

Introduction

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The economic crisis in Europe at the launch of the new millennium has coincided with a wider sense of crisis in other dimensions of social life. Economic perturbations have affected European countries in radically different ways, generating a growing sense of a future disrupted. They have also raised sharp debates about the relationships between European countries and their membership in the category “Europe”—debates that have intersected with past inequalities and racisms, both within and outside the continent.

In this book, we use the economic crisis as a starting point to look at wider issues of race, gender, and national understandings of self and other in contemporary Europe. We critically examine imaginings of Europe within and in the aftermath of economic crisis, highlighting Europe’s historical association with whiteness and modern civilization, and explore how these are re-envisioned or contested within an era that increasingly seems to be characterized by crises of different kinds (Loftsdóttir and Jensen 2014). We invited scholars to link their own research and analysis with the key questions posed here in order to provide case studies from different national contexts on crisis and European racialized identities and subject positions.

While economic crises are often theorized as purely economic issues or—within European contexts—problems related especially to social welfare questions, this book offers a different perspective, one based on a longstanding tradition in anthropology and critical theory in which the economy is seen as an intrinsic part of society and thus as embedded in a larger nexus of social interactions and history (Schwegler 2009; Peebles 2010; Schneider 2002). As Stuart Hall stresses, “No crisis is only economic” (Hall and Massey 2012: 57). Crises—economic or otherwise—are moments of potential change, but they can also be implicated in the reproduction of social relations

or prevailing power struggles (Gluckman 1954; Hall and Massey 2012). In fact, economic crisis can create opportunities for multinational corporations and institutions to move social power further towards neoliberal goals, thus creating new prospects for some but not all, as Klein (2007) has shown. However, crisis also has potential to serve as a platform for radical change or as an avenue for creating different forms of resistance (Boyer 2013).

In this introductory chapter, we situate the central question of the book—the entanglement of crisis with whiteness and race—within theoretical frameworks that have critically evaluated postcolonial engagements of the present. The collection constitutes a contribution to critical research on race and European identities by providing a nuanced sense of how racialized identities in contemporary Europe are played out in the crisis context. We explore and unpack what we term “crisis talk,” examining how such discourse motivates public feelings and affects, ultimately shaping bodies, boundaries and communities. We approach these questions from different disciplinary perspectives spanning the humanities and social sciences. While the book’s main perspectives come from anthropology, we also draw insights from sociology and media studies. We situate this book within critical perspectives acknowledging the world as postcolonial—a perspective that has long been part of anthropological insights without necessarily being labeled as such (Loomba et al. 2005: 30). In contrast to scholars who claim that postcolonial perspectives are unable to grasp the changing power structures of the present (Hardt and Negri 2000), we share with Ponzanesi and Colpani (2016) the conviction that we need to investigate the “after-effects of colonialism” and how they are shaping current articulations of power.

Debates about Europe’s predicament and future often mobilize or touch upon reified conceptions of “Europe,” imagined as a fixed location inhabited by certain kinds of people. In this book we approach Europe differently, as a contested space and fluid construction with plural histories (Ponzanesi and Blaagaard 2011). This is made especially clear through empirically grounded case studies that elucidate specific understandings of self and other at specific times and circumstances. Coloniality is deeply saturated in our present, as Escobar (2007) and others have argued, serving as an “underlying logic” (Lee, Hongling, and Mignolo 2015: 187). These contributions emphasize how the articulation of this past and the salience of difference take shape in different European contexts within a time of turmoil. We ask how discourses and sentiments related to Europe and crisis draw upon past forms of categorization and evaluation while articulating

with differences across the European continent. The title of the book, *Messy Europe*, is meant not only to emphasize Europe's economic crisis, but to draw attention to these messy identities and subjectivities that are in tension while they continuously shift, intersect and contradict one another.

Crisis Talk, Crisis Europe

The term “crisis” has its origins in the Greek verb *krinō*, to separate, choose, or judge (Koselleck 2006: 358). It developed distinct meanings in Greek legal, theological, and medical usages, but “at all times the concept is applied to life-deciding alternatives meant to answer questions about what is just or unjust, what contributes to salvation or damnation, what furthers health or brings death” (ibid., 361).¹ As German historian Reinhart Koselleck writes, the very ambiguity of the term turned it into a key concept, and from the 1770s on it became a “structural signature of modernity” (ibid.: 374). It has certainly become an organizing metaphor in the twenty-first century, comparable to the salience of the term “risk” in the 1990s. For Mary Douglas the appeal of “risk” comes from its “universalizing terminology, its abstractness, its power of condensation, its scientificity, its connection with objective analysis” (2003/1992: 15). Similarly, crisis texts are a “veritable industry” today (Roitman 2014: 3). Crisis is used to qualify the nature of any number of events, from “the humanitarian crisis” to “the energy crisis.” As Roitman (ibid.: 3) observes, “through the term ‘crisis,’ the singularity of events is abstracted by a generic logic, making crisis a term that seems self-explanatory” (see also Kosmatopoulos 2014; Loftsdóttir and Jensen 2014).

Article and book titles signaling that a place called “Europe” is facing or has faced a “crisis” proliferate daily.² Texts as diverse as newspaper headlines and works in scholarly journals reveal a sense of foreboding and concern that wider forces are hampering the potential and promise of European countries and indeed others farther afield. Authors refer to “*the* economic crisis,” “*the* refugee crisis,” “*the* Eurozone crisis,” “*the* subprime mortgage crisis,” as if the referent was obvious to all. Yet accounts of these vary widely in location, timing, cause, and scale. Here we reflect more deeply on what it means to evoke crisis in this way.

In her work *Anti-Crisis* (2014: 3), Roitman explores what “crisis” *does* in social theory and in the construction of narrative forms. She underscores the way the “crisis” concept relates to historical

consciousness and the ways events are narrated and understood. A declaration that something is “a crisis” or “in crisis” entails a kind of retrospective analysis, a claim that something has gone wrong, and thus carries an implicit or explicit judgment or critique. As Roitman argues, imagining a “crisis state” is possible only in “counter-distinction to imagined alternative societies” (Roitman 2014: 15), an exercise with a specific genealogy.

According to Koselleck, imagining a time of “crisis” became possible only after a shift in historical consciousness in the late eighteenth century. As a temporal division between future and past emerged, this shift was accompanied by a sense that the future should be different and, more precisely, *better* than the present.³ This new historical consciousness is key to our understanding of the crisis concept and our analysis of “crisis Europe.” When a moment is deemed to be one of “crisis,” this crisis designation carries with it an implicit critique of the prevailing social order,⁴ which is imagined in contrast to how it *should* be. Accounts of crisis, or crisis talk as we term them here, often contain attempts to diagnose the failure, to explain “what went wrong.” The mere labeling of a period of time or a particular place or economy as one “in crisis” brings comparisons into the discussion: a “crisis moment” is understood as such only in contrast to some other era, some better past, present, or imagined future. When applied to the European context, this crisis talk brings to mind both the utopian promise of the EU, in contrast to the present moment, as well as idealized notions of Europeanness developed in previous, often colonial times. How do these past or promised social imaginaries compare with those of the present era? How do earlier ideas of European or national exceptionalisms, subjectivities, and talents enter into the equation when a time and place is labeled as one in crisis?

Crisis talk is thus not only descriptive but also performative, and in this book we ask what work the crisis label achieves. Claiming a period of time as one of crisis leads to the elaboration of certain questions and the silencing of others (Roitman 2014: 41). As Roitman reminds us, even the mainstream media are aware that declaring a crisis situation in extra-large font can actually generate the proverbial bank run (*ibid.*: 116). Which topics become foregrounded by conjuring up crisis, and which are kept to the side? Which kinds of answers and explanations are offered, and which kinds of sentiments are evoked? In her work on the Icelandic economic crisis, Loftsdóttir (2014: 3) similarly stresses the necessity of exploring “what ‘crisis’ does,” pointing to crisis as an “exercise of power” where crisis and the idea of crisis produce different affects.

Roitman's (2014) analysis of "a dizzying array of crisis narratives" found in discussions of the 2007–2009 financial crisis suggests such an exercise of power and indicates how crisis talk can have lasting consequences. As she writes, these narratives "search for origins, sources, roots causes, reasons...none waver in their faith in crisis" (ibid.: 11). These works carry assumptions about how institutions like "the market" or "finance" should function, and thus try to explain how they deviated from some norm or ideal (ibid.: 41). In doing so, they fall into certain predictable patterns with lasting effects: "We should also ask what narratives are *precluded* by the crisis narrative, or the post hoc judgment of deviation, of failure. What are at stake are not only possible stories about the world, but also worlds" (ibid.: 41, emphasis added).

Crisis talk is a constantly shifting field. Indeed, when we first envisioned this volume, we had in mind the specific economic crisis facing so many European polities in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Yet once we focused exclusively on that economic crisis, we found that accounts vary widely in location, timing, and cause. In many works "Europe" is used as shorthand for the European Union, where the phrase "economic crisis" inevitably leads back to the monetary union and the survival of the Eurozone. Extensive discussions of the Eurozone in crisis in European settings raise concerns about the future of the EU, of relations between EU member states, of the Schengen agreement,⁵ of the monetary union. Moreover, Europe-based crisis talk has shifted quickly from economic to social concerns as discussions of people migrating to Europe seeking asylum or work become entangled with concerns about the health and economic welfare of the society as a whole. Here, Western media depictions tend to perpetuate an "us/them" binary that is highly racialized. Theorization of Europe in crisis, therefore, cannot be explored without a serious look at the European Union in connection to wider political and economic frameworks. No longer simply a continent or an idea associated with the civilizing mission of the colonial era, "Europe" has become a remarkable social and political experiment, itself challenged by a rapid series of crises (Dervis and Mistral 2014: 7; Dobrescu and Durach 2014). The UK vote to depart from the European Union in June 2016 (Brexit) further stimulates the sense that the EU project is in crisis and the future is insecure and fragile (Coates 2017). Besides uncertainty about what Brexit really means for economic and trade relations, Brexit induces fears that anti-EU sentiment will spread. Parliamentary elections in the Netherlands (2017) and presidential elections in Austria (2016) and France (2017)

are all examples in which the leading rival candidates are defined as either for or against the European Union. The British vote for Brexit revealed tendencies toward polarization within the European collective (Balibar 2016), with a part of the population of Europe characterized by an entanglement of anti-European, nationalist, and anti-immigrant sentiments that offer disadvantaged social groups a way to express their anger about their own miserable situation (Braidotti 2016) by scapegoating others.

However, talk of “crisis Europe” extends beyond EU boundaries to involve such countries as Switzerland and Norway, which are not members of the European Union but are connected to the regional and global economy, and Denmark, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (at the time of writing), which all are EU members but not participants in the monetary union. Further, a much wider, global optic comes into view in discussions of refugees, asylum seekers, and the suspension of the Schengen agreement. And debates about the fate of nations, whether within or outside the EU, as well as the fate of the EU itself, often mobilize or touch upon reified conceptions of “Europe,” as we develop further here.

Finally, given the shifting focus of European crisis talk, agreement on a definitive beginning and end to the crisis is elusive indeed. In fact, new “crises” seem to emerge repeatedly in the wake of the previous ones; only the labels change. This is exemplified by the shifts in public discourse from “the” economic crisis, to worries that the fiscal crisis in Greece would affect all of Europe, to the EU’s so-called “refugee crisis,” to Brexit. This constant shifting of focus from one crisis to another clearly reflects the dominance of the crisis trope and indicates a need to further elucidate how crisis talk informs people’s understanding and experience of the contemporary world. Like Roitman (2014: 94), we will not argue that all of these European crisis narratives are “false,” or that they are “mere representations.” Rather, crisis talk itself matters as an object to be analyzed and disassembled. As Roitman (2014: 3) writes, and as several chapters here demonstrate, crisis is mobilized to mark out or designate a “moment of truth,” often defined as a “turning point in history” when decisions are taken and events decided. What kinds of decisions are being proposed in contemporary European societies in relation to dire economic indicators? How might nationalist understandings be mobilized as “meaningful and affective constructions” (Loftsdóttir 2014: 21) during moments deemed out of the ordinary, moments of apparent crisis? How might declaring a situation to be one of crisis allow for the resurrection of antiquated or suppressed racist ideologies?

In sum, there is clearly a sense of a place in flux on the European continent, often designated as a place in crisis. In this book we explore how “crisis Europe” is being experienced on the ground, the work to which crisis talk contributes, and the ways in which this experience intersects with, reinforces, or exacerbates contemporary and historical understandings of regional, racial, and gender hierarchies. If the different levels and forces that come together and fuse as crisis are dismantled, crisis can be approached as a “conjuncture,” as suggested by Hall and Massey (2012: 55): “a period when different social, political, economic, and ideological contradictions that are at work in society and have given it a specific and distinctive shape come together.” Detailed analysis of various linkages that are made, and of associations and identifications that are re-activated, result in deep insights into the complex entanglements that constitute crisis in different national contexts.

Race, Gender, Nation

Pervasive or punctuated periods of budget-tightening measures have led people to evaluate how the diminishing resources are distributed—who gets what and why. Such questions are often associated with the emergence and mobilization of racist ideologies. As we have seen again and again across the world, times of economic growth can be associated with expansive outlooks towards others, while times of trouble can lead to scapegoating and worse as resources shrink (Hilton 1979; Braidotti 2016). What effects has crisis talk had on people living in different European national contexts? Is the generalized anxiety unearthing ugly sentiments or accelerating the rise of integralism, outlined so effectively by Holmes (2000)? The 2015 escalation of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe—often labeled as the most serious refugee crisis since World War II—is accompanied by bifurcated compassionate reactions and anti-immigrant populists’ racist claims. As Žižek (2015: 4) points out, an “anti-immigrant wave ... thrives all around Europe.” In refugee crisis talk, the concepts of refugee, asylum seeker, and immigrant slide into each other in public discourse. As legal categories that both assign rights to particular groups and exclude others, the concepts “refugee” and “asylum seeker” have increasingly been contested for their narrowness. The colonial reverberations in anti-immigrant public discourses challenge Europe to confront both its colonial past and persistent racism (Hipfl and Gronold 2011: 29).

Tensions over resources typically foster increased racialization, or the re-racialization of populations who had been integrated into the national body. We see this in the cases presented, although in these settings bluntly racist ideologies are muted, for the most part. It appears to be untenable in wider circles to suggest that resources be divided up according to phenotype or ancestry (Desmond and Emirbayer 2009). Clearly a shift has occurred in the past half-century, at least in the contexts studied here, in that the rationale for the hierarchization of peoples is decidedly not due to purported biological inferiority, even if these hierarchies may map neatly onto colonial-era hierarchies. At the same time racism, far from disappearing, is often expressed in indirect language—covertly, as linguists often note (Hill 2008; Modan 2007). One of the key insights of recent race research is the acknowledgement that racism not only takes multiple forms in contemporary societies (Balibar 1991b), but also attaches itself to other features such as religion and culture, and in the process makes these phenomena difficult to untangle. The use of culture in this regard has been extensively demonstrated: “culture” becomes an explanation for the marginalized positions of certain groups, objectifying and homogenizing masses of people in ways reminiscent of past racializing practices. Racism in this sense is often embedded in the language of nationalism and ethnicity, and sometimes referred to as a “new” racism or “cultural racism” (Balibar 1991b; Abu-Lughod 2002; Bunzl 2005; Harrison 2002: 150). Hierarchies emerge and are reinforced, with people being ranked due to essentialist logic, purported behavioral traits, and moral worth, “even when the language of race is not mobilized” (Thomas and Clarke 2013: 307). The current crisis-talk about migration, coupled with increased economic insecurity, has created fertile ground for populist parties across Europe that feed into racialized nationalistic sentiments. Brexit can be seen as responding to and amplifying growing nationalist tensions in north-west Europe (Gingrich 2016), where the scapegoat becomes racialized minorities, refugees, and migrants (Açıksöz 2016).

The fact that racism “is not a single, static ideology” (Miles and Brown 1989/2003, 107) but situational and fluid has made it hard to define what racism is, and what it is not. Grosfoguel, Oso, and Christou (2014: 636) emphasize that racism is a “global hierarchy of human superiority and inferiority” that is produced culturally, politically, and economically so that racism can be marked by multiple variables such as phenotype, ethnicity, and language. As Desmond and Emirbayer point out, context matters: different racial classification schemes will be relevant in different societies, or in the same

society in different eras. Moreover, race can be understood only in relation to gender, ethnicity, class, and nationality. As interrelated symbolic categories, they are mutually reinforcing and thus have to be understood in context and in relation to each other (Desmond and Emirbayer 2009: 339).

With the shift in focus away from race as revolving around an “other,” toward understandings of racialization as intrinsic to the construction of the European and Western subject, studies of whiteness have become a vital component of contemporary research on racial identity (Hartigan 1997: 498). What makes whiteness particularly challenging as a research topic is that whiteness is not usually consciously reflected upon by those classified in this way, who have white privilege (Hartigan 1997). The power of being identified as “white” hides largely in its invisibility: “white” skin color has become normalized and self-evident in the Global North (Nakayama and Krizek 1995; Puwar 2004). Whiteness, as a relational category, is the “standard” others are judged by (Ware in Blaagaard 2011: 156). However, because whiteness, like other forms of racialization, structures a system of meaning comprised of multiple variables (class, gender, etc.), it too is context-specific.

Scholars stress the need to develop a more nuanced sense of whiteness in the European context (Garner 2006; Ware in Blaagaard 2011), and better delineate how it contrasts with whiteness developed elsewhere. American understandings of racism are often seen as too dominating a frame for research on racism elsewhere, constituting the universalizing of particularism, as seen by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1999).⁶ Essed and Trienekens suggest that whiteness be understood as a “floating concept” in the European context, and call for further analysis of how it is encoded within such notions as national identity, Western superiority, and civilization (2008: 68). In this book, we consider how notions of whiteness are implied in social discourses that associate Europe and Europeanness with civilization, modernity, equality, and democracy—concepts that have historically been quite important on a continental scale (Lewis 2006; Ponzanesi and Blaagaard 2011)—and ask how these notions are triggered by or even central to crisis talk. Positionality matters: several authors productively discuss “whiteness” as part of their own subjectivity as well as the object of permanent critical reflections. Several of the chapters here address the benefits and challenges of such a subject position for scholars of colonial and postcolonial racisms.

A focus on contemporary racism and whiteness requires an understanding of the ways in which elements of the colonial imaginary are

reproduced in the present (Swarz 2005: 231). Quijano (2000) draws attention to the coloniality of power, emphasizing how current structures of power and discourses are informed and structured around ideologies that go back to the formation of the world during the era of imperialism and colonialism. How do these ideologies build upon or reinforce ideas of gender and intersect with ideas of class and sexual orientation?

Colonial formulations about “Europeanness,” themselves complex, were articulated differently across the continent. Europe is rich in distinctions, with shifting center and peripheral regions: discussions of Southern Europe’s compatibility with the rest of Europe following the massive economic collapse vividly reflect discourses of “more” or “less” European places and peoples (Bickes, Otten, and Weymann 2014). As elucidated by Daniel Knight (2013: 150), Greece was routinely described as corrupt and lazy in wider European discourses. While remaining careful not to reify the distinction between post-socialist and socialist Europe (Gilbert 2006), one should recall that Europe’s socialist past and Cold War legacies have to be remembered as consequential in shaping European dynamics as well (Tulbure 2009). Idealized versions of Europe were important as objects of desire in the East, and the recent EU enlargement to Eastern Europe has in turn been characterized by some as a kind of colonization (*ibid.*). Significantly, the category “Eastern European” has long been racialized in the sense of not representing fully European populations (Buchowski 2006). How do such regional constructions (“southern” vs. “northern” Europe, East vs. West) stem from, reinforce, or challenge prior racist and colonial hegemonies? What kinds of “new” racisms are emerging based on different technologies of power? How do notions of crisis influence how whiteness is imagined and constructed within different localities in Europe, and how does the sense of crisis intensify and change older historical constructions? We consider these questions in multiple national contexts, noting how ideas of national exceptionalism, sovereignty, and relationship to the “Europe” construct are engaged as well.

The chapters in this book demonstrate how crisis talk can frustrate long-standing distinctions between self and other, sometimes mobilizing colonial-era notions of Europeanness, race, and cultural difference, and revealing the contours of whiteness. Brigitte Hipfl discusses how a popular Austrian TV police series locates crisis elsewhere—in Eastern European countries characterized by economic chaos and patriarchy—indirectly associating Austria with stability, the norm. Andrea Muehlebach analyzes the racial politics

of humanitarianism, with its differential characterization of black and white orphans in ad campaigns that help distribute compassion unequally while calling up colonial-era tropes. Race is a specter in Andrea L. Smith's discussion as well. While officially France's republican universalist ideals should result in equal treatment of all citizens under the law, the eviction of Roma calls attention to differential degrees of Frenchness recognized by official policy, in which "Gens du voyage," a subgroup of French nationals, have been subject to a distinct regulatory regime due to their distinct place-making practices and thereby identified as a vehicle bringing crisis to the French social body. As crisis rhetoric ramped up in conjunction with moral panic about an influx of Roma from Eastern countries, the Roma, constructed as fundamentally outside European ideals, were expelled from the national body altogether.

Crisis is also strongly gendered: women often carry the burden of austerity measures, as reduced public services often hit women especially hard (Enloe 2013: 102–104). In the Icelandic chapter in this volume, we see how gender is deployed to inform ethnic/national distinctions and thus is intimately connected to local understandings of whiteness and a specific understanding of Europeanness. Hipfl's chapter also demonstrates the gendered embodiment of crisis in Austrian fictional television through stereotypical TV images of racialized, aggressive male bodies and victimized female bodies. Similarly, "real Europeans" are understood as those societies demonstrating (or at least valuing) gender equality, as we see here in the examples of Austria and Iceland, where understandings of national worthiness intersect with a sense of moral superiority along gender-equality lines. Looking at European countries within the wider globe, Italian children are viewed as deserving of a future, while others deserve to just live (see Muehlebach here).

In several contexts, crisis triggers questions of difference through the frame of "deservingness," as Shay Cannedy trenchantly puts it in her chapter. States are responsible for dividing up rights, responsibilities, and resources, as Steve Garner emphasizes in his chapter. As economic crisis leads to budgetary restrictions and the shrinking of resources, the question arises as to which groups are deserving; apparent in many such discussions is an implicit or covert racialization. In the Irish example (see Cannedy here), for instance, we see asylum seekers bluntly sorted—not by skin tone, but through a language of deservingness that deems some asylum seekers "bogus."

Questions of moral worth circulate and extend beyond national boundaries. Recent critical analysis of humanitarian concerns can be

seen as constituting another important avenue for understanding the subtle contemporary processes of racialization in which whiteness operates through an array of discourses that are not in themselves about race. In particular, concerns about global poverty and calls for the intervention of international organizations or well-intentioned people in the Global North help define the “West’s place in the world” (Roy 2010: 12). Actions conducted on behalf of a “universal humanity” have provided powerful justification for particular governing technologies that support the superior position of the West (Feldman and Ticktin 2010: 6). In this way, international development helps create the European or Western subject (Escobar 1995; Ferguson 2006). Stoler’s (2004: 6) work in the colonial archives of the Dutch East Indies demonstrates that such concerns predate international development, with humanitarian social reforms serving as an important driving force in the colonial empire. It is particularly urgent to analyze how this subjectivity links to racialization and racism. As Cannedy and Muehlebach so effectively argue here, humanitarian impulses work with and reinforce a sense of a hierarchy of humanity (Fassin 2011) in which some people deserve more, and some behave better, than others.

The links between the humanitarian subject, race, and whiteness become especially charged when the humanitarian logic turns inward to tackle need at home, for today’s (white) European humanitarian subject is often called on to assist Europeans: we are in a situation in which Europe itself is understood as in crisis and in need of humanitarian support. Muehlebach shows us what happens when the humanitarian logic is turned back onto the nation itself as Italian children are viewed through this lens. Scarcity leads to a sense that nationals are more deserving than “others,” whether these others are located internally or overseas. In Garner’s analysis here, we see how such ideas are secured while other segments of the population are excluded by reframing discourses on the distribution of basic rights. His chapter elaborates how the idea of “fairness” has become positioned against what is seen as “equality” government policy, characterized as diverting resources to minority ethnic groups and immigrants. In the process he describes how the intersection of Britishness and whiteness becomes intensified during crisis, indicating the importance of locating whiteness within a political economic perspective.

From the “fairness” rhetoric in England that provides a hidden way to challenge the “equality” rhetoric associated with multiculturalism (and thus to justify shifting resources to those who deserve them), to the use of a rhetoric of deservingness against asylum seekers

in Ireland, to a sense that others from the East (in Austria), undocumented migrants and refugees (in Lampedusa), or nomads (in France) are arriving with alien values, crisis talk helps create new distinctions between peoples and unearth ancient ones, with some populations, usually those belonging to the hegemonic (white) ethnicity of the nation-state in question (see Eriksen 2002: 98), seen as more deserving than all the others.

Nation-States and the EU

When we first formulated this research agenda, we imagined that notions of “Europeanness” would be front and center in our analysis, and that crisis talk would resurrect colonial-era ideologies about *European* civilization and *European* superiority. The colonial past certainly resonates with EU border control policies. Through border control, the EU racializes bodies based on established histories of European immigration control that in turn were shaped by colonial-era practices and distinctions, while guided by various new technologies of power (M’Charek, Schramm, and Skinner 2014: 473). By keeping certain groups of people out and allowing others to engage with the cosmopolitan present, these border controls offer a powerful statement about which kinds of bodies and subjectivities belong in European space, and which bodies are perceived as *not* belonging. As Steve Garner (2007: 69) has pointed out, the categories of mobility on which Schengen is based overlap with distinctions of geography and class, in addition to being racialized in the sense of clearly distinguishing rights along predominantly European white and Third World nonwhite lines. As elaborated through various studies on migration and borders, those defined as external are also increasingly criminalized through various discourses of illegality. Discourses on the legality of bodies within Europe’s borders are extended toward internal populations, where migration and migrant populations are increasingly monitored (M’Charek, Schramm and Skinner 2014: 479), as are even nomadic populations, as we see in Smith’s chapter in this volume.

Notions of “Europeanness” and otherness emerge in several of the empirical studies developed here, but what is noteworthy is the ways the anxieties generated by crisis talk are most often attached to concerns about the *nation* rather than the EU or some imaginary “Europe.” Despite regular (and often wishful) assertions to the contrary (Balibar 1991a; Castells 2010; Mann 1993; Morris 1997), the

nation and nationalism live on. This finding reinforces what others have written about the European Union and the ways its citizens still tend to think along national rather than pan-national or post-national lines (Eder 2014: 220). Citizens of EU member-states see the origins of the crisis as intimately tied to their country's connection to the EU through the single currency and the Schengen agreement, and the most highly visible attempts to address the interrelated economic and migration challenges politically are playing out at this level. Yet when we attend to how the crisis is experienced, discussed, and worked through on the ground, we hear concerns about the *national* unit, the effects of crisis on the nation's identity, and the future of the citizens of this or that nation-state. Though we do encounter discussions about the future or viability of the EU, identity concerns are more closely related to that of the *nation*: this crisis is being framed as one that challenges the future of the French, or mobilizes principles of Latvian or Icelandic identity, and so on. Whereas some may argue that this is because of certain failings within the EU, such as the lack of real democracy and the need to create a single polity out of the EU member states (see Eder 2014: 229), our findings raise significant questions about the gulf between the sense of belonging to the nation and the salience or resonance of EU membership. Concerns about a nation under threat, moreover, touch on not-unrelated anxieties about state sovereignty, as we discuss further.

Anderson's (1983) work offers insight into why the nation-state continues to carry such lasting force in this era of the EU. In *Imagined Communities*, he famously asked what it is about this form of political organization that encourages people to sacrifice their lives for a community of people, only a fraction of whom they will meet over the course of their lives, exploring what Eriksen (2002: 100) has called the "emotional power" of nationalism. Not only have print capitalism and the creation of standardized languages played a role in uniting members of nation-states, but whole ideological apparatuses have been involved as well: the reproduction of specific histories or "invented traditions" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), the consolidation of an authentic national culture, the deployment of key symbols, the "banal nationalism" associated with everyday practices: coins, stamps, turns of phrase, weather reports that depict the national map, and the generation of a sense of solidarity across the classes (Eriksen 2002: 100–101). In the process, nationalism "can instill passions and profound emotions" (*ibid.*: 106, citing Kapferer 1988).

The chapters here demonstrate the enduring power of affective associations with nation-states, while emotional connection to the

wider super-national EU frame seems less developed. One may ask why this is so. Has the symbolic work foundered (Shore 2004)? Is this related to an absence of “dichotomization” (Eriksen 2002: 28), that is, the need to create sharper conceptual distinctions with an other—a relational concern foregrounded early on by Barth (1969)? Is “EU-ness” only visible in contrast to non-EU spaces and polities? Or is this a question of democratizing the EU, creating a true EU demos, as some suggest (Eder 2014)? As Eriksen (2002: 74) has explained, the EU began in the late 1950s as a “coordinating organ, an economic marketplace and alliance between independent states,” and only in the late 1980s did the focus shift to emphasize attachment to the EU itself. This involved the strategic creation of symbols of shared Europeaness, usually associated with nations: logo, flag, anthem (Shore 2004). Shore (2004: 31) demonstrates that the aim was not necessarily so much to generate EU support but to invent the category of the “European public.”

However, as the need to navigate the array of national and local traditions in the various EU meetings and commissions illustrates, attempts to implant Europeaness among the member states have been fraught with tensions. One of the (unintended) effects of such efforts is that the differentiation between “more” and “less developed” European subjects is often intensified rather than diminished (Graham 2009). Yet utopian proponents of the EU suggest that the current “crisis talk” might itself be embraced as a way to help further such a project. As Eder asks, “Why not venture the idea that the crisis of Europe opens another path of European integration in which the people no longer appear as the sum of individuals living in Europe, but as people linked to each other as bearers of conflicting interests and ideas?” (2014: 221).

Although EU-ness appears elusive in our case-studies, a sense of “Europeaness” does appear in relation to national, gender, or racial distinctions in several of the chapters. This is especially the case when Europe is viewed from the margins, where various conflicts and differentiations can be more clearly teased out (Loftsdóttir 2012). The ambivalence that can occur (as well as insights we can draw) from the margins is here explored in chapters about Lampedusa, Ireland, Iceland, and Latvia. Three of these chapters concern relatively smaller countries located on the geographic periphery of Europe that have a history of being dominated by others. This past, whether we define it as colonial or not, enters into and helps shape the local response to crisis, whether in arguments for or against asylum seekers or in hardship due to the economic crash in

Ireland, or in Latvian and Icelandic articulations of moral superiority that demonstrate mastery of the requisite cultural markers exemplary of Europeanness.

These chapters reflect ongoing anxieties around securing one's position within the imagined European community, the question of belonging, and how membership is affirmed through various social and political discourses. In spite of strikingly different historical trajectories, national discussions within these three countries similarly reflect the ambiguity of Europeanness. In an atmosphere of crisis, these designations have reverberating ramifications. Kristín Loftsdóttir and Helga Björnsdóttir's chapter on post-crash discussions about gender in Iceland finds public discourse on gender equality to be a way of demonstrating Iceland's place among the more stable and affluent northern European countries. However, essentialized ideas of Icelandic women as key symbols of economic development and "order" reproduce persistent nationalistic ideas of Iceland and reveal racialized hierarchies within Europe itself. Shay Cannedy's chapter demonstrates how Ireland's historical association with racialized others plays out in relation to present-day refugees and asylum seekers in either an emphasis on solidarity or a distancing that sees these groups as a threat to the nation. Both Cannedy's and Loftsdóttir and Björnsdóttir's chapters reflect the shifting dynamics of whiteness as historically constituted, and as something never fully given (Jacobson 1998).

The Italian island Lampedusa, located on the borders of the European continent and discussed here by Antonio Sorge, also shows the ambiguity of borders while elucidating the struggles to give them meaning. After 2011, as extensive numbers of migrants came to the island due to its proximity to North Africa, Lampedusa became a hub for cosmopolitan activists who do not view the island in the same way the locals do. Sorge casts this against the precarious economic and political positions of the local Lampedusans. Dace Dzenovska's essay also speaks to economic marginality within Europe, demonstrating that from the perspective of the European center, Latvia's harsh austerity policies are viewed as exemplary, even though they ironically forced many Latvians to leave in order to survive. Her chapter also demonstrates an imagined hierarchy of Europeanness, founded in this case on purported fiscal responsibility

Anderson's (1983) work on nations as imagined communities demonstrates how nation-states are often founded on an understanding of a shared past and common future. As elucidated by Eriksen

(2002: 61, 68), ethnic classifications and boundary maintainance in general can be seen as creating an order in a social sphere where there is a continuity between past and present. As we discussed earlier, citing Roitman's (2014) work, engaging in crisis talk means critiquing the contemporary moment, which is understood as proceeding differently from how it should: the present is contrasted with an imagined future and assumed past (see also Loftsdóttir 2014). Several chapters in this book explore these temporal dimensions of crisis talk as they take place in the context of the nation. In Hipfl's chapter, crisis is located elsewhere, in populations deemed "backward" through a denial of coevalness (Fabian 1983), and it gets transported into Austria through migration and trafficking. Smith's contribution discusses the challenges that emerged when unsettling continuities between past and present were exposed during Sarkozy's expulsion of Roma in the summer of 2010.

Crisis and the State

Crisis affects the nation-state in two ways that may seem opposite but actually are interrelated. As discussed above, crisis is primarily experienced and dealt with in a national context, calling the state to action and thus implicitly strengthening the role of the state as well as the bond of the population to the nation. At the same time, since each nation-state is inserted into a globalizing world (Clarke 2012: 46), the crisis that emerges is never just a domestic crisis. This makes it very difficult for the state to adequately deal with the problem at hand; crisis can erode the sovereignty of nation-states or at least initiate fear of such erosion. Debates about the role of the state are thus increasingly entangled with questions of sovereignty (Sharma and Gupta 2006: 2). Bauman and Bordoni, in their book *State of Crisis* (2014: 22), address the nation-state's diminishing power and capacity to cope with globally produced problems, calling this a "crisis of agency" and a "crisis of territorial sovereignty." To consider why the contemporary moment should be viewed as one of diminished state power, they contrast the present era with the Great Depression. At that time, states across the developed world adopted "Keynesian solutions" by investing in public works and employing labor when there was no work (ibid.: 2). Citizens knew where to turn: the state. But the current crisis is different in that countries are far too indebted: "All they can do is make random cuts," exacerbating the recession rather than mitigating its impacts (ibid.). Today the state no

longer has the power it once had, and much of their work sets out to understand why.

Globalization partly explains this trend. When economic expansion ground to a halt in the 1970s, there was a “growing inability of states to deliver on their promise of providing for their citizens to mitigate the vagaries of fate” (ibid.: 8–9). The idea of the state, in fact, was downgraded at this time, as states became viewed as “obnoxious annoying obstacles to economic progress” (ibid.: 9). Public trust was instead granted to the “invisible hand” of the market, and state functions were increasingly contracted out (ibid.: 10). This has led to “statism without a state,” and “governance” has taken the place of a functional government (ibid.: 13). The state has been “expropriated by supra-state global forces”: “Finances, investment capitals, labour markets and circulation of commodities are beyond the remit and the reach of the only political agencies currently available to do the job of supervision and regulation” (ibid.: 11–12).

As a result of the state’s loss of power to manage its affairs, the local-level political systems in charge of states are unable to tackle the problems that face the state from afar. In this view, states face pressure from two sources: the electors who can put a government in or out of office, and globalized forces—economic shifts, migration, climate change—that “float” in a “space of flows” and can render the decisions taken by the government null and void (ibid.: 19).⁷ Neoliberal moves should be viewed in this light:

Seriously drained of powers and continuing to weaken, state governments are compelled to cede, one by one, the functions once considered a natural and inalienable monopoly of the political organs of the state to deregulated market forces. (Bauman and Bordoni 2014: 20)

Former social functions of the state are now subject to economic calculation, and “viability criteria” are introduced to public services, regulating such areas as education, health, social security, scientific research, and public safety. This is, then, a crisis not only of the state, but of state sovereignty, as state agencies must seek local solutions to globally generated problems, when the industrial worker no longer plays the same role. Balibar (2015: 4) notes that whereas class struggle and social politics secured a certain living standard in the past, today “we witness a double movement ... in the name of competitiveness and the control of public debt. One must diminish the real wages of labour and render it precarious in order to make it more ‘competitive,’ while continuing to develop mass consumption, drawing on the purchasing power of the wage earners or rather on their capacity

for debt.” As a result, the “proletariat” has become the “precariat,” marked by the uncertainty of employment (Bauman and Bordoni 2014: 115).

Within the European context, any discussion of the loss of state powers necessarily circles back to the EU. Balibar (2015: 4) has recently described this supranational project as oriented to a “quasi-constitutional neoliberalism,” with competition becoming a key force that intensifies disparities. Some even argue that the crisis demands a rethinking of the entire EU project (Guillén 2012 64). The economist Guillén (*ibid.*: 62) writes that the monetary policy was misguided at the start, for the euro, in contrast to the strong currencies of developed countries (dollar, pound, yen), “has no regional productive system, much less a state, behind it”. Postwar economies of advanced capitalist countries were national economies, organized around national systems of production and by countries, through domestic polity (*ibid.*: 62–63). In his view, the 1970s oil crisis led to a dismantling and reconstruction of these national productive systems, pushing free trade and breaking down barriers to international capital. In this new global neoliberal order, no “global productive system” exists; instead there are “dismantled national productive systems and globalized agents, alongside weak national governments, and insufficient, uncoordinated supranational authorities that operate along their fringes” (*ibid.*: 63–64). This is the heart of the European crisis, he believes: “a genuine crisis within the global crisis,” for the EU is not a “regional productive system,” but represents the integration of national productive systems; for this reason “there cannot be a European currency worthy of the name” (*ibid.*: 64) as the entire project was established on an unstable foundation.

Once neoliberalism became the dominant discourse and practice, and the “real” power of state governments was decreased (Bauman and Bordoni 2014: 18), the names of today’s “games” are indecision, prevarication and procrastination. The double bind that governments find themselves in by being constantly exposed to the contradictory pressures of the electorate and global forces often ends up in compromises that are unsatisfying for both sides.

These dilemmas are evident in several of the essays presented here. From Sarkozy’s attempts to tackle an immediate crisis by shifting the public’s attention to Roma populations, to Latvians’ submission to austerity measures so onerous that a significant portion of the population had to leave altogether to survive, to England with its myriad, seemingly endless austerity cuts, we see case after case involving national leaders trying to find some way to tackle the economic crisis of

the moment, while presenting a plausible explanation to placate the electorate.

The loss of state power paradoxically encourages state aggression. Under conditions of crisis, there is often a sense among citizens that governments are failing to enforce order, a duty perceived as one of a government's primary roles (Bauman and Bordoni 2014: 21, 46). States often respond, providing a sense of direction by offering more repressive measures of control in a drift toward a "law-and-order society," as Hall et al. (1978) demonstrated in their illuminating study *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, Law and Order* in the case of Great Britain in the 1970s. They analyzed how the moral panic around "mugging" in Great Britain in the early 1970s became the key ideological form in which a historical moment was "experienced and fought out" (ibid.: 221). Mugging obscured the global crisis of capitalism and the crisis of hegemony in Britain at that time, and black underprivileged youth were blamed for an increase of crime, thus preparing the ground for institutional responses to (re)instill law and order. In this way, the state defended and protected the majority against the groups that became the scapegoat for the crisis: criminalized young black males. Smith's chapter addresses a similar case in which *Gens du voyage* in France become the objects of repression.

Ironically, then, a weakened state can become an aggressive state. Neoliberal policies do not depend on abolishing the state, as neoliberal advocates commonly assert; rather, the state takes a "very active role in creating, maintaining and protecting the preconditions of market self regulation" (Connolly 2013: 21). This means that neoliberalism needs an "active state to promote, project and expand market processes" (ibid.: 21). Furthermore, whereas market liberalism advocated that the state should not interfere with "natural" market processes, neoliberalism organizes other parts of civil society in accordance to "neoliberal principles of being" (ibid.: 22).

Fuchs (2013) regards the current situation in Europe as resembling the processes Hall and his coauthors ascertained in Britain in the 1970s. Using Germany as an example, he states that contemporary moral panics vary their objects, drifting from the unemployed to "immigrants, European bureaucracy, an alleged laziness of Southern Europeans, the claim that Southern Europeans ... overspend money, do not know how to run a state and the economy and the claim that left-wing parties and movements bring chaos" (ibid.: 3). Here again racist discourses are at work, preventing confrontation of the root causes of crises—global capitalism, neoliberalism and geopolitical decisions by major global players gone awry. Positioning one's own

nation against what are labeled the “black sheep” in the European Union while adhering to EU regulations is one way of strengthening the respective nation-states. Another strategy can be found in recent elections across Europe, where the articulation of moral panics regarding racialized others by conservative and right-wing parties pays off with increased votes.

The different analyses of Europe’s many crises have produced radically different prognoses. It is partly for this reason that we cannot pinpoint a clear-cut trajectory, periodicity, or geographical boundary in our narration, for to do so brings a whole explanatory apparatus in through the back door: some date “the” crisis to the period immediately following the subprime mortgage crisis at the end of 2007, but others argue it commenced with the implementation of the euro, or with political economic shifts a previous generation of leaders took in response to the oil crisis of the 1970s. Others argue that its roots lie in the devastation of World War II. Though we cannot pinpoint a particular starting point, this latest crisis period has settled into a more generalized state, and we endeavor here to delineate some of the ways it shapes everyday life in diverse locales across the continent.

The case studies presented in this book reflect not only the value of interdisciplinary work and conversations, but also anthropology’s methodological flexibility, critically adjusting its methods to changing social realities and thus reflecting, in a way, the “messiness” of both everyday life and the anthropological method. Anthropology has resisted the urge to box in its methods as either quantitative or qualitative (LeCompte 1999: 54), and highly valuing “experience” as a source of insights (Okely 1992) and using different approaches to doing research for deeper understandings (Walcott 1999). As Gabriella Modan (2016) has argued, rapidly changing ways of communicating raise methodological challenges for anthropology and also influence the ways in which anthropologists can engage with their subjects during and after research through various social media. Various communication technologies make it easier to “stay in touch” as local media discussions go global. The chapters reflect this fluidity of methods. Hipfl’s and Garner’s chapters reflect the methodologies used in their respective disciplines (media and cultural studies, sociology), while the remaining chapters are all written by anthropologists with extensive fieldwork experience in the social settings they discuss. The essays by Cannedy and Sorge convey the results of the classic ethnographic research that has been the hallmark of anthropological methods. The chapters by Muehlebach, Loftsdóttir and Björnsdóttir, Dzenovska, and Smith reflect continued engagement

with their ethnographic fieldwork site and base their insights on earlier or continuous fieldwork while also making extensive use of diverse materials, including media articles, images, blogs, and archival sources. Anthropology's commitment to flexibility in its embrace of different methods and materials for analysis makes for particularly effective analyses of the fluid landscape and discursive sites that have characterized Europe in crisis.

In Conclusion: Crisis as a Structure of Feeling

Raymond Williams (1977: 131), in his search for a deeper understanding of cultural and historical specificities, used the term “structures of feeling” to designate “a particular quality of social experience and relationship, historically distinct from other particular qualities, which gives the sense of a ... period.” Structures of feeling designate what it feels like to be in a particular situation—the sense of how lives are lived and experienced, which includes the affective practices and emotions circulating in society. They include the role of “imagination” in our current interconnected reality and its workings as a “social fact,” as captured by Appadurai's (1996: 5–7) work on globalization. The chapters in this book illuminate what it is like to live under conditions of crisis in different national contexts, and also offer insights into the ways in which crisis talk evokes affective reactions, not least to legitimize state policies and interventions. Crisis talk can be one approach to win social consent and build or reactivate a certain common sense, as the examples of Iceland and Latvia with their respective national identity constructions demonstrate clearly.

How would we describe the structures of feeling of the contemporary conjuncture? It is fair to say that the present atmosphere is characterized by a sense of precariousness: many feel deprived of the past promise of a predictable future, a sentiment shared even by those critical of this future (Muehlebach 2013: 297). As Hipfl lucidly demonstrates here, the media are involved: TV crime fiction, with its continuous repetition of scenarios of crisis, both reflects and provides an education in living with precarity: not only does it reflect the “structure of feeling” of the contemporary moment, but it instructs its audience on how to live with persistent anxiety and uncertainty. The continent is experiencing waves of crisis that roll from one end to the other, a situation narrated in the language of germ theory as an ailment spreading from one country to the next like a contagious epidemic.

When it comes to Europe's current crises, there seems to be a growing sense that the crises will not disappear, and that we have to learn how to live with them (Bauman and Bordoni 2014; Balibar 2010). The volume as a whole clearly reflects this sentiment, as well as the public feelings that emerge with crisis talk. The case studies illustrate how specific emotions are mobilized and analyze the work they do, effecting different bodies differently and opening or foreclosing a possible future and sociality. Although some have argued, perhaps hopefully, that crisis can be generative of positive change (Eder 2014), the mood is quite different in the cases presented here. The issue of increased distribution of wealth to a few in the face of growing class binaries (Harvey 2005) intersects with the increased sense of precariousness and loss of a future. As phrased by anthropologist James Clifford (2012: 422), there is a lingering sense that "it is impossible to say with certainty what comes next", which indicates the sense of loss of a vision for the future, or at least a predictable one (Muehlebach 2013: 297).

Referring back to the title of this volume, *Messy Europe*: within contemporary narratives the concept "messy" often has a negative meaning of something disorganized, untidy, disorderly, confusing, or even dirty. With the title of the book, we emphasize the ambiguity of the term messy, drawing attention to discourses that describe Europe as a "mess" due to its financial crisis, exemplified by crisis talk, while at the same time stressing that messiness is a positive, intrinsic, and undervalued aspect of human life. Europe's messiness is also constituted in its overlapping subjectivities and identities, which, despite efforts to reduce them into discrete national, ethnic, or racist categories, resist such simplification. The crisis talk in the aftermath of the financial crisis makes it all too clear that identities in Europe are messy in the positive sense of being plural—the results of intersecting categories and histories that have never fitted neatly into the boxes created in attempts to organize a confusing social world. As part of the chaos that is humanity, Europe itself has never had clear boundaries, meaning, or origins.

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Notes

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1. Koselleck (2006) offers a thorough review of the term “crisis,” its entry into different European national languages, its expansion in the nineteenth century, and usage in the present.
2. For outsiders to the European context, a basic account of the recent crisis starts with the economic crisis that arrived almost without warning immediately following the subprime mortgage crisis that began in the United States in 2007 (Guillén 2012: 42). Following worldwide recession, it reached Europe with Iceland’s collapse, spreading into Greece, Ireland, Spain, and the United Kingdom by 2009 and on to Portugal, Belgium, Italy, and later France (ibid.: 54). With a bailout plan involving the International Monetary Fund (IMF), countries across the Eurozone began implementing austerity or structural-adjustment policies that eroded welfare states constructed over decades (ibid.: 55).
3. Koselleck dates the current meaning of the crisis concept to eighteenth-century Europe and the emergence of a new historical consciousness

involving a shift away from a Christian understanding of time (2006; see Roitman 2014: 18). Before this shift, it was widely imagined that the future would bring nothing new and sinful humans would not change until the expected end of the world. After the emergence of a new understanding of time, philosophers argued that the future would be different from the past, and in fact *should* be different. Koselleck explored how the political utopianism of the era involved a new “moral demand for a difference between the past and the future” (Koselleck 1988: 98–137, 2002: 110–44, in Roitman 2014: 28). This shift is intimately related to the idea of “progress,” intrinsic to the idea of modernity (Roitman 2014; Norgaard 1994: 49).

4. “Crisis” and “critique” are cognates, an important point underscored by Koselleck (1988, 2002, in Roitman 2014).
5. Schengen is the European agreement on mobility that abolishes border checks between European countries that are part of the agreement; meanwhile external border control continues to exist.
6. Scholarship in the United States is ever evolving. While acknowledging the primary importance of the black/white binary, recent research asks for more nuanced analysis of the interplay of race and ethnicity (Hartgen 1997; Smith and Eisenstein 2013).
7. As Bauman and Bordoni (2014: 29) write, the separation of power and politics is lethal to a democratic state: the constitution promises that citizens will be involved in making common decisions, but these are now made by bodies of people who are appointed non-democratically.

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