

The Dark Side of European Integration

Franco-German Dominance and the Structural Reproduction of Informal Empire

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Even as the sovereign debt crisis threatens the stability of the euro-zone, the European Union (EU) has gained widespread currency as the most prominent model for global governance. Journalists, academics, and politicians continue to make similar arguments for the normative desirability of a “global Europe.” “Could the European model go global?” pondered a *Financial Times* editorial in December 2008 before quickly replying in the affirmative: “It seems everything is in place. For the first time since homo sapiens began to doodle on cave walls, there is an argument, an opportunity and a means to make serious steps towards a world government.”¹ More recently, the newspaper defended its position, claiming that “the alternative is simply to let global problems fester. . . . It is worth struggling to preserve the European ideal—and not just for Europe’s sake.”² Academics have forwarded parallel narratives. In 2004 Andrew Moravcsik wrote that “Europeans remain the strongest proponents of universal human rights and the European Union is a multilateral model for the globe.”³ In 2011 Jeremy Rifkin argued that “the EU is ideally positioned to

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lead the 21st century. . . . The EU has an enormous opportunity to be the flagship for a new model of governance.”⁴ Even politicians have accolades to spare. Jean Monnet, a French diplomat and one of the EU’s founding fathers, posited that European unity “was not an end in itself, but only a stage on the way to the organised world of tomorrow.”⁵ Similarly, in 2007 British foreign secretary David Miliband, not the first person one would look to for euroenthusiasm, stated that the EU “can be a role model that others follow.”⁶

Indeed, the EU appears as the most successful contemporary manifestation of Immanuel Kant’s vision of a federal system of republican states. Kant laid out this view in his essay “Toward Perpetual Peace,” whose second definitive article states that “the right of nations shall be based on a federalism of free states.”⁷ For Kant, fulfilling this requirement is a necessary condition to overcome an anarchic and war-torn state of nature and achieve long-lasting peace. Clearly, many contemporary thinkers agree. But the Kantian model has provoked vigorous resistance, most notably by Edward Said and James Tully, among others. Both scholars highlight and critique the “cultural imperialism” that underlies Kant’s theory.⁸ This prompts the concern that if the Kantian idea of Europe is open to the charge of perpetuating imperial structures, then the modern EU might be vulnerable to similar critiques. In this case, then, much more than the sovereign debt crisis should place the desirability of the European model in doubt.

This article argues that European integration has been leveraged to impose Franco-German interests, thereby reproducing the structures of dependence and subordination characteristic of “informal imperialism.” It begins by providing an overview of the concept of informal imperialism as conceived by Tully and relating it to Charles Beitz’s notion of the “democratic deficit.” The article also addresses Thomas Pogge’s thesis that the Western-imposed global institutional order accentuates structural inequalities that perpetuate poverty in many postcolonial states. It then considers how Franco-German dominance in the EU exemplifies the structural reproduction of informal empire through an analysis of two contemporary case studies. First, an assessment of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), a subsidy system for EU farmers largely championed by France, draws attention to the policy’s harmful and exploitative effects on many African postcolonial states. Second, a consideration of Germany’s role in

the Greek debt crisis and the subsequent EU bailout negotiations focuses on the normative consequences of Germany's ability to dictate the terms of the bailout without consulting the Greek people. The article proposes that these cases highlight that European integration can be leveraged to reproduce the structure of informal imperialism both *outside* and *inside* the EU. It concludes with some suggestions for how the union can become a normatively acceptable model for global governance, namely by democratizing, and hence deimperializing, its integrative process.

The Structural Reproduction of Informal Imperialism

A consideration of how one might see the modern EU as informally imperial must start with an examination of how Europe fits into the Kantian vision of global federalism as outlined in "Toward Perpetual Peace." Tully has usefully reduced the Kantian idea of Europe to five core principles. First, Europe is gravitating towards a federation of independent republican states that, second, are founded upon Kant's six "preliminary articles," the cosmopolitan right to hospitality, and the "spirit of trade." Third, the EU appears as a global prototype and precursor to a global federation of free states. Fourth, the integrative process of global federation is described as a natural, historical means of modernization. Finally, this process would mark the end of the European imperial era of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁹ Although Tully objects to the general premise of a normatively desirable European-style global federation, he is especially critical of the assumption that a global federation and imperialism would remain mutually exclusive. Tully notes that "the federation accepts and builds on this older imperial foundation, understood as the 'will' or 'mechanism' of 'nature', and does not permit any resistance to it."¹⁰ Further, the realization of the Kantian vision need not occur for imperial structures to emerge: Tully makes clear that the current international order is plagued by "informal imperialism."¹¹

Certainly, the notion that the contemporary international order maintains imperial structures is not new. Tully acknowledges that "there is now a large body of literature arguing that the field of public law and political organisation is characterized better as some form of 'new imperialism' or 'empire.'"¹² Nevertheless, Tully's work on the subject is particularly comprehensive and, as we shall see, helpful for constructing a normative case that

resists elevating the EU as a global model in its present form. He explicates his concept of informal imperialism as follows:

The assumption that imperialism always entails colonies is false. One of the major forms of imperial rule in the West has been non-colonial: that is, the tradition of “informal” imperial rule over another people or peoples by means of military threats and military intervention, the imposition of global markets dominated by the great powers, a local governing class, and a host of other informal techniques of indirect legal, political, educational, and cultural rule, such as spheres of influence and protectorates, without or after the imposition of formal colonial rule.¹³

A few key points require particular emphasis. First, Tully’s concept of informal imperialism is not synchronic but diachronic—a continuation of the European colonial rule of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He emphasizes this point by noting that “these oppressive relationships were built up during the era of formal Western imperialism and they have survived decolonisation and intensified in the current period.”¹⁴ Perhaps this is why Tully chooses to conceptualize an “informal” rather than “new” imperialism; the latter can suggest a process of separation and reconfiguration vis-à-vis formal colonialism, whereas the former implies path-dependency, namely that the essence of imperialism never disappeared and remains largely unaltered. Thus informal imperialism constitutes a structural reproduction of the central dynamics of dependence, exploitation, and hierarchy that characterized formal colonial rule.

A second point that demands emphasis is that informal imperialism operates in conjunction with efforts to leverage globalizing forces to diffuse a capitalist model outside the West, irrespective of local custom, the compatibility of an economic order with said project, and the associated economic consequences. National elites outside the West, writes Tully, were “pressured to open their doors to a highly structured capitalist world economy over which they had no control . . . at the expense of local control of their economic affairs, to subordinate their own legal and political sovereignty over their resources to international law, and to learn to call this imperial subalternisation ‘freedom.’”¹⁵ Central to this process are Western-dominated global organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, that provide for “the successful extension of informal neo-liberal imperialism around the globe.”¹⁶

Pogge's *World Poverty and Human Rights* complements Tully's informal imperialism by highlighting how it contributes to the structural reproduction of global inequalities. Like Tully, Pogge emphasizes that contemporary economic inequality is but a continuation of "a dramatic period of conquest and colonization."¹⁷ He also emphasizes that the current economic order implicates the West in the responsibility for maintaining global structures of inequality: "We are, both causally and morally, intimately involved in the fate of the poor by imposing upon them a global institutional order that regularly produces severe poverty . . . and/or by upholding a radical inequality that evolved through a historical process pervaded by horrendous crimes."¹⁸ Although Pogge stops short of Tully by never explicitly arguing that the maintenance of global economic inequalities amounts to informal imperialism, he certainly implies this conclusion by arguing that the West is responsible for imposing exploitative institutional structures that exacerbate poverty within postcolonial states.

Pogge does not limit his criticism of the international institutional structure to the IMF and the World Bank; he also notes that the EU is part of a "global institutional order [that is] shaped and upheld by the more powerful governments and by other actors they control."¹⁹ Indeed, public policy decisions are made within frameworks like the EU "without input from or concern for the poorer societies."²⁰ This decision-making process engenders a democratic deficit whereby the peoples affected by EU policies have little control or means to shape their ultimate outcome. For this certainly violates the oft-quoted maxim that in order for a decision to be democratic, "*quod omnes tangit ab omnibus approbetur* ('what touches all should be approved by all')."²¹

One could argue that, in practice, the maxim that everyone affected by a decision should be able to directly influence the decision-making process often finds itself subjected to qualifications even within clearly democratic regimes. In this light, one should not apply such a stringent requirement to the EU. Indeed, Moravcsik makes the case that "the EU's appearance of exceptional insulation reflects the subset of functions it performs . . . matters of low electoral salience commonly delegated in national systems, for normatively justifiable reasons."²² Agreeing with Moravcsik that the "what touches all" rule is too stringent, Charles Beitz suggests replacing it with

“the substantive requirement that political decisions should take account of all affected interests.”²³

Even if we accept Moravcsik’s thesis and Beitz’s reformulation, Pogge suggests that decision making in institutions like the EU remains undemocratic since policies are implemented *without concern* for the most vulnerable populations they affect. In other words, even without a formal mechanism of democratic accountability, one can still deem the EU’s policies undemocratic if they fail to consider the interests of all concerned. Tully moves a step further, linking the EU’s democratic deficit to his concept of informal imperialism: “Remaking the major regions in the image of the EU,” Tully submits, “would be no less imperial and anti-democratic” than the policies of the Bretton Woods institutions, for “the project rests on a grand narrative of a particular set of teleological processes of modernisation and juridicalisation that are presented as universal but that are deeply embedded in historical phases of Western domination.”²⁴ This adds a further dimension to the problem of the EU’s democratic deficit which is often ignored in contemporary discourse: that undemocratic decision-making processes are central to the structural reproduction of informal empire.

So much for the desirability of the Kantian idea of Europe! But what substantive evidence indicates that contemporary EU policies are informally imperial? A case study of the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy and the Greek sovereign debt crisis helps illustrate how two European states—France and Germany—have reproduced informally imperial structures both inside and outside the EU.

France and the Common Agricultural Policy

Historically, the CAP has been the most expensive of all the EU’s policies. Although the union has worked to reduce the share of its budget consumed by the CAP, estimates indicate that in 2013 the policy will still make up 36 percent of all EU spending.²⁵ In 2012 the CAP probably will cost the EU €44 billion, an increase of 2.5 percent over 2011.²⁶ The CAP provides direct support for agricultural products via subsidies, guaranteeing that the EU “support price” for agricultural goods remains significantly higher than world market prices.²⁷ More recently, the EU has slowly shifted towards giving farmers direct income support payments instead of product subsidies. Bruno and Guglielmo Carchedi explain the CAP’s dynamics:

“Given the low level (relative to the European level) of the world market prices . . . the EU commits itself to buying (through intervention offices) the farmers’ products if farmers cannot sell them at a higher price.”²⁸ This presents a problem, however, because “intervention prices are higher than world market prices, [so] traders could buy at world market prices and sell within the EU at the intervention prices. . . . To avoid this, a *threshold price*, higher than the intervention price, is needed. This is the price at which goods can be imported into the EU and is equal to the world market price plus a levy. In this way, EU farmers are protected against foreign competition” (emphasis in original).²⁹ Sugar farmers in the EU, for example, are guaranteed a price three times higher than the world market price and simultaneously benefit from import tariffs as high as 324 percent of market prices.³⁰ This policy of subsidizing the income of European farmers while imposing significant import tariffs engenders large yearly surpluses in EU agricultural produce, particularly with respect to barley, wheat, butter, pork, and cheese.³¹ The surplus is usually “dumped” in the world market in a process whereby the EU offers an export refund to European farmers equal to the union’s internal market price minus the world market price.³²

To this point, the CAP may still seem a standard EU-wide protectionist policy for individual farmers who could not survive global competitive forces. However, the reality is clearly different. Far from mostly benefiting small farms, “80% of the CAP spending goes to only 20% of farmers, overwhelmingly the bigger and richer ones.”³³ This has resulted in the rationalization and centralization of the European agricultural market because “75 percent of all European agricultural produce now comes from 25 percent of its farms.”³⁴ In truth, the CAP benefits—and incentivizes—agribusiness more than it does small, family-owned farms.

But how does the CAP amount to an informally imperial policy? To answer, one must consider the extremely harmful impact of the dumping of EU agricultural surpluses on the economies of postcolonial states. Maxine Frith of the *Independent* notes that such dumping has had a particularly harmful effect in African states. She estimates that “Mozambique loses more than £70 [million] a year—equivalent to its entire national budget for agriculture and rural development” because of the CAP-induced trade distortions.³⁵ In Swaziland, 12,000 workers lost their jobs because of the dumping of the EU sugar surplus.³⁶ In Ghana and Senegal, where frozen

EU chicken produce sells at 50 percent of the domestic price, the market share of domestically produced chicken meat has plummeted from over 50 percent to 11 percent.³⁷ Wheat dumping has also had adverse effects in Kenya and Nigeria, and cheap imports of EU-subsidized powdered milk have had severe consequences for cattle owners in Mali.³⁸ Starkly, the EU has countered mounting criticism of CAP-generated agricultural overproduction by asking farmers to abstain from planting crops in some of their fields. “The point which is usually forgotten,” write Carchedi and Carchedi, “is that EU farmers are being paid in order not to produce food within the context of . . . growing hunger in the world. What would be more obvious than distributing the surpluses to the poor?”³⁹

In this vein, one can see the CAP as part of a global institutional order that, as Pogge notes, “regularly produces severe poverty” by upholding structures of inequality that evolved in the period of formal European colonialism.⁴⁰ Despite the CAP’s clearly harmful effects, the EU has largely turned a blind eye to African farmers: A recent European Commission publication, *The Common Agricultural Policy Explained*, fails to make any mention of the issue of dumping or the adverse effect that the CAP has had on the economies of postcolonial states.⁴¹ Pogge anticipated that the West preferred to ignore its involvement in perpetuating poverty instead of acting, for “we are less familiar with the assertion . . . that most of us do not merely let people starve but also participate in starving them. . . . Rather than think it through or discuss it, we want to forget it or put it aside as plainly absurd.”⁴²

Turning to the issue of France’s participation in this scenario, we see that the CAP clearly would not exist, at least in its current form, without French influence. Desmond Dinan, a historian of European integration, argues that “the Common Agricultural Policy . . . owes its existence to [former French president] de Gaulle.”⁴³ Indeed, the CAP proved essential to incentivize France to remain an active participant in the process of European integration. Maintaining control of the CAP was so important to de Gaulle that in 1965 he recalled the permanent French representative from the EU Council of Ministers after Walter Hallstein, president of the European Commission, proposed that the commission have greater budgetary authority over CAP payments.⁴⁴ This initiated an “empty chair crisis” that threatened the entire European project, given the unanimity voting procedure

for substantive proposals in the council.⁴⁵ In 1966 a deal was brokered with de Gaulle, who secured continued CAP payments and limited the commission's budgetary discretion.⁴⁶ Today, France remains the largest beneficiary of CAP payments: in 2010 French sugar conglomerate Tereos alone received more than \$223 million in EU subsidies.⁴⁷ In fact, each of the 10 largest French farms receive over €500,000 in support (compared to the €500 in income support for small-scale farms).⁴⁸

To conclude, although protectionism per se does not render the CAP a case of informal imperialism, we see that it allows the EU—and France in particular—to continue to exploit and harm postcolonial states. Indeed, as Carchedi and Carchedi note, “in this case, agricultural protectionism dictates both the type and the quantities of the agricultural products which can enter the EU. In this way, it is the agricultural sectors of the dominated countries which adapt to the EU economy rather than the other way around.”⁴⁹ Additionally, although the EU continues to levy large tariffs on agricultural imports, African states have been subjected to increasing pressure from the IMF “to scrap their own tariffs and subsidies as part of free trade rules.”⁵⁰ It must strike the average African farmer as particularly unjust that the IMF, led by a French managing director for 36 of the last 48 years, would impose liberalizing measures on African states even as France continues to support unreasonably high import tariffs within the EU along with subsidy payments mostly benefiting the largest French farm conglomerates.⁵¹ Not only are such policies undemocratic in Beitz's formulation (for negotiations over CAP funding rarely take the interests of African farmers into account), but they are also informally imperial. As Tully writes, “informal imperialism consists in, firstly, imposing a structure . . . that opens the resources, labour and markets of the imperialised country to the free trade dominated by the great powers.”⁵² In so doing, the CAP helps perpetuate a global institutional order that accentuates global inequalities and contributes to the maintenance of poverty in postcolonial states.

Germany and the Greek Sovereign Debt Crisis

Having considered the informally imperial relationships inherent in the CAP, we must note that such structures do not exclusively affect states outside the EU. In this vein, the Greek sovereign debt crisis serves as an illustrative example of imperial processes occurring *inside* Europe.

We should concede at the outset that much of the responsibility for the Greek crisis falls on the shoulders of the Greek state and its people (though we should not forget the complicity of the EU, given that EU member states ignored many of the following problems, addressing them only when their own interests—particularly those of the eurozone—became threatened). The Greek government’s control of public expenditures is weak, largely because the Greek budget is printed as separate budget lines, rendering it difficult to track where and how efficiently public expenditures are allocated.⁵³ Indeed, “within this system, not only is there a lack of knowledge on which to assert effective accounting control . . . there is also much scope for clientelistic and corrupt practices.”⁵⁴ This is compounded by a chronic tax evasion problem that drains the Greek state of 30 percent of its yearly tax revenue.⁵⁵ Deeply entrenched clientelism and corruption also twice derailed efforts to reform Greece’s public expenditure and protectionist market policies in the late 1990s.⁵⁶ But the tipping point that precipitated the Greek crisis occurred in 2009, when Greek finance minister George Papaconstantinou discovered that the previous government had falsified reports regarding the extent of the Greek debt: “I had to call a meeting to look at the budget,” recalled Papaconstantinou, and “the next morning there would be this little hand rising in the back of the room: ‘Actually, Minister, there’s this other €100 to €200 million gap.’ . . . We had no Congressional Budget Office. There was no independent statistical service.”⁵⁷ Instead of 3 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), Papaconstantinou had to revise the budget deficit estimate upward to more than 13 percent of GDP.⁵⁸ The revision sent shock waves across Europe and the financial markets, prompting the Dutch finance minister to tell Papaconstantinou privately, “George, we know it’s not your fault, but shouldn’t someone go to jail?”⁵⁹

As Greek bond yields began to rise to more than 7 percent (double the percentage for most of the rest of Europe), concerns quickly mounted that the Greek crisis could spread to other European states, particularly Spain, Portugal, Ireland, and Italy.⁶⁰ The fact that Greece could not autonomously repay its borrowings made a bailout package inevitable. Furthermore, it became clear that Germany would be the key player in negotiations to help the Greek state. Initially, Germany appeared to allow the Greek crisis to fester so that it could induce agreement over the smallest bailout package possible, prompting US president Barack Obama to call German chancellor

Angela Merkel and “warn her of the possibility of a Lehman Brothers–style meltdown.”⁶¹ When she finally agreed to participate in the negotiations, Merkel declared that Germany would not support an agreement that did not include “rigorous policy conditions and would substantially involve the IMF,” against the wishes of European Central Bank president Jean-Claude Trichet and French president Nicolas Sarkozy.⁶² The eventual €1 trillion bailout package included €250 billion in loans from the IMF, which attached the classic “Washington Consensus” conditions to the Greek package: severely cutting government expenditure, freezing public-sector pay, and increasing the national retirement age.⁶³ Even the initial rescue was not enough to alleviate fears of a Greek default. February 2012 saw a proposal for a new \$170 billion bailout that included further IMF-imposed austerity measures.⁶⁴ These actions have exacerbated structural inequalities and poverty within the EU. The recent austerity cuts have plunged Greece, which was already one of Europe’s poorest states, into a “catastrophic depression” comparable to the American Great Depression of the 1930s.⁶⁵ Fotis Kouvelis, leader of the Democratic Left party, argues that because of the IMF-imposed conditions, “the middle class is being wiped out. . . . Some 30 per cent of Greeks now live below the poverty line.”⁶⁶

One could plausibly argue in favor of implementing painful austerity measures in order to prevent Greece from defaulting on its debt obligations and precipitating the euro’s collapse. Similarly, one could highlight the incompetence of the Greek state with regard to reforming its budgetary process and cracking down on tax evasion. These realities, however, do not justify imposing such measures without consulting the very people expected to bear the painful consequences. Indeed, the outcome might not be imperial *per se*, but the *process* involved and the *dynamics* it engendered were both undemocratic in Beitz’s formulation and characteristic of Tully’s concept of informal imperialism.

According to Article 52 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, which codifies customary international law, an international agreement is considered valid and binding only if no one has threatened or coerced a party into signing it.⁶⁷ Although we do not know whether the Greek bailout packages legally amounted to coercion, we do know that by unilaterally refusing to endorse any package that did not incorporate strict supervision from the IMF, Merkel pressured the Greek state into accepting extensive

austerity measures to which most Greeks objected. Further, not only did the negotiations regarding the bailout not include Greece but the interests of the Greek people also remained far from the focus of the discussions—it was the euro that needed saving, regardless of the consequences for the Greek state and its people. This prompted one Greek union leader to allege that the bailout package of 2012 amounted to “a brutal, cynical blackmail against an entire nation.”⁶⁸ Similarly, when Merkel declared that “there can be no deal” without Greece quickly accepting the IMF’s conditions, a Greek official characterized her statement as “an ultimatum.”⁶⁹ Merkel even proposed that an EU budget commissioner should have veto power over the Greek budget, prompting Greek culture minister Pavlos Yeroulanos to declare this an “impossible” option.⁷⁰

In assessing Germany’s demands of the Greek state, one must keep in mind that individuals often hail the EU as a model of consensus democracy involving multilateral decision making and compromise among equal member states.⁷¹ Yet the language of Greek officials suggests that Greece was largely excluded from negotiations. Instead, Merkel unilaterally involved the IMF and refused to support any agreement that did not include draconian spending cuts. In this light, deliberations over the Greek bailout packages exposed latent power hierarchies and hegemonic relationships deeply entrenched in the EU’s institutional structure. Importantly, Germany’s economic dominance in Europe allowed Merkel to dictate the terms of any agreement and reproduce the structure of domination and dependence characteristic of informal imperialism.⁷² The case of the Greek sovereign debt crisis is thus a classic example of what Tully describes as the imperial process of “structurally adjusting’ an existing constitutional order . . . and, secondly, subjecting this legal and political order in turn to regimes of public and private international laws, again constructed and dominated by the great powers.”⁷³ Merkel’s plan to surrender authority of the Greek budget to an EU commissioner for the purpose of better enforcing IMF austerity measures is perhaps the most evident manifestation of an informally imperial structure. Further, the declarations of Greek officials that Merkel was imposing an impossible deal—indeed, an outright ultimatum—suggest that no one followed Beitz’s rule that “decisions should take account of all affected interests.”⁷⁴ Rather, the interests of the rest of the eurozone, particularly those of Germany, shaped the resulting outcomes.

As the Greek people began rioting in protest of the IMF-imposed austerity measures, Greek prime minister George Papandreou was left to deplore Greece's "partial surrender of sovereignty" and to declare that "our struggle will be to recover our autonomy and *liberate* Greece from the surveillance imposed by the forces of conservatism" (emphasis added).⁷⁵ Papandreou's statement starkly echoes the laments heard during the struggle for independence from formal European colonialism just 60 years prior. Blinded by the sense of urgency apportioned to returning stability to the eurozone, no European state—least of all Germany—appears ready to listen.

Deimperializing European Integration

The foregoing case studies are not meant to characterize the European project or the process of European integration as informally imperial *as a whole*. Rather, they illustrate that European integration *can* and often *is* leveraged by the most powerful actors within the EU to reproduce imperial structures, both inside and outside the EU. Neither does this article contend that the French and German governments are consciously adopting imperial policies, for it is precisely the continuity of colonial structures that facilitates the maintenance of informally imperial processes because they appear "natural."

The overall suggestion holds that the EU, which began as a "common high authority" meant to ensure Franco-German cooperation and peace in the wake of World War II, continues, to a great extent, as a Franco-German project.⁷⁶ Undoubtedly, the economic power of France and Germany has served as the most important factor in maintaining their influence. It is no coincidence that France's ability to defend the CAP has stemmed from the fact that it is the world's second-largest agricultural producer and that Germany's central role in the Greek crisis derives from its status as Europe's largest economy, making up more than 25 percent of the eurozone's GDP.⁷⁷ If the EU is to become a normatively acceptable model of a new form of regional or global governance, however, then it is the degree to which people's interests are affected by a particular course of action—not the economic might of a member state—that should endow a collective group with decision-making influence. Such a move would begin to deimperialize European policy making. But why should this be the focus of reform, and what would this process look like?

The key lies in overcoming the EU's democratic deficit because, clearly, undemocratic decision-making processes facilitate the passage of policies that reproduce imperial structures. The emphasis on mitigating the democratic deficit is not novel. Many people have leveled the "standard version" of the democratic-deficit critique against the EU, charging that the institution lacks ties to European citizens.⁷⁸ This standard critique is rarely delivered as a means of deimperializing Europe; rather, it is often directed primarily to alleviate euroskepticism through the construction of a European demos.⁷⁹ However, one has reason to view this approach as ineffective at best and counterproductive at worst.

According to the traditional narrative, creation of a European demos will help overcome the democratic deficit by linking European peoples to the politics and policies undertaken at the European level, boosting participation in European parliamentary elections. The view is that democratizing European integration depends upon the emergence of a single European identity. In the end, such an approach is misguided. The preamble to the EU's European Charter of Fundamental Rights defines integration as a process whereby "the *peoples* of Europe, in creating an ever closer union among them, are resolved to share a peaceful future based on *common values*" (emphasis added).⁸⁰ Therefore, according to the charter's own language, European integration should not be mistaken as a process of standardization and homogenization but one of promoting interdependence—a respect for diversity even as common values are reinforced through what Tully suggests could be open-ended "dialogues or, rather, *multilogues*" (emphasis in original).⁸¹ One should not ignore the fact that the EU motto is "united in diversity," not "united as Europe."⁸² Those who advocate the construction of a European demos seem to disregard the fact that in Europe "there are multiple *demos* but they tend to be overlooked and so either excluded from official integration processes or overlooked in them and subordinated to elite-driven and assimilative procedures."⁸³ Insofar as the EU seeks to subvert this rich diversity in favor of a new European nationalism, it threatens to marginalize many of its own peoples. As Joseph Weiler notes, "The potential corrosive effect on [such values] . . . are [*sic*] self-evident. Nationality as referent for interpersonal relations, and the human alienating effect of *Us* and *Them* are brought back again" (emphasis in original).⁸⁴ Therefore, by

focusing on the creation of a single European identity, those seeking to overcome the EU's democratic deficit threaten to deepen it instead.

It is not difficult to see how ignoring the grievances of African farmers in the case of France and the CAP or Germany's failure to consider the concerns of the Greek people during their country's sovereign debt crisis could be associated with the belief that "they" are not worth listening to because they are not qualified (or have rendered themselves unqualified) to be a part of the European demos. This statement may seem particularly striking vis-à-vis Greece, but in the face of the current crisis, many argue that Greece never should have been allowed to join the EU in the first place.⁸⁵ Thus, following Beitz's "substantive requirement that political decisions should take account of all affected interests," mentioned above, would mean including "them" in a decision-making structure that, after successive iterations, threatens to undermine the creation of a European demos. Exclusion, therefore, is the price one pays to attain a true form of European identity and democracy. This insight certainly contributes an additional, more sinister undertone to calls to "save Europe" by removing Greece from the European Monetary Union.⁸⁶ As Weiler notes, "It would be equally ironic that an ethos that rejected the nationalism of the Member States gave birth to a new European nation and European nationalism. The problem with the unity vision is that its very realization entails its negation."⁸⁷

Consequently, democratizing—and thus deimperializing—European integration actually involves working to *resist* efforts to construct a European demos while leveraging the European demoi that already exist by involving them in Tully's model of open-ended multilogues. "What holds these diverse members together," Tully writes, "and generates bonds of belonging to the community as a whole across continuing differences and disagreements is that the prevailing institutions, procedures and norms of integration are always open to free and democratic negotiation and experimentation with alternatives by those subject to them."⁸⁸ This move not only would consider the consultation of the Greek people in the bailout negotiations part of the process of democratizing the EU, but also, by extension, would facilitate the consultation of peoples outside the union who are nevertheless affected by its policies. For example, groups of African farmers affected by the CAP could be granted "consultative status" in the EU decision-making process, a special treatment similar to that provided for some nongovernmental orga-

nizations in the United Nations.⁸⁹ Clearly, this reform would blur the boundaries of the EU by involving external actors in European policy making, but given the growing perception of an inward-looking and insular “Fortress Europe,” one has little reason not to view a softening of the EU’s borders as a positive development.⁹⁰

A related case not discussed here but that is certainly applicable concerns Turkish accession to the EU. Currently, Turkey is being forced to liberalize and “Europeanize” in a decades-old and remarkably elusive quest to fulfill the required accession criteria and incorporate all of the EU’s extensive body of law, known as the *acquis communautaire*.⁹¹ Instead of imposing a unilateral and informally imperial process of Europeanization on Turkey, it would seem more constructive and normatively desirable to engage in reciprocal consultation and contestation of the requirements that must be fulfilled for a state to rightfully consider itself “Western” or “European.” Undoubtedly, Turkey will have to implement further legal and institutional reforms if it wishes to attain EU membership, most notably in the broad area of women’s rights and gender equality.⁹² However, the scope and substance of these changes should never be set in stone and unilaterally imposed—rather, they must remain malleable and open to revision at every stage of EU enlargement. After all, since the answer to the question “What does it mean to be European?” probably will continue to evolve and remain subject to vigorous debate, why should the criteria for EU membership not follow suit? Ultimately, this shift in perspective does not undermine an illusory European demos. Instead, as Tully suggests, it reinforces the many *demoi* (including communities of Turkish immigrants) that constitute the European landscape, thereby strengthening a democratic pluralism whose foundations are already in place.⁹³ In this light, what can ultimately erode resistance to, or even fear of, this approach is the realization that it does not undermine Europe or democracy—it enhances, and in so doing, deimperializes both.

Notes

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92. According to Meltem Müftüler Bac, the Turkish penal code still includes inadequate punishment for rapists and perpetrators of “honour crimes” (e.g., husbands who kill their adulterous wives) (*ibid.*, 27).

93. Tully notes that, indeed, these demoi “have been there since daybreak.” *Public Philosophy*, 242.

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