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The Greek-German policy discourse and politics of blame:

A tragedy on the stage of the European debt crisis?

BACHELOR THESIS

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Abstract

This research paper aims at answering the question to what extent Greek-German policy relations are shaped by discourses rooted in politics of blame, historical reflexivity and mutual blaming for alleged political failures. While both sides struggle to shape a contemporary narrative, instrumentalized tools also include strong references to historical events and cultural identities. The utilized sources of policy documents do not exempt the discourse from strong personal and ideological leanings, and as such are framed not only within pure placement of blame but also attempts of praise and request on both sides to promote political agendas and modes of self-presentations, including political self-victimization and responsibility shifting.

Keywords: Greek-German discourse, politics of blame, policy discourse, debt crisis, discourse analysis, political victimization

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1. Introduction

The political European project is strongly connotated with the ideas of a stable post-war community cooperating in a solidarity prosperous economic sphere. However, since the aftermath of the financial crisis exactly one decade ago (2007-2008), continued economical challenges to the Hellenic Republic have conjured up intense disagreements about fiscal policy design (e.g. extent of austerity) and debt management, most prominently with the Federal Republic of Germany.[1] Colliding expectations between proponents of enforced austerity policy, most notably Germany, and Greece have led to recurring clashes not only between national parliaments and policy makers, but perhaps even more prominently within the media and inter-societal dialogue. The "*politics of blame*", as discussed by Papadimitriou & Zartaloudis (2014), soon dominated a scenario which later came to be understood as one national example of a wider economic problem. Specifically within the bilateral communication between Greece and Germany, mutual resentment over policy demands and derogatory media depictions gradually created a disruptive atmosphere, as analyzed by Bickes, Otten and Weymann (2014).

Beyond contemporary economical disagreements, deeply rooted historical events reappeared as arguments utilized to strengthen either side's demands. Especially in Greek reception, German occupation during World War II in 1941, systematic economic exploitation, as well as unimaginable crimes during the military occupation, do still constitute a wound only partially healed (Anton, 2011) and are received by Greek public as having significant consequences still felt today. Consequently, this led to immediate historical reflexivity when German demands for Greek debt payments conjured up a renewed notion of German dominance and Greek victimization. This discrepancy of power has thus created a mindset in which economical competition as a form of equalized power distribution is no longer possible, but instead has been replaced by the power of coercion and domination (Karlberg, 2005). Terminology in policy documents on both German and Greek sides reflect the widely discrepant interpretations and expectations to an extent, which creates seemingly conciliatory positions and harsh clashes between policy makers and their respective institutions.

[1] The formal designation for the "Hellenic Republic" and the "Federal Republic of Germany" will subsequently be substituted by "Greece" and respectively "Germany" for easier reading.

Within this construction several questions still remain open and were not attempted to be specifically answered by research. First of all, there exists a crucial gap in understanding why such clashes appeared in policy documents and how the intensity of this discourse might be evaluated. So far, scholars utilized this scenario to apply crises discourses aiming at understanding the debt crises not only as an economical problem, but more so as the means to re-evaluate the European understanding and approach towards this event. While Troika and IMF constitute extremely relevant actors, the research at hand will exclusively focus on Greek-German bilateral narratives. Notably, after crisis widened to other European member states after 2012, intensity of bilateral clashes gave away to more moderate terminology. Lawrence (2014), has concluded that understanding crises as special rather than common events within the EU framework is misguided and further, that cause and effect relationship is reduced in relevance over a preceding construction of a crisis. Also, there seems to be a lack of research concerning the notion of why ubiquitous feelings of crises erupted so violently and possibly at the expense of fact based analysis and problem orientated policy design. As Pearson & Clair (1998) emphasize on the notion of any crises being the result of "*a breakdown in shared meaning, legitimization, and institutionalization of socially constructed relationships.*" The resulting deficit appears not only in institutional order, but more importantly a challenge towards an established narrative. However, a discourse analysis specifically aimed at the presented Greek-German case opens the possibility to better understand the power relations as described by Karlberg (2005) and the often underlying historical reflexivity and manifested in political terminology (Wodak & Angouri, 2014).

To what extent and which form do are the Greek-German policy discourses shaped by the competing narrative in the areas of politics of blame, historical reflexivity and personalized clashes of policy creators?

Thus, the research question formulated in this proposal aims at answering: First, how did the Greek-German policy discourse developed in the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2007-2008? And second, how can this escalating development be explained within the framework of a discourse analysis?

Therefore, the initial question will focus on a descriptive re-illustration of relevant events while the second question focuses on an explanatory design. These combined research questions are highly relevant both in terms of applying a case-oriented discourse analysis framework to a recent and still ongoing economic scenario which has significant implication for the entire European project and society. Moreover, I expect new insights concerning the way historical reflexivity and contemporary power relations may get intertwined almost instantly if it serves either a defense against asymmetric power relations (e.g. debtor versus credit grantor). In that perspective, I hope to combine Wodak´s historical discourse approach as a theoretical basis with Karlberg´s idea of power as a model of domination to possibly arrive at a discourse analysis setup specifically suited to grasp the "How" and "Why" within the Greek-German scenario at hand.

Methodologically, I seek to answer this research question by focussing on the terminology present in those Greek and German policy documents, which (a) deal with the issues straining bilateral relations and (b) are ideally drafted as immediate responses or reactions to each other. Those policy documents will include publications by policy makers, speeches and all official publications presented by their respective institutions. (To give an example: In several instances, publications of the German Federal Ministry of Finance were immediately followed by repellent or at least relativizing statements of its Greek institutional counterpart.) Therefore, utilized terminology will be categorized in terms of general scope (time, issue, sender and addressee) as well as interpreted more elaborately concerning terminological meanings (and distinct attribution types such as blame, praise request), attached connotations and ultimately the effect on further discourse development. As a necessary methodological tool, a customised coding scheme will enable the aforementioned classification of terminology and also allow for a more transparent and easier access to the research conducted. Finally, Atlas TI software will support this approach in order to make the qualitative research accessible for closer reading and potential follow-up research.

2. Theory

In this section, I will substantiate the concepts presented in my research questions with theoretical findings by established scholars. I will break down the entirety of the Greek-German discourse into three, more specific dimensions and then reflect upon each by locating their characteristics between different theoretical approaches. The first discourse will focus on the issue of historical reflexivity, the second on the issue of austerity and debt management. Lastly, the discourse of power relations between policy makers themselves will be addressed. The most essential conceptualization will of course concern the type, respectively sort of interpretation of a discourse for which I will primarily focus on Wodak´s conceptualization of a discourse historical approach (DHA) as one possible manifestation of a critical discourse analysis (CDA).[2]

2.1. Discourse involving the politics of blame

"Tragedy is, then, a representation of an action that is heroic and complete and of a certain magnitude - by means of language enriched with all kinds of ornament, (...): it represents men in action and does not use narrative, and achieves, through the representation of pitiable and fearful incidents, the catharsis of such incidents."

- Aristotle, Poetics ch. 6, 2, describing the notion of catharsis

In the framework of the European debt crisis, a national emotional release channelled through politicians on both sides appears to take place. This collective catharsis, one might describe as a Greek tragedy acted out on a national level, presents the European public with an apparent need of its actors to find emotional and social release even beyond any financial one. However as interpretations of the catharsis idea differ in Greek antiquity, they do so in modernity. A notion of purging or cleansing, an emotional release from feeling victimized or unjustly oppressed, is attached to both Greek and German peoples. Facing highly complex and non culpably inflicted hardships, especially in the Greek case, turning to catharsis in multiple forms (media populism,

[2] Both the terms discourse historical approach (DHA) and critical discourse analysis (CDA) will from here on be mentioned in their abbreviated form.

political demagogy, protesting and even rioting) may help to relieve such pressure. The prominent pictures of anti-riot police using tear gas on Greek protesters, a more sarcastic tragedy writer might describe as an auxiliary instrument to provoke relieving tears and emotions. In the context of politics of blame, I argue that such blame formulation and placement is a prominent dimension of such cathartic endeavours. To "blow off steam" by multiplying or echoing the blunt criticism of media and political figures serves not only as relief, but must also be regarded as a dangerous tool. Any staged tragedy offering a cathartic momentum must ultimately resolve itself. The Greek-German case however gives strong reason to fear a never-ending cycle, since political and media actors involved heavily benefit from instrumentalizing this tool on both sides. It remains to be seen whether a Sisyphean deadlock can be avoided on the stage of European politics.

The politics of blame constitute a prominent tool of deeply rooted negativity bias. To prevent association with any form of negativity is essentially regarded as typically human behaviour and as such present in all spheres of life. From blame shifting between kindergarten children ("He broke it, not me!") to established European political elites, the underlying core mechanics remain surprisingly identical. Hood (2010) also mentions a cognitive predisposition to generally attribute greater weight to actual or merely perceived losses. In comparison, the recognition of positive achievements or gains is significantly less developed. Consequently, when dealing with any political issue the intuitive move is to avoid blame before risking such blame in any undertaking promising positive results or situational improvements.

However, politics of blame do not constitute a necessarily purely negative element within communication and specifically dialogues of policy institutions and creators. As such, placement of blame may also involve enforcement of responsibility, not only within a bilateral relation but more essentially towards external actors most notably manifested in the form of constituencies. Key (1964) mentions, that such an electorate will function as a "rational god vengeance and reward", stressing the fact that politics of blame also construct assignments of responsibility and thus further enhance the addressee´s need for either responding to such messages or even reluctantly adapt policy modifications. Additionally, Key describes politics of blame as a process of constant struggle which often is not predictable, while still being relevant for the

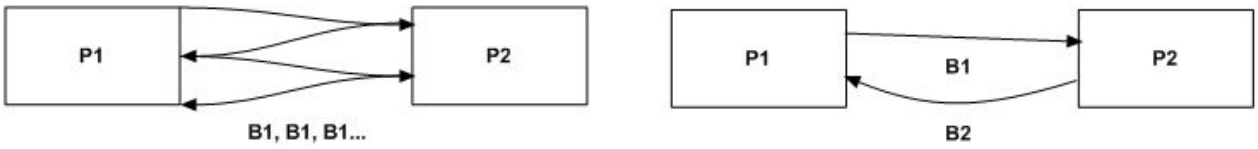
democratically designed process of policy creation. Grounded in this ambivalence is the inherent need to collate actual policy action and connected blame in order to create any means of transparency in democratic accountability.

In contrast, this form of accountability is presented by van Dijk (2008) as being severely limited by the criterion of who actually gets to present it and thus gains the ability the influence overall narrative of the discourse. In contrast to Key, van Dijk´s evaluation of politics of blame describes them as less democratic and transparent. One notable actor involved in creating a recurring narrative of resentment is the media, specifically tabloids and yellow press. The modus operandi of how to present one-self or others is largely guided by mechanisms of oversimplification of facts and antithetic construction of antagonistic groups (We against Them). However, largely unnoticed by the public, the media is not the only actors which reverts back to such instruments. In my analysis I will demonstrate that even official policy documents contain (a) such mechanisms and (b) I will seek to analyze whether this constitutes a tool to enhance both validity and explanatory power of resentment and blame.

As Weaver (1986) argues, most office holders do actively seek not to increase positive affirmation of their work but instead are focussed on reducing the amount of blame place on them to the least least possible degree. In the case of Greek office holders, minimization of blame has seemingly be perfected as to deflect all potential, external criticism aiming at economical failures. The metaphor of a shield phalanx present by Greek politicians mimicking the historical hoplites on a new, less bloody yet politically as ferocious battlefield comes to mind. Again, Weaver (1986) presents constituencies as being far more acceptable to losses than than gains in political reputations. In an analogy, media discourses often find themselves attributed with the statement “bad news sells best”. One primary type of avoiding or deflecting such blame is “scapegoating”, a process in which responsibility for a problematic issue gets shifted to another individual or institution. It is notable, that this specific variant of blame avoidance does not infer that there is no problem existent or blame itself unjustified. It is however a question of a justified addressee of blame, the object of blame attribution. Consequently, blaming others constitutes the primary tactics of choice when it comes to a successful approach of avoiding blame.

Another distinction must be made whether the blaming issue remains in itself unchanged, gets deflected, and it ultimately exchanged between parties, or whether, in order to avoid blame, an actively new blaming issue gets created.

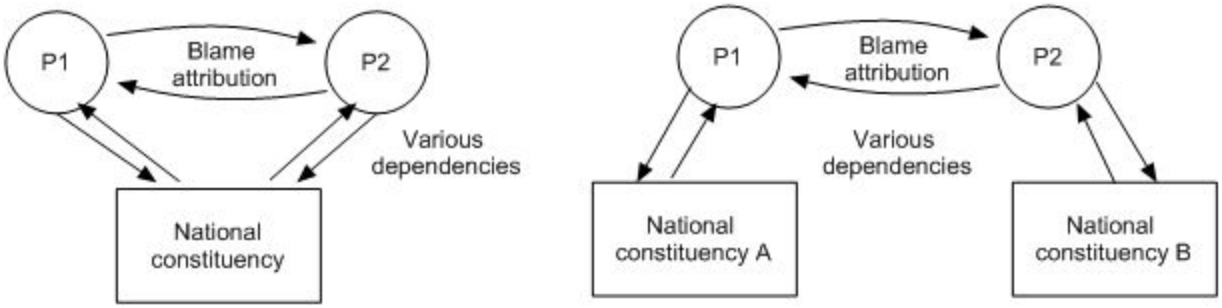
Graph 1: Schematic comparison of constant blame deflection vs. creation of new blaming issue to avoid loss in overall blaming balance



Democratic, parliamentary systems tend to encourage the creation of publicised politics of blame not only based on general characteristics such as pluralist debate culture and constitutionally enshrined freedoms of expression. Beyond this, structural elements in parliamentary process such as extent of party control, coalition size and type of electoral system have significant impact. As Cain elaborates in that context (1983), politicians may find it easier, even tempting, to set themselves apart from unpopular measures of their own party if dependence on caucus support is low. I argue, that such reduced dependence especially manifests in that case of more bureaucratized policy makers, most notably members of administrative and ministerial institutions not directly dependent on any constituency. Hence my focus is put specifically on the blame discourse between policy creators in federal, financial ministries and ultimately the ministers themselves.

Lastly, an issue ignored by Weaver (1986) is the creation of an entirely new area of blame projection: foreign policy creators. This constitutes a significant difference for all theory regarding politics of blame in my opinion, since the aforementioned dependency on a constituency suddenly requires a new model and approach.

Graph 2: Intra-national vs. Inter-national blame exchange in a discourse



Going beyond, increased Europeanization in the spheres of politics, media and societies complicated the re-tracing of blaming patterns further. As Roose et. al. (2014) present, European institutions´ involvement in economic decision such as the EFSF (European Financial Stability Facility) and ESM (European Stability Mechanism) has led to a notable increase of euroscepticism in Greece and ultimately to a perceived threat of German and European institutions as a whole being in a despotic alliance against Greece. The Greek self-awareness of being a comparatively small, yet determined enemy against eastern despot Xerxes I. seemingly recurs in a modernized attempt to recreate the success of Marathon, only this time to be fought against a Western despotic regime. Having elaborated on the strong presence of historical reflexivity present in Greek public debate and political landscape as well, the dimension of Europeanization within the discourse is regarded as still significantly less important, as discussed by Hoesch (2003), when compared to national antitheses such as Germany.

2.2. Discourse of historical reflexivity and cultural reservoirs

As Weber (1922) argues, power constitutes a possibility to position one's own will to dominate a social relationship and, perhaps notably in the context of Greek-German relations, to do this against declared will of the counterpart. The form of implementation of such a superiority of power however may vary broadly, ranging from purely physical force to the utilization of threats, reliance on formalized sources authority or even technocratic forms of power assertion (such as the exploitation of international finance mechanisms to keep continuously keep debtors subdued). Interestingly, the history of Greek-German relations has witnessed a large number of these forms of power implementation, from violent warfare and occupation to a reliance on international and European financial bodies to pressure Greek austerity. However, this compilation is certainly not exclusively or complete. Karlberg (2005) expands on this idea by distinguishing his model of "*power as domination*" depending on whether power is to be understood as a control mechanism to be enforced upon others (the so-called "*power-over*") or, more scientifically orientated, neutral power potential without negative connotations (the so-called "*power to*"). Most notably, he heavily criticizes Foucault (1980), who recognizes power strictly within the "*power as domination*" paradigm, which has been and still remains the predominant thought model for politics in Western societies. Translated to historical reflexivity, it is notable that even without

more detailed analysis, power has always been understood as the means to triumph within an adversarial scenario, whether this should be war or reputation on international financial markets. Talking about reflexivity, this mechanism simultaneously applies to Greek receptions of more recent German initiatives and presents a mindset which Karlberg (2005) specifically seeks to challenge. The notion of his "*power-to*"-conceptualisation would allow for interpreting power both alongside the axes of adversarialism and mutualism, as well equality and inequality. Both axes combined might enable a more detailed and possibly useful tool to shake long established adversarial power relations. These long established, adversarial power relations reappeared continuously in the form of Greek self-victimization and also unfounded German feelings of moral superiority due to better developed work ethics and a general feeling of being judges over a Greek "*failure story*", as described by Kutter (2014). This shows that historical reflexivity does work in both ways, but generally manifests itself over completely different stereotypes (e.g. German taxpayers feeling as being draftees to counter Greek budgetary liberality / Greek citizens feeling as being victims of structural, economical disadvantages enforced upon them). Even beyond, Dijk (1993) describes discourse as a difficult term due to its high ambiguity. It may simply involve an isolated event or span over a multitude of events. As such, he attributes media the tendency to further the presentation of single events as a self-standing discourse, when they are in fact only part of a larger picture. Since the research at hand will focus in policy documents, it remains to be seen whether this statement of Dijk also holds true for the Greek-German discourse, and especially the concept of historical reflexivity.

Contrasting, Beck (1992) names the process of reflexivity as being connotated in a negative way as being misguided. In his opinion, the over-reliance on "*realism in science*" may lead to false assumptions in the relations between political processes because the competence to judge risks and uncertainties are regarded as impossibilities. However, also non-experts may exert crucial insights and their hindrance to do so prevents different forms of knowledge to be recognised, valued and most of all to build up trust. Less abstract, the Greek case presents us with the process of re-appearing national stereotypes directed by "experts" in media and politics, conjuring up anti-German sentiments, while a majority of regular citizens in fact detested this process as being detrimental to any issue-orientated solution, as discussed by Papadimitriou & Zartaloudis (2014). Finally, the discourse of historical reflexivity (Wodak, 2015) should focus on how terminology in

policy documents reproduce ideological convictions and which institutions (social, political, economical) do benefit from this practice.

2.3. Discourse of personalized clashes of policy creators

The public clash between Greek and German finance ministers Varoufakis and Schäuble at times has become the epitome of strained relations not only between both administrations but also between the two European peoples. Advocating and appealing to both Greek reliability in fulfillment of financial obligations and German taxpayers to limit insecurities as well as maintain the appearance of being in control of the situation (Roose & Scholl & Sommer, 2016). Central notion of this discourse is the attribution of responsibility, which is often directed at the commonly expected role of social, political or economical actors. To give an example: A commonly expressed expectation of German policy makers towards their Greek counterparts concerned the implementation of reforms. However, establishing fully accurate attributions of responsibility is very often not possible. Often times, the scope of involved of actors is simply too broad for any fair distribution of responsibility. Consequently, this process of attribution of responsibility is mostly focussed on political decision-makers, both expressed in policy documents and public discussion. As a consequence, either national population is likely to exert very strong interest on such statement. In return, producers of policy documents will feel to immediate need to defend themselves from attribution of blame, yet seek to gain praise from their constituency. One of the most statement representing this mechanism stems from Schäuble as well, promising that invested German tax money will be returned in any case. This is a primary example for the level of institutional framing of a specific, situational context terminology (Wodak, 2015). The felt obligation to his electoral and party constituency form strong social variables and institutional framing, in which his statements must be analyzed. Meades (2015) supports the necessity to distinguish four levels of facets to enable a more reliable interpretation. The fourth facet (broader socio-political and historical context), is however also noted as being a challenge to unbiased and neutral evaluation of such statements, as argued by Jorgensen & Phillips (2002). The concept of discourse of austerity must therefore take into account, that the very term of austerity may simply be an expression of ideology present in the German side of that discourse. Bachrach & Baratz (1962) deliver an interesting addition to this notion by arguing that

the creation as well as enforcement of bias within social groups or political systems may be instrumentalized to further the agenda of one discourse participant. In the scenario at hand, the conservative German economic ideology is presented against a neo-liberal or socialist support of deficit spending.

The discourse of austerity, in comparison with the two other discourses, only became more polarized at later stages and has been extensively shaped by German Federal Minister of Finance, Wolfgang Schäuble. In personifying the reputation of conservative spending morals, the discourse became increasingly polarized because Greek policy documents either focussed on his personal statement or aimed at reaching a more scientific level when arguing about the impact of the German austerity on Greek economy (and in extension the thought experiment to turn to more liberal or socialist budgetary designs) (Kutter, 2014). Repeated German resistance towards discussing these thought experiments reappears in the idea of a "*regime of truth*" established by Foucault (1980) which states that the discourse on debt creation in Germany is largely dominated by conservative convictions and thus creates, in conjunction with being supported by power holders, the message of being true. The discourse analysis therefore must take strongly into account, that the entire austerity and debt management concept is first, a matter of political convictions, and second the way the discourse is talked into existence and historically formed along the lines of a few sources / creators of policy documents seeking to instrumentalize fiscal design for hidden messages and convictions.

Lastly, policy makers themselves do constitute a discursive concept manifested between the tension field of constituency support, power relations in various dimensions (as a party member, cabinet member, in external affairs towards organizations and other political individuals). The repeated clashed of German conservative politician Wolfgang Schäuble and Greek left-wing / partially socialist Yanis Varoufakis became most prominent manifestations of personalized discourses between politicians involved into the overarching bilateral Greek-German scenario. This conceptualisation must therefore draw heavily from social variables as presented by Wodak (2015) as part of her DHA-approach. Also, as Meades (2015) expresses in case about Canadian PM Trudeau, rhetorical structure within discourses between politicians is not only discursive based on terminology interpretation, but also confrontation of completely different schools of political thought, social class and salience attached to the issue at hand. Reverting back to Karlberg (2005), he criticizes human adversarial nature in politics as a product of a political

system being structured as a partisan contest. Naturally, we expect democratic elections to be decided by such an adversarial process of "forced" vote distribution between individuals, not policy programs. According to Laszlo (1989), this model of "*zero-sum*"-relations is detrimental to political processes. However it does constitute a very interesting and also complementary concept to the other concepts developed.

3. Methods

The methods chapter aims at, first, presenting the approaches to gather, categorize and evaluate policy documents rooted in the discourses discussed.

3.1. Methodological considerations

For the subsequent analysis of blame attribution patterns within the Greek-German discourse, I will focus on a total of 30 policy documents, equally divided between Greek and German institutions as their respective authors and publicists. Since my research focusses on the bilateral discourse between Greek and German policy creators, a qualitative research design will employ a two-step approach for their analysis. First, the analysis will attempt to categorize general parameters of selected documents according to the CDA-scheme. This will include sender, addressee, point in time and general classification of content (praise, blame, request). Second, the blaming statements will be sub-categorized into a distinction between whether the blaming issue is newly created / actively constructed or simply deflected. And further, it is of interest to make a distinction between active blame placing and blame avoidance. The goal of this research object follows two general assumptions, which are based the general outline of alleged Greek self-victimization present in the discourse (as discussed above) and in addition the expectation to find a significant imbalance between blame placing and blame avoidance dependent on which nation is observed. If theoretical expectations can be confirmed by analytical findings as well, I expect the ratio of blame avoidance tactics to be higher on the Greek side. Likewise, I expect the ratio of active blame placing to be higher on the German side compared to blame avoidance. As such, the first hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H1: Greek policy documents will most likely tend to incorporate stronger notions of blaming. German policy documents, simultaneously, will tend to be more defensive (including blame avoidance) and conciliatory.

A second hypothesis will seek to address to expectation that policy documents stemming from both sides will be likely to react to blaming or shifts in blame attribution by equal tools and less

likely to counteract by offering concrete policy measures. Therefore the second hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H2: The displayed narratives will often not be associated with concrete solutions or cooperative policy approaches.

3.2. Case selection

The case selection focussed on the timeframe of (and including) the years 2009 to 2015. This timeframe is expected to contain a relevant pool of documents containing blaming tactics, given the proximity to the predating Financial Crisis of 2007/2008. Also, given the number of cases (n=30), a total timeframe of more than six years might fail to depict a coherent reflection of the discourse taking place due to changes of the political landscape.

The majority of policy documents stems from parliamentary publications. Another part is derived from personal statements of politicians. A third part is made up of newspaper articles and interviews. However, these are only acceptable if the policy maker / politician is directly quoted and all remarks are clearly assignable statements.

3.3. Data collection

Data collection will include policy documents from both Greek and German sources. These include speeches, press releases, documents and to a limited extent offical remarks made by office holders to the press (this only to the extent to which a direct quotation is applicable). The search strategy is twofold: First, a direct research in official sources, respectively administrative or legislative institutions. Such include Greek and German finance ministries (Ministry of Finance of the Hellenic Republic / German Federal Ministry of Finance), the ministries of external affairs (Ministry of Exterior Affairs of the Hellenic Republic / German Federal Foreign Office) and also the offices of the heads of governments (Prime Minister´s Office of the Hellenic Republic / German Federal Chancellery). Consequently, the data will primarily stem from the document archives provided by the respective administrative and political institutions. Second, a

growing range of academic papers have shown interest in the impact of the Greek debt crisis onto both European political dynamics and isolated, bilateral relations such as the Greek German relationship. To supplement the analysis of discursive practices within the established timeframe and actor constellation, a selection of at least 30 documents is aimed for. This will allow for a reliable data set, able to depict changes and developments within the discursive practice, most notably terminology used and the intent that terminology was used with (Source, Addressee, Medium) (Blame, Praise, Request). Also, since the time frame will cover the years 2009 to 2015, I will attempt to utilize identical institutions as sources (e.g. ministries) over the course of the established time frame to better depict a form a continuous observation and reduce bias in selection of cases.

3.4. Method of data analysis

The method of data analysis will focus on analyzing the terminology used in the gathered policy documents. A discourse analysis will first of all help to categorize which distinct type of document is used as communicative means. Also, the relationship between communicating actors will be useful to make statement about inherent power relations. Intrinsic motivations for usage of specific terminology will be categorized not only based on power relations, but also policy goals manifested in choice of terminology. As an example: Sudden Greek shift to demand compensations for stolen monetary assets during German occupation in 1941 seeks to balance out the position of being a petitioner. The term crisis indicated that there exists a situation in which fundamental societal agreements / economical arrangements are recognized as unstable and are questioned. Consequently, it is essential to analyze which attributions are made by which actors. In other words: Who places blame / responsibility / praise at which actor in an official way? Also, it is relevant which reasons are attributed to this communication and what the specific event constitutes the frame for such remarks. To include this framework allows for considering the dimensions of “power” and “interaction”.

The “dramatization” in terminology places the discourse analysis at the heart of deeply rooted, historical reflexivity which only seems to be covered by daily routine, however still not resolved completely. Using the three selected discourses, the analysis will seek to identify specific

terminology which is intended by the creators of policy documents to express their wishes / intents within the discursive items. These textual indicators will, first, be quantified in the sense that they will be both counted and weighted in proportion to conflicting indicators. In a second step, I will seek to group the textual indicators into subgroups, which express similar or comparable intents. This will allow for a more detailed interpretation of these subgroups according the DHA schematic.

The aforementioned first step of quantification will also enable to make statements about the points in time in which certain developments within discourses became more prominent. I expect to recognise a sequence of escalating steps in terminology and development of discourse to see how these discourses developed. Lastly, the DHA interpretation of discourses will allow for statements regarding the intrinsic motivations and external circumstances, which possibly constitute reasons for the discourse escalations.

3.5. Identification of weaknesses in research design

The employed research design is developed in awareness of potential weaknesses able to reduce both validity and reliability of the research conducted. Consequently, I will identify such potential weaknesses and present the countermeasures taken to address these weaknesses. First of all, the issue of language skill becomes apparent. In absence of sufficient knowledge of the Greek language, I used Google Translate to translate Greek and German texts to English. The actual quality and reliability of such translations however could only be checked in the case of German texts. However, give the established use of this translation tool, its continuous use seems acceptable. Also, consultation of a Greek native speaker (former housemate) in some cases provided additional translation checking.

Next, personal bias might be involved to some extent. This must not necessarily be negative bias, but might be positive bias as well. Obviously, both the question of any potential bias detection as well as its reduction or elimination approaches are highly diffuse. At the least, I negate bias on the basis of lack of personal involvement or potential benefit depending on the outcome of the research.

A more technical weakness might derive from terminological interpretation, most prominently attached connotations and teleological shifts. The former I understand as the inherent value attached to an expression or term, which can range from negative, over neutral to positive forms of subjective reception. This is a noteworthy weakness, because attached connotations may highly differ depending on nationality or social perspective. To give an example: The term "rebellious" invokes a generally negative connotation in the case of an archetypical German interpretation. Nonetheless, in the Greek case, the same term often is not set far apart from a nearly heroic demeanour. Consequently, when categorizing terminology (such as blame avoidance or attribution) it is necessary to be aware that terminology is a highly subjective tool and should be instrumentalized only if identical connotations are present. Lastly, teleological shifts may occur when attached aims of specific terminology change. One example can be identified in the term "morals", since invoking morals may aim at requesting completely antithetic types of actions supposedly desirable.

4. Analysis

The analysis chapter aims at answering the research question and the derived hypotheses. This is achieved by testing the three distinct discourses according to the methodological approach and complementing the findings with theoretical considerations discussed in the theory part.

4.1. Analytical considerations

The subsequent analysis of the discourses presented will be framed by the methodological considerations laid out above. In order to reach an answer to the derived hypotheses, further development of a tool to analyze the data set selected is required. The first, crucial element for a detailed analysis is a coding scheme. Its purpose is to (a) structure and (b) enable quantification of all relevant statements integral to the discourse dimensions. Structuring these statements is highly reliant on building categories instead of simply identifying uniformous keywords. Evidently, political rhetorics, including those found in policy documents such as speeches and press releases, are much less drawn to utilize identical, technical terminology given the presence of a strong discourse and varying formats of documents. Consequently, focussing on keywords alone will not be sufficient. Instead, a categorization of relevant statements will be applied and is intended to create a pool of terminological subsets which can be attributed to aforementioned dimensions of the overall discourse. (The coding scheme is presented as Appendix I.)

4.2. Discourse I - politics of blame

The discourse of politics of blame features a highly complex terminological array due to the variety of responsibility shifting techniques and multiple forms of instrumentalization by policy actors. Interestingly, the very term “blame” only occurs 2 times in all 15 Greek policy documents. Any explicit usage of the term would indicate a very direct and transparent approach, however it is likely to be expected that the politics of blame are terminologically represented in a more subtle and complex way. Also, the German policy documents do feature the German term for blame (“Schuld”) in abundance. However, the same term applies to financial debts and hence is used extensively (73 times), and only 2 times in the context of placing blame. Also

surprisingly, an absolute majority of the term “responsibility” (26) reveals a usage not directed towards external actors (EU 3, Germany 2), but towards Greece itself (21). Most notably, speeches by Greek PMs Papandreou, Tsipras and Greek minister of finance Varoufakis are directed towards personal and institutional responsibilities represented by themselves. These usages are regularly connected to the ideas of moral responsibility and a responsibility towards the Greek constituency (the people). As laid out by Key (1964), a general expectation is geared towards blaming tactics to be a somewhat transparent and thus useful tool, which supplements political rhetorics as additional means of furthering not only agenda but moreover constituency support. In light of the unexpectedly often self-addressed demand for responsible acting, this general assumption can initially be accepted as a supported statement. This unanticipated modesty reappears in a rather transparent mentioning of “scapegoat” (4), which in every occurrence is not used as an accusation, but instead a self-reminder of not “find” or “use” a scapegoat. This ties in closely with the notion that responsibility is significantly more often self-centered than demanded from external actors. Another relevant terminological dimension involves the mentioning of “failure” and by extension the accusation of having failed at various policy implementations or fulfillment of assumed responsibilities (“to fail”, “failed”). The term failure gets mentioned in Greek policy documents 16 times, of which more two thirds (11) are directed towards the EU (7) (lack of coordination, programmatic and policy failures) and Germany (German banks 1, German nation state 3). The remaining 4 counts include only 1 explicit statement of own accountability (“full responsibility for our failures”) and 3 mentioning failures forcefully induced by externally designed policies. It becomes apparent that Hood´s assessment (2010) of an imbalance between negativity avoidance (what he calls negativity bias) at the expense of taking risks to achieve improvements of a status quo can be not be as easily confirmed on the basis on the contents in this discourse´s narrative shaping: Apparently, Greek politicians will instead somewhat emphasize on the creation of a more positive outlook in a discourse by design focussing on blame. The notion of responsibility surmounting externally directed failure attributions is somewhat surprising. Taking into account the German perspective, the term failure is applied to various translations (“Versagen”, “Misserfolg”, “Scheitern”, “Fehler”). Again defying initial expectations, the first three terms are not even mentioned one. Only the term “Fehler” (failure, mistake, error as common translations) appears 7 times. These counts however include not a single clear admittance or even remote concession of any

possibility of German failures. Instead, a majority (4) address shortcomings of European economic and institutional design regarding the ability to counteract of European economic divide ("Konstruktionsfehler der Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion"). 2 counts explicitly mention achievements of the national government to correct national policy deficits. In following van Dijk´s framing of politics of blame, it is tempting to construct an accusation of oversimplification in the narrative shaping, likely to avoid unshiftable allocations of blame. To admit any distinct failure, according to Cain (1983) will almost certainly not occur as a self-addressed claim but instead as aimed towards the policy creator´s own party to achieve a detachment from public association of policy creator and admitted failure. As such, the German side more often relies on blaming institutional design flaws of the European Union themselves. The expand on the assumption of Hood (2010) expecting negativity bias, a remarkable quantity of the terms "success" and "successful" is present, with 25 counts in Greek and even 32 in German policy documents (considering the translations of "Erfolg" and "erfolgreich"). The scale of positively connotated counts of these terms is absolute (25), not one is tied to a failure to reach said success. Further, the largest proportion is tied into a European perspective (11), asserting the necessity of a combined Greek and European success to ensure each other's economical and by extension social wellbeing. Item 04 represents this attitude exemplary with Papandreou´s statement: *"And our success, Greece's success, will be Europe's success."* Further, 4 counts refer to Greek historical achievements (2 mentioning the Greek revolution of 1821). 4 counts address Greek economical contributions and efforts taken to succeed, generally emanating a stance of optimism and sense of positivism. This group of textual indicators however must be confronted with three essential questions. First, talking points about success are almost never tied to very specific or at least transparent goals. A general call for "well-being" of the Greek or European public can hardly be called programmatic, not even ideologically rooted. Appealing to such widely accepted manifestations desirability does not qualify for a resilient statement policy-wise. Second, contradicting initial expectations, the attempt of shaping a politics of blame narrative in this discourse does not instrumentalize the notion of absent or missing success as a tool to place blame on allegedly responsible external actors such as Germany or the EU. As such, direct accusations are almost non existent. Moreover, the textual indicators are to be seen as notice of intent, less so as explicit formulations of policy goals. There is a distinct lack of objectively retraceable performance benchmarks or quantified promises involving policy performances. In

consistence with Hood (2010), negative receptions following non-fulfillment of potential goal formulations are avoided almost in an artistic way. Third, this indicator group reveals a noteworthy use of personal pronouns, perfectly exemplifying the notion of "We against Them" as outlined by van Dijk´s criticism of the politics of blame. There is an antithetic construction of antagonistic groups, given that the connection of unifying, personal pronouns ("we, us, our") is permanently attached to positively connotated signal word ("success, successful"). This rhetorical tool aims at achieving consolidarity for one narrating participant in the discourse, inadvertently constructing the reception of an external group existing outside the shining sphere of success. Expanding on Weaver (1986), susceptibility of the constituency to such positive outlooks allows to re-frame its entirety with a positive outlook. In that regards, negativity bias appears to be strongly tied into a very selective use of personal pronouns as well. In these cases, it is more often impersonal and tied to objects or processes, however not persons. Casually worded: A policy program may fail, a government may fail, however not an individual policy creator. Interestingly, this ties with Cain´s (1983) idea that policy creators will seek to distance themselves even from their own party or coalition in the face of negative evaluation from their constituency. The will to political survival will eventually surpass party loyalty. In the context of the politics of blame discourse, it thus becomes apparent that a significant proportion of the textural indicator group "success" is not even remotely instrumentalized as a blaming tool, but instead primarily serves as a tool to create optimism, party and voter coherence and indirectly instill a sense of common purpose. Hence, this approach is logically found in the speech of newly elected Greek PM Tsipras to generate support for his newly formed government (item 10). Lastly, there is one terminological outlier in terms of blaming potential. In fact, these 2 counts of "success" can be considered a direct threat. Former Greek minister of finance Varoufakis describes policy success as the means of resistance against different political ideologies (German austerity vs. more flexible spending): "*(...) their greatest nightmare was our success*", and "*(...)if Syriza is successful, other countries would face radical domestic opposition.*" (item 13). This constitutes a rare outlier from the commonly conciliatory notions of success presented before. A success as being weaponized to motivate political discord in foreign nations, presents a connotation of not only passive resistance but extra-national application of Greek policy resilience. The German policy documents contain 32 counts of relevant textual indicators, a relative majority of which (11) is directed towards self-affirmation and self-praise: 6 counts of

underlying the success achieved by the federal government and 5 counts of national self-affirmation, for example emphasizing on the superiority of liberal market design by Schäuble ("*Die Überlegenheit unseres Systems (...)*.", item 18). The notable tendency to underline German economic success serves as a strong sources of shaping power for the overall discourse narrative: If one is economically successful, than the policy approaches must obviously be correct. This makes it difficult for any rivaling narrative to shape the discourse differently and simultaneously sets competing approaches visibly apart in a qualitative manner. Especially in the case of parliamentary speeches echoed widely by the media, the fully intended result of such speeches will paint a picture of contrast (Look here, look there.). This approach ties in closely with the ideas of Tajfel (1974) about improving a self-image by contrasting the achievements of one's own social group to a different one. Further, Tajfel (1974) also mentions in his theory of social identity the separation of all discourse participants or involved groups into an antithetic symmetry ("We against them".). As already discussed above, the terminology already heavily supports his ideas, and German self-depiction delivers another strong argument for an intentional instrumentalization of identities clashing to ultimately further own policy goals. Most notably, the politics of blame do not appear as apparent in rhetorics and policy presentations. Instead, especially the German policy documents display a seemingly thought-out approach of combined criticism, but mostly indirect positive reinforcement. This is done by (a) presenting the German economy as a paragon and not referring to Greece as a negative example, and (b) creating rationed praise for economical reforms and hardships accept by the Greek population. The textual indicator count shows 8 such cases (so one third of all counts). For example the German chancellor Merkel speaking about the Greek success story ("*griechische Erfolgsgeschichte*", item 24) as a reaction to undertaken reforms. Also, additional rhetorical repertoire is also aimed at this approach by re-emphasizing both the European success story (2) and German intentions to remain in solidarity to Greece (2). Lastly, is must be noted that the German narrative handling is geared towards demanding responsibility in a way more subtle than expected. While reforms are demanded, the general approach is considerably more sophisticated than expected within a discourse of politics of blaming. An indirect approach is apparent, through which desirable goals are underlined, but negative consequences from missing policy orientation towards those goals by Greece are oftentimes communicated nonverbally. A notable example is stressing the hardships the Greek population is facing, an elaborate method to confront the Greek government with the

dangers of shifting public perceptions is no situational improvements are accomplished. Consequently, the strength of indirect politics of blame only becomes apparent when observing the conditions under which such positively connotated remarks are made. There remains, in fact, a strong discourse, however one which is contested with superficial smiling, and threats gaining power specifically by not mentioning them explicitly (one such example being the "Grexit" threat made by some German politicians). A final textual indicator group used to evaluate the shaping process of the discourse of politics of blame are the terms "pressure" and its respective German translations ("Druck", "Zwang", "Verpflichtung"). With total count of 7 in Greek policy documents and 23 in German policy documents. The distribution of mentions on the Greek side, as expected, display a focal point on the role of Greece as being a subject to external, mostly international pressure. A special quality is the accusation of Greece being the victim of "*opportunistic speculation*" (item 02), which emulates a somewhat ominous situation of being threatened by faceless external market forces. Beyond that, in a call for action, newly elected PM Tsipras depicts identical pressure as an essential source of motivation for the Greek population to take responsibility in achieving a sound budget (item 10): "*It is the condition for a strong negotiating stance (...). The reason is simple: the less money that you need, the more independent you are, the stronger you are to withstand pressures. That is why our program was designed in conditions of fiscal balance. However, something that we are all aware of is that it requires the patriotic responsibility of each and every Greek woman and man and we invite them to support this national effort."* Lialiouti and Bithymitris (2016) present the notion of national self-valuation being closely linked with economic success. Thus, regaining economic resilience is heavily tied into the idea of national self-determination. Moreover, a broadly re-emerging sense of poverty instills additional feelings of victimization, a process with directly results into additional blame placement towards European institutions. As such, 4 additional counts of textual indicators are directed towards outside pressure against the Greek recovery effort (1), personalized pressuring finance minister Varoufakis (2), as lastly the degree of stress put onto the democratic of the Hellenic Republic. Especially the last indicator creates a parallel scenario to the German Weimar Republic, a democratic system heavily burdened by slow economic recovery after the 1929 Wall Street Crash and subsequent worldwide economic crisis. In contrast, the German policy documents are orientated towards both acknowledging economic pressure on Greece (7 counts), but also put a heavy emphasis on stating that Greece voluntarily accepted its reform programs (4)

("*Greece obligated itself*", as stated in item 28). Again surprisingly, the expectation of finding a significant count of textual indicator openly demanding restrictions on Greek sovereignty or threatening some sort of sanctions is non-existent. In short: There are no direct threats contained in the selected policy documents. Only 2 counts carefully remind the Greek side to be aware of their challenged fiscal positions and the possibility of the enforcement of compulsory loans. Instead, the promise of further support for the Greek case is more prominent (3 counts), for example in items 26 and 29. Here, as already identified above, the German approach reminds of a sophisticated baiting policy to further motivate Greece to uphold its internal and external obligations.

4.3. Discourse II - historical reflexivity and cultural reservoirs

The discourse of historical reflexivity and cultural reservoirs constitute a type of discourse on first sight more loosely coupled to the realms of politics. The logical question is what relevance historical events and construction of a cultural self-image tie into a political crisis. The realm of myth and mythology provide an unending reservoir of tools and most essential, power of interpretation. The narrative derived from a national myth can be extremely powerful, since its core ideas are already deeply rooted within the entirety of a nation´s population. In contrast to a new policy approach, there are no basic explanations required. The policy creators who choses to instrumentalize elements of national myth can most likely be sure that all addresses will understand his message and be more susceptible to its content compared to regular political communication. This idea is also supported by Bell (2003), who depicts a the notion of a "*discursive realm*" in which policy creators may roam freely in order to construct a narrative fit to support a political agenda. As such, utilization of the national, cultural reservoir will also more likely to be direct towards inter-national blame exchange (Graph 2, p. 9), since its highest effectiveness will be achieved when using its potential against foreign policy creators. Also, Pearson and Clair (1998) argue from the standpoint of organizational theory, that any organization which is confronted with a crisis within its guiding narratives, should seek to involve its key supporters in order to retain any possibility in influencing the dominating narrative guiding a discourse. Thus, for newly elected Greek politicians such as Tsipras and Varoufakis, it became essential to quickly entangle their political agenda with both historical

reflexivity and Greek cultural reservoir. Worthwhile goals of this strategy seem to be (a) the potential for mobilisation among their own constituency and (b) at least a neutralization of some criticism from other parties. An assumed heightened constraint to criticize a policy program appealing to national self-perception and national pride seems expectable in this case. The danger here lies into a subtle transformation of a national cultural reservoir and its national myths into nationalist myths, thus displaying political instrumentalization not necessarily in line with the true meaning of the mythology. Bell (2003) writes: "*We should understand a nationalist myth as a story that simplifies, dramatizes and selectively narrates the story of a nation's past and its place in the world, its historical eschatology: a story that elucidates its contemporary meaning through (re)constructing its past.*" The analysis seeking to discern narrative patterns within the described discourse has focussed on the following textual indicator, chosen to represent key terms likely to be connected to said pattern. The term "history" (including its German equivalent "Geschichte") appears 45 times in total. However, I only counted the instances in which relevant historical references are made (which for example rules out unrelated references to the Cold War). Subsequently, in 24 counts a reference towards historical achievements and processes. Most notably, the number of self-addressed characterizations is the highest (17). A clear emphasis is put on Greece´s historical achievements as the cradle for European democracy, development of sciences and its continuous struggles to regain or defend its independence from foreign powers: "*This is where culture and the history of Europe developed.*" (item 04). PM Samaras (item 07) states in this context: "*Circumstances demand that we transcend our limitations and surpass ourselves. We have to prove that we are one of those generations in Greek history that was able to succeed against overwhelming odds.*" The mention of overwhelming odds is a historical reference probably addressing Leonida´s struggle at Thermopylae, the battle at Salamis (480 BC) against Xerxes I., but also contains the notion of resistance against the Ottoman Empire and evidently the occupation by fascist Germany. It becomes apparent, that there is a very strong notion of resistance present in Greek political communication, which seems to be significantly and inseparable intertwined with Greek self-understanding. Especially compared to the German case, in which any notion of occupation or war-related burden is generally squeamishly avoided. The second largest count refers to burdens inflicted by mentioned German occupation and criminal, fascist regime (7). Interestingly however, the majority of said counts (4) does equally aim at deriving contemporary claims (most

notably a renewed attempt at initiating discussions about war reparations). The London Agreement of 1953, through which Germany was able to shed off large amount of outstanding debts. A strong sense of injustice is noticeable in the Greek side in this regard. Therefore, the general Greek tendency is not to condemn Germany repeatedly, but instead to use this historical process for potential contemporary gains or policy claims. Clearly, the prevailing notion is one of active resistance, therefore the narrative does not contain any elements of stoicism. Also, 3 counts include statements of demanding a different policy approach by external actors towards Greece, which is grounded in a somewhat problematic justification in historical transfer of entitlement (item 10). Here, newly elected PM Tsipras states: "*This people only deserves admiration.*". Hence, the idea of a general sense of entitlement appears in multiple counts and seems to be rather double-edged sword. Theoretically, every nation might be able to derive some form of entitlement for past historical events, as such this must be seen as a problematic tendency. Interestingly, especially when compared to Germany, this dealing with, what I will call, historically founded entitlement is not exclusively located in right-wing or conservative party spectrums. Instead, it is the Syriza (Coalition of the Radical Left) in particular which uses this method. As elaborated by Lialiouti & Bithymitris (2016), this can be regarded as a particular Greek phenomenon, present throughout all party spectrums and ideologies.

Another unexpected find is the proportion of explicit demands of Germany based on the occupation compared to general mentions of the nation-socialist regime as a traumatic, national event for Greece. First of all, the term "Nazi" appears 15 times, only 2 of which in German policy documents. On the Greek side, mentioning of this textual indicator is heavily tied into the London debt agreement of 1960 and even more into the German debt agreement of 1953. The core issue present is the criticism that German reparations did only compensate Greek individuals, but never made amends towards the Greek state. Notable is a single count representing heavy symbolism (item 15). The first act of newly elected Greek PM Tsipras in 2015 was to lay flowers on the graves of Nazi victims. The connotation here is not so much a direct approach of demanding and claiming extended German reparations, but instead a more subtle, indirect symbolic act. Given the circumstances (Tsipras´s awareness of very attentive German media observations of the newly formed Greek government and its first steps), his action is one of silent accusation or at least a reminder of German history in Greece. In sharp contrast, the German policy documents contain only 2 counts. 1 about Schäuble depicted as a member of the national-socialist regime

(item 27) and 1 about continued German reconciliation efforts, while avoiding any mention of distinct plans for extended German war reparations towards to Greek state by German president Gauck (item 24). This imbalance exemplifies that fact that textual indicator itself is emotionally charged and also object of completely different connotations. The German side may not actively seek to avoid the term, but nonetheless displays a rather limited use. The Greek side however display an extensive use as a buzzword (at least in two items). Given the awareness of attached connotations on the German side, it can not be denied that a limited venture in Bell´s "*discursive realm*" (2003) is orchestrated here. Additionally, this maneuver enables a subtle containment of German feelings of moral superiority. As Kutter (2014) describes, the Greek "*failure story*" may be too easily judged from the German perspective. Grounding the perspective in an environment of historical guilt serves as a fitting tool to debunk such a perspective. Lastly, 1 count sets the Nazi-reference into a national context (item 13), by Varoufakis talking about the "*Golden Dawn Nazis*", and by doing so heavily criticising a political party of his country. He depicts them as one element in the destruction of Europe, if they were to gain further influence. As visualized in Graph 2, the noteworthy alternative is the constituency. Compared to all other uses of the textual indicator, in this instance the national constituency is addressed instead of an external one.

Another indicator revealing interesting results is "tradition", which appears 18 times (15 counts in Greek, 3 in German policy documents). First, in sharp contrast to the textual indicator of "Nazi", general connotations here are minted considerably more positive. A general guiding theme reappears: the strong influence of Greek historical achievements on political communication and self-depiction. In two cases, the historic symbolism is even transferred directly from antiquity in the modern world (item 08): Greek naval traditions are summoned up and underpinned by the statement of featuring the largest merchant fleet worldwide. The overall majority of Greek references towards traditions contain appraisal of democratic traditions and European values having emanated from Greece. In contrast, the German side only features 1 relevant count in the context of the historical narrative and cultural reservoir utilization (item 24): Schäuble describes Europe as having a "*tradition of reforms"*, citing Greek PM Samaras. Obviously, German tendencies to intertwine historical processes and policy approaches is remarkably less developed within the entirety of the discourse.

4.4. Discourse III - personalized clashes of policy creators

The third and last discourse represents a clash of two selected and maybe most notable (in mutual perception maybe even notorious) finance ministers on the Greek and German side, Yanis Varoufakis (in office as Greek minister of finance between 27th of January 2015 6th of July 2015) and Wolfgang Schäuble (in office as German minister of finance since 28th of october 2009). Despite the very short timeframe of simultaneous tenure of office, the clashing of both personalities quickly became what must be described as a public spectacle and inspired media and artists to create a multitude of articles and works dealing with the conflict. In terms of the analysis, namings of each politician in respective policy documents of the other side function as textual indicators (34 counts for Schäuble being named by Varoufakis, completely disproportionate to not a single naming or direct address of Varoufakis by Schäuble). Aside from pure quantification however, derived implications for further analysis are more complex. First, it seems not surprising at all that politicians representing conflicting policy approaches towards solving a European problem issue becomes engaged into an adversarial process. While Karlsberg (2005) criticizes human adversarial nature in politics as a product of a political system being structured as a partisan contest, the narrative contents reveal a strong importance of personal cooperations. As Meades (2015) discusses, struggles for shaping a narrative between politicians are by far not only guided by political assessments alone, but instead inadvertently include personal perspectives, social class and various saliences. The utmost salience is attached by both sides to the question of how to deal with Greece's debt problematic. As such, repeated German resistance towards discussing these thought experiments reappears in the idea of a "*regime of truth*" established by Foucault (1980) which states that the discourse on debt creation in Germany is largely dominated by conservative convictions and thus creates, in conjunction with being supported by power holders, the message of being true. Consequently, for both sides there appears to be now way out of a pre-designed deadlock or escape from a pre-set confrontation, because neither side will or is able to relinquish its position. A major reason for this is elaborated upon by Weber (1922), who argues that maintaining an inferior position within any social relationship will be associated with a loss of power. In a way, the imagery of a more "hot headed" Varoufakis seeking to lay siege to the long-standing convictions of political "old hand" Schäuble seem commendable, but doomed to fail right from the start. Further, we not only see a

antithetic clash of two political figures, but moreover a clash of the political systems they originate from. As Pappas (2013) elaborates, the Greek political system has always been prone to utilize more polarizing and confrontational rhetorics, accusing "*its tendency to reduce all politics to a single dimension of conflict, its emphasis on deliberate polarization, and its quest for majoritarianism.*" Again, the combination of theoretical foundations and discourse analysis results in two essential findings: First, in a chance of largely refusing populist media depictions of two ego-centrist politicians clashing within a power struggle. The underlying motives and imprints of completely different political environments may pre-define approaches towards narrative shaping and reduce the assumed impact of purely personal characteristics. Second, the case of Schäuble´s none-declared yet exercised refusal to address Varoufakis directly as little as possible constitutes, on first sight, a surprising withdrawal from countering Varoufakis´s attempts to shape the overall narrative. This, being an attempt by Varoufakis pursued with a high degree of effort and organized irritation. (Notable examples include publication of his talking from the Euro Group meeting, considered to be confidential; Operating a personal blog which contains a number of notes directly addressing Schäuble) Still, a constant shaping of narratives takes place by all actors inclined to reproduce statements made by either politicians, most notably the media. In that sense, it is striking to to witness an analogy to Pearson´s & Clair´s (1998) depiction of a void of interpretation. Even leaving room for different narratives will likely diminish one's own narrative in comparison, but moreover this mechanism also applies to the interactional effects between original senders, reproducing agents or other actors taking up the same narrative. Thus, the same way absence of narrative substance invites rivalling narratives, one might argue that the conceived clash between Schäuble und Varoufakis is in fact systematically reinforced by actors reproducing their discourse in ubiquity (i.e. media or panel discussions).

5. Conclusion

The analysis has revealed a number of surprising outcomes, which do challenge my initial assumptions about the discourses and moreover their interaction with the theoretical foundations. In a first step, I will revisit my initially formulated hypotheses and seek to answer these by consulting findings made in the analysis. Next, the overarching research question will be answered by illustrating the findings as well as most relevant lessons derived from my approach. Also, the potential for adding to existing theory will be addressed, this in conjunction with the question where further research efforts might most useful. Lastly, a retrospective view on the working process will present ideas for different approaches and finally end with a general outlook, guided by the research questions and impressions from analysed the discourses.

H1: Greek policy documents will most likely tend to incorporate stronger notions of blaming. German policy documents, simultaneously, will tend to be more defensive and conciliatory.

Hypothesis 1 can be accepted as true only to a limited extent. In several ways, the initial expectations got defied by more complex mechanism becoming apparent during the research. First, the idea of "*stronger notions of blaming*" is relative depending on the specific narrative sought to influence. Still, the analyzed data set provides a clear proof that overall blaming activities are manifested on the Greek side. Concerning the German side, the narrative framing as being "*defensive and conciliatory*" must self-critically be criticized as being to naive. It became apparent in both discourses I and II, that German policy creators do follow a very consequent and steady path alongside their policy design. Conciliatory leanings appear as such on the surface, but more likely are in fact skillfully applied incentives to motivate the Greek side for further cooperation. In retrospect, this part of the hypothesis could be formulated as follows: "*(...) German policy documents will tend to construct a more sophisticated mixing of incentive structures and non-mentioned threats from non-compliance.*" The latter element closely ties into the discussed notion that, operating from a position of strength, the German side does not require forms of explicit blaming and can instead rely on mutual, non-outspoken understanding (for example that failing compliance of Greek national governments will eventually invoke the wrath of its own constituency).

H2: The displayed narratives will often not be associated with concrete solutions or cooperative policy approaches.

The second hypothesis must be negated, when taking into account the now apparent larger framing of the narratives in all discourses. In fact, the opposite is true: since the national narratives themselves appear to be the result of closely linked political ideologies and moreover very well defined performance expectations by local constituencies, every single displayed narrative must be assumed to simultaneously incorporate problem-solving approaches.

Answering the research question, which asks

To what extent and which form do are the Greek-German policy discourses shaped by the competing narrative in the areas of politics of blame, historical reflexivity and personalized clashes of policy creators?

gives room for a finalised presentation of overall findings and results. First, there exists an obvious disconnect between media representation of political communication and actual content; political discourse is way less confrontative; in fact notion of cooperation, problem-oriented action and solidarity are disproportionately less represented in the media. This is a surprise for me, since it could not be expected that there exists such a large discrepancy between media depictions and actual political communication. To some extent one must make the allegation, that media depictions are in fact more misrepresentations of the political deliberations processes than actual depictions.

Ultimately all "We against them" approaches can still be considered somewhat productive. Most notably in the German case, we see an well designed incentive rhetoric implemented into the discourse. A combination of criticism and proposed support does not support an initial assumption of blunt threats (externally enforced "Grexit"). Against all expectations, scapegoating only appeared to a very limited extent. This reflects with the theoretical estimation presented by Roose et. at. (2016), predicting that scapegoating will be more likely when the target of such

practice only has limited means to defend itself. However, in the scenario at hand, Greece would not have been able to find such a target, most notably on a horizontal level another nation state such as Germany. Beyond that, expectations of scapegoating European institutions (vertical level) were not part of a more detailed analysis.

Societal structures perceived as not being stable will immediately result in all actors participating in a narrative to try and define an overarching meaning. As Pearson and Clair (1998) expand on this: Any insecurity will equal a void of interpretation. And since the potential to influence interpretation alone does constitute a powerful tool, not only the content creation represents a temptation for competing policy creators, but moreover the institutional potential to place itself at the heart of a narrative is relevant. A notable example is the media aiming at antedating political narratives.

Even with a very significant usage of historical reflexivity, the suspected transformation from cultural reservoir usage to nationalism does not appear in any form. To some extent there was a prior expectation, that given the strong significance of history in Greek political landscape and communication, would at least partially show signs of concern. Relating to theory, Bell (2003) notes: "*In Kantian terms, the ability to represent history in an extremely partial and easily digestible manner is a necessary condition of the very possibility of nationalism."* This is however not the case. Still, the fact that none of the policy documents from the Greek side are taken from extremist parties or platform (such as the right-wing party Golden Dawn), does not allow to generally rule out the possibility of such developments. Lastly, this is not to be understood as a concern specifically direct at the Greek case, since obviously every nation state may demonstrate a misuse of its cultural reservoir.

It must however be seen rather critical, that historically founded construction of claims exist which are not really rooted or justifiably attached to contemporary political claims. Theoretically, every nation could achieve an array of diverse claims by scanning through its own historical processes. Thus, this is a highly problematic tendency. Interestingly though, it is the left-wing government of Syriza which furthers this tendency. As elaborated by Lialiouti & Bithymitris (2016), the interesting characteristic here is that even left-wing parties are heavily drawn to

utilize historically founded claims. This is completely different from Germany, where a "historical reservoir" (though not a cultural reservoir) remains widely shielded against routine instrumentalization by German politicians in general, and beyond that left-wing parties generally distance themselves more determined from usage of such reservoirs.

Regarding mythology and historical achievements, it becomes apparent that Greece utilizes a much more generous approach towards transforming these contents into actual political instruments, or at the very least strong frameworks for narratives. Since these frameworks are already deeply rooted in the collective mind, any politician may easily its potential for unifying his constituency or concentrating public outcry towards rivaling narratives.

The first act of newly elected Greek PM Tsipras in 2015 was to lay flowers on the graves of Nazi victims. The connotation here is not so much a direct approach of demanding and claiming extended German reparations, but instead a more subtle, indirect symbolic act. Given the circumstances (Tsipras´s awareness of very attentive German media observations of the newly formed Greek government and its first steps), his action is one of silent accusation or at least a reminder of German history in Greece. Ironically (!) this indirect approach bears some similarities to German policy design towards Greece in the context of the debt crisis: there is a tendency to create and instill situational awareness and conscience for obligations, but without explicit mentioning such. It is likely that a balance is expected to bear more positive results than blunt demand construction.

A strong hybridization of discourses remains. The tendency towards cooperation and a commendable willingness to endure great hardships has become apparent in the discourses. This stands in harsh contrast to the attempt of more left-leaning and socialist parties which aim at mobilizing a form a total resistance (national referendum) and do engage more strongly in attempts to reshape the dominant discourse narratives of historical reflexivity and historical reservoirs, as well as politics of blame. As such, the great and rich pool of Greek history and historical self-understanding is utilized and most importantly interpreted very differently depending on how the actor wishes to shape the discourse. Consequently, we must remain aware

of the notion that literally every historical is open to differing interpretations depending on narrative perspectives and goals.

The catharsis is repeated too often not as a method of healing, but too easily transforms into its own reward. The media landscape recycles or arranges public outrage too lightly. A catharsis for it's own sake becomes a recurring method. In this regards, a never ending tragedy may be put into motion. Such a development could, fortunately, not be identified in the case of the analyzed discourses. While certain motives are prone to reappear with great regularity, such as confrontations about austerity and the threat to national sovereignty by European influences, there was no quantifiable or qualifiable mechanism of a catharsis organized by policy creators. To again refer to Aristotle's statement in his Poetics (ch. 6, 2) talking about the notion of catharsis: "(...) *and [it] achieves, through the representation of pitiable and fearful incidents, the catharsis of such incidents."* What this repeated cycle of catharsis might ultimately result in might be called a Sisyphean deadlock.

Further research should therefore focus on the danger of "manipulated national memory", as represented in Bell´s discursive realm (2003). What sets historian and politicians apart ideally is that fact, that the former will not seek to instrumentalize history. The latter however may disregard this and easily tap into a rich national heritage and selectively compile a nationalist or otherwise undignified policy approaches.

The research has proven both in terms of quantification and terminological quality, that the selected policy documents did allow for a detailed evaluation on the three depicted narrative struggles contained within the discourses. Further, the method developed to analyze said documents has managed to produce resilient outcomes. Moreover, it became apparent that the theory consulted and critically challenged could be integrated into the conducted research and played a pivotal role in enabling a more thorough analysis of the discourses.

Referring back to the notion of heroism, especially in Greek mythology, it is often a tragic one and ultimately results in an untimely death of the hero. There are, however, notable exceptions like Odysseus. It seems to be a fitting allegory for the cases of both Greece and Germany, not

always actively shaping but also being driven by competing narratives within the discourses. When I opted for this specific topic, I had in mind the hope for myself to discover if populist, anti-European and often hate-filled outrages witnessed in media landscape and public furies actually are represented in policy-related discourses at all. Consequently, while my two hypotheses must be considered as not true, the outcome for the research questions is a somewhat promising recognition that both Greek and German policy creators are not only subjects to circumstances of crises and blindly bound to self-interest. Former Greek prime minister Papandreou gave this feeling of optimism for a European case a fitting description (2011), bringing to mind the idealized but worthwhile home of mentioned hero Odysseus, who did not meet a tragic fate: "*Will we reach, all together, Ithaca, or will this be a Sisyphean task, to allude to ancient mythology? Is there any hope? Will we ultimately succeed? My answer is yes, we can. Greece has the potential. Europe has the potential.*"

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Appendix I: Coding scheme

Discourse	**Discursive Items**	**Textual indicators**
Politics of blame	Personal statements of politicians (private interviews)	Statements aiming to discredit / criticize by claiming a better cause
	Public, joint conference statements	Remarks in which respect and need for cooperation is stressed, such as "European responsibility", and "responsibility to the people", and a good "culture of discussion"
	Mediated communication over third party (communication via interview, parliamentary speech, other type of public speech)	Statements which seek to re-ensure own constituency about personal determination and reliance as decision maker
Discourse of historical reflexivity / cultural reservoir	Texts by politicians in representative functions	Mentioning of historical achievements, cultural values or myths as basis for policy designs and demands
	Statements by national politicians	Defense against historically rooted deductions of (financial) obligations
	Parliamentary publications	Statements stressing importance of good relations and steady rehabilitation
Discourse of personalized clashes between Policy creators	National finance ministers	Mutual naming, followed by both personal judgments and assessments about the person and the politician

Appendix II - Data set of utilized documents (ordered chronologically)

Table 1 - Greek policy documents (ordered chronologically)

Title	Date (y/m/d)	Author / Authoring institution	Category	Size (pp.)	Source (Link)	N.
Prime Minister's statement	2010 / 03 / 04	Office of the Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic	Statement	1	http://primeminister.gr/english/2010/03/04/german-news-agency-prime-ministers-statement/	01
Special Committee on the Financial, Economic and Social Crisis | Prime Minister's speech	2010 / 03 / 18	Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic	Speech	8	http://primeminister.gr/english/2010/03/18/special-committee-on-the-financial-economic-and-social-crisis/	02
Foreign Policy Association | Prime Minister's address	2010 / 09 / 24	Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic	Speech	5	http://primeminister.gr/english/2010/09/24/foreign-policy-association-prime-ministers-address/	03
University of Humboldt in Berlin | Prime Minister's speech	2011 / 02 / 21	Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic	Speech	23	http://primeminister.gr/english/2011/02/23/university-of-humboldt-in-berlin-prime-ministers-speech/	04
Meeting with Angela Merkel in Berlin | Statements	2011 / 02 / 23	Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic	Statement	10	http://primeminister.gr/english/2011/02/23/meeting-with-angela-merkel-in-berlin-statements/	05
It's the (German) banks, stupid!	2011 / 04 / 16	Greek Minister of Finance	Private blog entry	7	https://www.yanisvaroufakis.eu/2011/04/16/its-the-german-banks-stupid/	06
Speech on the State Budget for the Fiscal Year 2012	2011 / 12 / 06	Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic	Speech (national parliament)	9	http://primeminister.gr/english/2011/12/06/speech-on-the-state-budget-for-the-fiscal-year-2012/	07

We need more Europe rather than less.	2012 / 05 / 21	Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic	Speech	10	http://archive.papandreou.gr/papandreou/content/Document.aspx?d=6&rd=7739474&f=1359&rf=1307755822&m=17793&rm=12740065&l=1	08
THE ANNOTATED WOLFGANG SCHÄUBLE – Commentary on his Guardian article, 19th July 2013	2013 / 07 / 21	Greek Minister of Finance	Private blog entry (reaction to number 23)	8	https://www.yanisvaroufakis.eu/2013/07/21/the-annotated-wolfgang-schauble-commentary-on-his-guardian-article-19th-july-2013/	09
Prime Minister's A. Tsipras speech, during the programmatic statements of the Government	2015 / 02 / 08	Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic (newly elected)	Speech (national parliament)	30	http://primeminister.gr/english/2015/02/08/primeministers-a-tsipras-speech-during-the-programmatic-statements-of-the-government/	10
Prime Minister's A. Tsipras speech in the Parliament during the discussion concerning the reconstitution, restructuring, and upgrade of the Committee for the Pursuit of German Debts owed to Greece	2015 / 03 / 10	Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic	Speech (national parliament)	4	http://primeminister.gr/english/2015/03/10/greek-pms-a-tsipras-speech-in-the-parliament-during-the-discussion-concerning-the-reconstitution-restructuring-and-upgrade-of-the-committee-for-the-pursuit-of-german-debts-owed-to-greece/	11
Prime Minister's A. Tsipras' speech at the event of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens on "The Greek Revolution as a European event"	2015 / 03 / 26	Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic	Speech	8	http://primeminister.gr/english/2015/03/26/prime-ministers-a-tsipras-speech-at-the-event-of-the-national-and-kapodistrian-university-of-athens-on-the-greek-revolution-as-a-european-event/	12
Yanis Varoufakis full transcript: our battle to save Greece	2015 / 07 / 13	Former Greek Minister of Finance (first interview after resignation)	Interview	10	http://www.newstatesman.com/world-affairs/2015/07/yanis-varoufakis-full-transcript-our-battle-save-greece	13
Dr Schäuble's Plan	2015 /	Greek Minister of Finance	Private	7	https://www.yanisvaroufaki	14

for Europe: Do Europeans approve? – English version of my article in Die Zeit	07 / 17		blog entry		s.eu/2015/07/17/dr-schaubles-plan-for-europe-do-europeans-approve-english-version-of-my-article-in-die-zeit/	
"The Greek Warrior", by Ian Parker	2015 / 08 / 03	The New Yorker newspaper - portraying statements of Greek Minister of Finance Varioufakis	Article drawing very heavily on citation	28	http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/08/03/the-greek-warrior	15
				Total for table 1: 168 pages		

Table 2 - German policy documents (ordered chronologically)

Title	**Date (y/m/d)**	**Author / Authoring institution**	**Category**	**Size (pp.)**	**Source (Link)**	**N.**
Eliten dürften sich nicht so benehmen!	2009 / 12 / 11	Federal minister of Finance	Interview	2	https://www.bundesregierung.de/ContentArchiv/DE/Archiv17/Interview/2009/12/2009-12-11-schaeuble-sz.html	16
Rede von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel beim Unternehmertag des Bundesverbands Großhandel, Außenhandel, Dienstleistungen	2010 / 10 / 20	Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany	Speech	8	https://www.bundesregierung.de/ContentArchiv/DE/Archiv17/Reden/2010/10/2010-10-20-merkel-bga-unternehmertag.html	17
Rede des Bundesfinanzministers, Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble beim 21. Europäischen Bankenkongress	2011 / 11 / 18	Federal minister of Finance	Speech	14	http://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Content/DE/Reden/2011/2011-11-18-european-banking-congress.html	18
Griechenland muss sich selbst helfen.	2012 / 02 / 13	Federal minister of Finance	Interview	3	https://www.bundesregierung.de/ContentArchiv/DE/Archiv17/Interview/2010/02/2010-02-13-interview-schaeuble-fr.html	19
Regierungserklärung von	2012 / 02 / 27	Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany	Speech (national	9	https://www.bundesregierung.de/ContentArchiv/DE/A	20

Bundeskanzlerin Merkel zu Finanzhilfen für Griechenland und Europäischer Rat am 1./2. März 2012 in Brüssel			parliament)		rchiv17/Regierungserklaerung/2012/2012-02-27-merkel.html	
Rede von Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel vor dem Deutschen Bundestag	2012 / 11 / 21	Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany	Speech (national parliament)	17	https://www.bundesregierung.de/ContentArchiv/DE/Archiv17/Reden/2012/11/2012-11-21-merkel-bt.html	21
Rede von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel beim Jahrestreffen 2013 des World Economic Forum	2013 / 01 / 24	Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany	Speech	6	https://www.bundesregierung.de/ContentArchiv/DE/Archiv17/Reden/2013/01/2013-01-24-merkel-davos.html	22
We Germans don't want a German Europe	2013 / 07 / 19	Federal minister of Finance	Opinion piece	4	https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jul/19/we-germans-dont-want-german-europe?INTCMP=SRCH	23
Staatsbesuch in Griechenland vom 5. bis 7. März 2014 – Ansprache von Bundespräsident Dr. h. c. Joachim Gauck beim Staatsbankett, gegeben vom Präsidenten der Hellenischen Republik, Karolos Papoulias, und May Papoulia am 6. März 2014 in Athen	2014 / 03 / 07	President of the Federal Republic of Germany	Speech	4	https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Bulletin/2010-2015/2014/03/22-3-bpr-staatsbesuch.html	24
Pressekonferenz von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel und dem griechischen Ministerpräsidenten Samaras	2014 / 09 / 23	Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic and Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany	Joint press conference	8	https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2014/09/2014-09-23-merkel-samaras.html	25
Rede des Bundesministers der	2014 / 12 / 18	Federal minister of Finance	Speech (national	5	https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Bulletin/	26

Finanzen, Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble, zum Antrag auf Verlängerung der laufenden Finanzhilfevereinbarung für Griechenland vor dem Deutschen Bundestag am 18. Dezember 2014 in Berlin			parliament)		2010-2015/2014/12/148-2-bmf-bt.html	
„Man kann nicht auf Dauer über seine Verhältnisse leben.“	2015 / 02 / 16	Federal minister of Finance	Interview (national radio)	4	http://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Content/DE/Interviews/2015/2015-02-16-deutschlandfunk-textfassung.html	27
Rede im Deutschen Bundestag zur Verlängerung des griechischen Hilfsprogramms	2015 / 02 / 27	Federal minister of Finance	Speech (national parliament)	5	http://www.wolfgang-schaeuble.de/rede-des-bundesfinanzministers-im-deutschen-bundestag-zur-verlaengerung-des-griechischen-hilfsprogramms/	28
„Es liegt in den Händen der Verantwortlichen in Athen.“	2015 / 03 / 01	Federal minister of Finance	Interview	2	http://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Content/DE/Interviews/2015/2015-03-01-bericht-aus-berlin-textfassung.html	29
Rede von Wolfgang Schäuble im deutschen Bundestag nach dem Auslaufen des Finanzhilfeprogramms für Griechenland	2015 / 07 / 01	Federal minister of Finance	Speech (national parliament)	8	http://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Content/DE/Reden/2015/2015-07-01-bundestag-griechenland.html	30
				Total for table 2: 99 pages		
				Total for both tables: 267 pages		