the history of the EU, while excluding part of Europe. He says that Europe is either the EU Member States or the Eurozone countries, while in the four years under review he mentions 'continental Europe' only once. And the German press, in accordance with the rule of European otherness, sees itself as the embodiment of the good and excludes everyone else from this circle, thus deconstructing the Eurocentric image of Europe and appropriating the idealized concept of Europe.

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