



Ινστιτούτο Διεθνών Οικονομικών Σχέσεων
Institute of International Economic Relations

China's Image in Greece 2008-2018



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October 2018

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Introduction and Acknowledgements

A growing and increasingly self-confident China is generating a global debate and no country has remained out of the fray. So far, the discourse on China's rise and its footprint in Europe, including Greece, has been related mostly to the volume of Chinese investment as an explanation for Beijing's growing influence in the region. While this focus is understandable and well-justified, researchers and policy-makers alike may be losing sight of some less discernible parameters of China's image. What are these less visible factors? Those that are not necessarily measured in dollars or euros and have more to do with perceptions, emotions and attitudes. Beijing authorities themselves are eager to receive feedback on the way China is viewed by European societies and the China-CEE Institute has recently commissioned several studies on perceptions of the China-led 16+1 platform in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). In this sense, the report produced by the Institute of International Economic Relations (IIER) aims to provide much-needed insight into the underlying reasons behind China's image in Greece.

The IIER study aspires to add to a still limited, but growing, body of literature on China-related media coverage in Europe. In the EU, the only similar attempt of late has been the ChinfluenCE project, which aims to map Chinese political and economic presence as reflected by the media in the CEE region. Although the research in question has a slightly different focus, the project partners have monitored a wide range of national media and have presented their findings in a comprehensive report¹ that has been duly taken into account. In addition, the IIER study has benefited from inputs provided by some of the institute's partners from the European Think tank Network on China (ETNC).

The IIER report covers three main areas of research, namely: (i) surveys of the way China is perceived by the general public in Greece; (ii) an analysis of selected Greek media and their coverage of China-related news; (iii) other – and, in particular, less discernible – factors that may also contribute to shaping up views of China in Greece. The period of time covered by the report spans from 2008 to 2018, the rationale behind this being that China's presence in Greece became very visible with the concession agreement for the port of Piraeus signed by the Greek government and the Chinese shipping giant COSCO in 2008.²

Given that perceptions are not easy to peg in measurement units, the IIER team opted for a mix of a data-driven approach and an attempt at a socio-psychological interpretation of trends presented in the report. The IIER researchers took into account 43 surveys carried out by both foreign and Greek polling agencies. Next, the team reviewed 1,386 articles available on the web, and published by ten Greek newspapers and news portals. A detailed note in Annex 1 lays out the scope of the research as well as the methodological framework and tools used. The other Annexes correspond to the three chapters in the main body of the report.

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the proof readers of this report for their substantive and constructive suggestions. Many thanks to Prof. Asteris Huliaras of the University of the Peloponnese; Mr John Psaropoulos, correspondent of Al-Jazeera in Greece; Dr Frans-Paul van der Putten of the Clingendael Institute in the Netherlands; Mr Richard Werly, European Affairs correspondent of the Swiss daily *Le Temps*; Dr Tamás Matura from the Corvinus University of Budapest; and, last but not least, the Director of IIER, Prof. Charalambos Tsardanidis of the University of the Aegean.

¹ Ivana Karásková, Tamás Matura, Richard Q. Turcsányi and Matej Šimalčík, 'Central Europe for Sale: The Politics of China's Influence', *AMO*, April 2018, https://www.amo.cz/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/AMO_central-europe-for-sale-the-politics-of-chinese-influence.pdf.

² This was when the conglomerate China COSCO Shipping signed a concession agreement with the Greek government for a big part of the Piraeus sea port. In 2016, COSCO took over the management of the entire Piraeus Port Authority (PPA).

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Abbreviations

ADMIE – (Greek acronym for) Independent Power Transmission Operator

AFP – L’Agence France-Presse

AMO – (Czech acronym for) ‘Association for International Affairs’

AMNA – Athens & Macedonian News Agency

ANEL – (Greek acronym for) Independent Greeks

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

BRI – Belt and Road Initiative

CEE – Central and Eastern Europe

CEIS – China Economic Information Service

ChinfluenCE – Chinese Influence in Central Europe

CMEC - China Machinery Engineering Corporation

COSCO – China Ocean Shipping Company

ETNC – European Think tank Network on China

EU – European Union

FDI – Foreign Direct Investment

GPO – Greek Public Opinion

IHT – International Herald Tribune

IIER – Institute of International Economic Relations

IPTO - Independent Power Transmission Operator

MES – Market Economy Status

MoU – Memorandum of Understanding

OBOR – One Belt, One Road

PPA – Piraeus Port Authority

PRC – People’s Republic of China

SCS – South China Sea

SYRIZA – (Greek acronym for) Coalition of the Radical Left

Executive Summary

Since 2008, the increasingly close ties between Greece and China have caught the attention of the world media and there has been speculation about where this ‘romance’ is heading. At the same time, there has been no comprehensive study of the way Greeks themselves perceive China and this evolving relationship. The IIER report aspires to contribute to related literature on China’s image in Greece and the role of the Greek media.

What do Greeks think of China?

A consistent pattern recorded by most of the surveys reviewed is that, in general, Greeks have a positive view of China, and it is more favourable than perceptions of China in other European and western countries. Greek citizens are well aware of China’s growing weight on the international scene and view it as a global superpower. Unlike most westerners, Greeks lean positively in their understanding of China’s influence, though they do consider it to be a threat to Europe. At the same time, Greeks do not think highly of China’s political system, which does not qualify as a democracy in their eyes. Nor do they envy life and work in China, and find Chinese commodities of inferior quality to that of western goods.

Therefore, Greeks are not disposed negatively towards China, but they certainly are not bewitched by it either. Further, apart from the ambivalent mood of the Greek general public about China, there are three distinct contradictions transpiring through opinion polls in Greece:

- (i) While China’s image in Greece is not exactly flattering with regard to living standards, social cohesion, form of government, human rights, work safety, environmental challenges, etc., Greeks have high expectations and view the Asian giant as an important economic and political partner.
- (ii) While China’s growing prowess is seen by Greeks as bad news for Europe, it is perceived as good news for Greece, as if Greece were not in Europe;
- (iii) While the vast majority of Greeks are adamantly opposed to globalisation, many Greeks expect China, the *par excellence* beneficiary of globalisation, to help the Greek economy stand on its feet again.

What do Greeks learn about China from the media?

China is not in the spotlight of the public discourse in Greece, which has been struggling with a severe socio-economic crisis and political turmoil. Yet, China does have its fair share of media coverage. The media outlets monitored by IIER offer the general public a commendably wide spectrum of news about China relating to developments within the country and on the international scene alike. If interested, Greek readers are given the chance to learn a lot about the emerging superpower.

Sino-Greek economic relations account for a large share of China-related media coverage. Relevant news items focus primarily on Chinese investment in Greece, and the ambitious Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) is repeatedly referred to. Greece is often presented as a gateway to the

EU and a launch pad for a major transport corridor from the Mediterranean to Central Europe. Cultural cooperation between the two countries is not covered to the same extent, but it is marked by very positive connotations.

Both the content and tone of coverage of China-related news are slightly more negative than positive, but by and large objective and balanced. As a rule, the media tend to modify their stance, depending on which side of the aisle they are closer to. When the political parties that they support are in power, the media tend to become more China-friendly (at a rate between 16% and 20%) and to prioritise Sino-Greek relations (at a rate close to 70%), but this does not alter the broader picture.

With regard to the impact of the media on China's image in Greece, two IIER findings clearly stand out: (i) the Greek media definitely help the general public improve its knowledge of life in China, though solid understanding of the 'Chinese mystery' requires a considerably bigger volume of information and a wider range of sources; (ii) media coverage of China does seem to have some impact at the societal level, but certainly not in terms of decision-making and foreign policy choices. For instance, while a large majority of Greek citizens have a negative view on the protection of human rights in China, the Greek government blocked the relevant statement of the EU in 2017. At the same time, there are no indications that Beijing is trying to wield influence by controlling Greek media, unlike what is often discussed in other parts of the world, including Europe.

The story behind China's image in Greece

The factors shaping China's image in Greece are not as straightforward as they may seem. Ultimately, views of China in Greece are conditioned by a cocktail of four different, and to a certain extent conflicting, narratives: (i) the conviction that China is very much a developing country that still faces considerable socio-economic challenges, despite its spectacular achievements over the last decades; (ii) the perception of an authoritarian regime, which does not fully respect the rights of its citizens; (iii) a somewhat 'transactional' attitude in the hope that China can be a financial backer and a potential ally against the oft-vilified western/European creditors in the midst of the protracted crisis in Greece; (iv) the fuzzy image of a civilisation as glorious as the Greek one and presumably a cultural 'relative', even if the average Greek knows virtually nothing about Chinese history.

The first two narratives feed negative perceptions of China, the third and fourth bolster its positive image. The key reason behind a favourable view of China relates to the fall-out between Greece and the EU, i.e. Greeks' perceptions of friends and foes have changed dramatically over the last decade or so and the country has instinctively been looking for alternative allies. It is this void that China has stepped into, stating repeatedly its commitment to Greece as a 'strategic partner'.

However, there is a risk that high-sounding and over-optimistic statements may have unintended negative effects, thus leading to a 'China fatigue' in Greece. Meaningful and visible investment in the Greek economy and, above all, large-scale job creation will contribute to China's image infinitely more than investing too much in the 'cultural kinship' between the two nations. Leaders on both sides may have to be a bit more circumspect: unless Sino-Greek cooperation delivers comprehensible gains soon, generic pronouncements about the 'strategic partnership' between the two countries may ring hollow to Greek society and backfire in the future. It is incumbent upon Greek and Chinese authorities to feel the pulse of Greek society, if Sino-Greek relations are to take root and stand the test of time.

Chapter 1:

Perceptions of China in Greece

1.1. General image of China in Greece

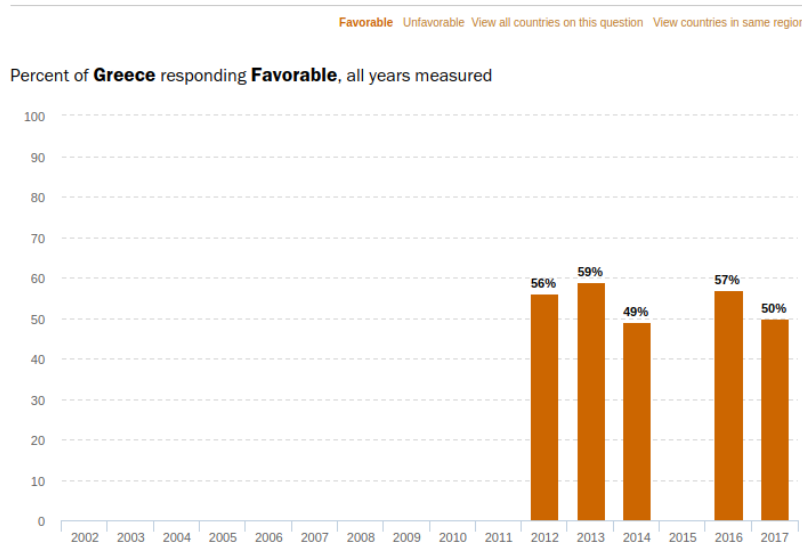
China's impressive economic growth and rise in prominence over the last four decades has generated an intensive discourse worldwide on where the Asian giant is heading. Its growing presence in Europe has caused mixed feelings, if not outright concerns, and perceptions vary quite a bit, depending on viewpoints, national sensitivities and a wide array of narratives about China's rapid ascendancy. There is no doubt that the world's second biggest economy is pursuing a new role in the global order, and Beijing is systematically projecting both its hard and soft power.

The vast majority of nations are mesmerised, and a large number of them share positive views of China. Greece is no exception. A representative depiction of the way China is perceived in Greece appears in the Pew Research Center database, which shows that between 2012 and 2017 five or six out of ten Greeks had a favourable view of China (Graph 1).³

Graph 1

Opinion of China

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of China?



Source: Pew Research Center

Although different surveys yield different figures, there appears to be a consistent pattern transpiring through most of them: in general, Greeks have a fairly positive view of China. In July 2016, 71% of Greek citizens, polled by the local agency Public Issue, expressed a positive attitude towards the Chinese people, roughly confirmed by their appreciation of China as a country (Annex 4.2.1.1.).⁴ This is roughly confirmed by another Greek pollster, Kapa Research, which finds that between 2005 and 2016 China's popularity peaked at 60.0% in 2013

³ <http://www.pewglobal.org/database/indicator/24/country/84/>.

⁴ Source: Political Barometer 158, *Public Issue*, July 2016, <https://www.publicissue.gr/13173/varometro-jul-2016-chi/>.

(Annex 4.2.1.2.).⁵ Compared to other EU member states and the US, Greece steadily demonstrates a positive, albeit fluctuating, attitude towards China. Thus, compared to thirty-seven other countries in the 2017 Pew Research Center global survey, Greece came across as the most positive EU member state vis-à-vis China (Annex 4.2.1.3.). Furthermore, the December 2017 Eurobarometer showed Greece as the seventh most China-friendly country among all the EU member states, even though negative views prevailed over positive ones in the country - 49% vs 45%, respectively (Annex 4.2.1.4.).⁶

In addition, Greek citizens are well aware of China's ever-growing weight on the international scene. There is a general impression that, while the US remains the most influential power on a global scale, China is as an heir-in-waiting in the mid- to long run. Thus, in 2013 more than half the Greeks polled (57%) believed that China was bound to replace – or had already replaced – the US as the leading world power.⁷ A BBC survey released in July 2017⁸ showed that perceptions of China's influence were predominantly negative within the EU. Greece was the only European country in that specific sample leaning positively in its views of China's influence, with a plurality of 37% offering a positive opinion (versus 25% who had a negative attitude). Aptly put, China's power is admired by many, but is also feared.⁹ This does not seem to apply to Greece.

Interestingly, however, it is worth pointing out that Greeks polled through various surveys do not seem to think highly of the political system nor the quality of life in China. In 2014, as many as 69% of Greek respondents stated they did not believe that Chinese authorities respected the personal freedoms of their citizens, even though Greece held the most favourable view of China on this specific account (at 21%), compared to the other western countries polled.¹⁰ In April 2017, the Greek research agency DiaNEOsis asked Greeks about their preferred political system and only 2.4% of respondents approved of China's form of government, the most popular model being Sweden, at 57.8% (Annex 4.2.1.5.).¹¹ A few months earlier, to the question posed by GPO whether Greeks found China a democratic country, 60.7% replied 'no' and 'not really', while 62.4% expressed the view that human rights were not respected in China (Annex 4.2.1.6.).¹² Notably, more than 20% of those interviewed gave an inaccurate answer to the question about China's political system (Annex 4.2.1.7.), by replying it was a 'parliamentary democracy' or a 'federal republic'.¹³

A consistent pattern that transpires through most surveys is a generally positive view of China in Greece, even if with a number of nuances.

In December 2016, four out of five Greeks (79.3%) viewed China as a developing country marked by considerable economic inequality and only 17.8% thought it would qualify as a rich country. (Annex 4.2.1.8). When asked about the quality of Chinese products, only 15.8% of Greek respondents considered it to be 'very high' or 'high'. The majority, 51.9% found it 'mediocre', while 31.4% thought it was 'low' or 'very low'. Nearly half the respondents indicated 'good value for money', essentially meaning that, although Chinese

⁵ Source: <https://kaparesearch.com/en/survey-on-greece-us-relations-2016/>.

⁶ Special Eurobarometer 467, 'Future of Europe', *European Commission*, December 2017, p. 81, <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/SPECIAL/surveyKy/2179>.

⁷ Source: Pew Research Centre, 'America's Global Image Remains More Positive than China's', p. 5, <http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2013/07/Pew-Research-Global-Attitudes-Project-Balance-of-Power-Report-FINAL-July-18-2013.pdf>.

⁸ 'Sharp Drop in World Views of US, UK: Global Poll', *BBC World Service*, 4 July 2017, p. 36, https://globescan.com/images/images/pressreleases/bbc2017_country_ratings/BBC2017_Country_Ratings_Poll.pdf.

⁹ Mario Esteban, 'Spain's Views of China: The Economy is the Key', *Elcano Royal Institute*, Paper presented at the conference *China: a European Perspective* at Sun Yat-sen University, Zhuhai, 7-9 December 2017, p. 9.

¹⁰ Source: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/07/14/chapter-2-chinas-image/>.

¹¹ Source: DiaNEOsis, <https://www.dianeosis.org/en/2017/04/greeks-believe-in-2017/>, B25.

¹² Greek Public Opinion (GPO), December 2016, <http://gpo.gr/el/erevna-koinis-gnomis-gia-tin-eikona-tis-kinas-stin-ellada/>, p. 14.

¹³ Greek Public Opinion (GPO), December 2016, <http://gpo.gr/el/erevna-koinis-gnomis-gia-tin-eikona-tis-kinas-stin-ellada/>, p. 4.

commodities were not of high quality, they were affordable and certainly an option.¹⁴ However, the vast majority of the respondents (78.8%) found Chinese products worse than the respective US and European commodities (Annex 4.2.1.9.).

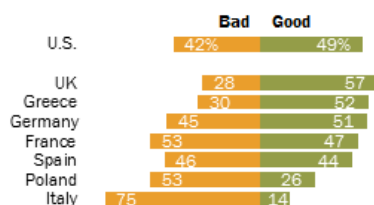
1.2. Perceptions of Sino-Greek Ties and Related Expectations

The general public assesses the relations between the two countries in a very positive light: in December 2016, a vast majority of the respondents (81.9%) qualified them as ‘friendly’ and ‘relatively friendly’ (Annex 4.2.2.1.).¹⁵ In addition, Greek citizens appear to support closer relations with China, though to varying degrees with a view to cooperation in three major areas, e.g. economy, politics and culture. In particular, a GPO survey carried out in December 2016 showed that 83.5% of those polled supported closer economic cooperation with China, as compared to 71.1% in favour of closer political relations and 87.5% who wanted to see closer cultural ties with China (Annex 4.2.2.2.).

Many Greeks consider China to be a factor that could help Greece get through the ongoing crisis.¹⁶ In July 2014, 49% of Greek respondents viewed China positively and 52% believed that China’s growing economy was good for their country – out of the sample of seven EU member states and the US only the United Kingdom had a more positive attitude (Graph 2).¹⁷ In July 2016, two-thirds of Greek respondents (67%) thought that economic cooperation with China was an opportunity for Greece’s own growth.¹⁸ The same share of the public (47% ‘yes’ and 20% ‘perhaps yes’) favoured economic cooperation between the two countries in the sectors of energy, tourism, manufacturing, etc. (Annex 4.2.2.3.).¹⁹ A few months later, 64.1% of Greeks stated that the presence of Chinese enterprises could prove beneficial to the Greek economy, and nearly four out of five (77.9%) were of the view that Chinese enterprises could create new jobs (Annex 4.2.2.4.).²⁰

Graph 2

Overall, do you think China's growing economy is a good thing or a bad thing for our country?



Source: Pew Research Center, July 2014

In a similar vein, 61.5% of Greek respondents viewed China’s growing economic power as a positive development for Greece. At the same time, however, an even larger share of the Greeks interviewed, 65.8%, deemed China’s growing economic power a threat for Europe

¹⁴ Greek Public Opinion (GPO), December 2016, <http://gpo.gr/el/erevna-koinis-gnomis-gia-tin-eikona-tis-kinas-stin-ellada/>, p. 8.

¹⁵ <http://gpo.gr/el/erevna-koinis-gnomis-gia-tin-eikona-tis-kinas-stin-ellada/>, p. 9.

¹⁶ Source: https://www.des.unipi.gr/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Research-Results-for-China-by-students-2013-2014-_in-english_.pdf, p. 26.

¹⁷ Source: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/07/14/chapter-2-chinas-image/>.

¹⁸ Bali Kaki, ‘To Politiko Varometro tis Public Issue: Afxanetai o evroskeptikismos’// The Political Barometer of Public Issue: Euroscepticism on the Rise’ (in Greek), *Avgi*, 24 July 2016, <http://www.avgi.gr/article/10842/7306363/auxanetai-o-euroskeptikismos>.

¹⁹ Source: Public Issue, July 2016, <https://www.publicissue.gr/13173/varometro-jul-2016-chi/>.

²⁰ Source: Greek Public Opinion (GPO), December 2016, <http://gpo.gr/el/erevna-koinis-gnomis-gia-tin-eikona-tis-kinas-stin-ellada/>, p. 10.

(Annex 4.2.2.5.)²¹. This constitutes an obvious contradiction with a view to Greece's EU membership.

In the same survey, 64.1% expressed a positive view of China, by replying 'yes' (17.7%) or 'probably yes' (46.4%) to the question 'Would you say that China is an ally of Greece on the international scene?'. In this, things change markedly when Greeks compare China to other choices. Thus, in October 2015 only 3% of Greeks polled thought that China could be the country's key ally: the EU came first (44%), with Russia a remote second, at 12% (Annex 4.2.3.1.). According to another survey released by Kapa Research in November 2016, China was the second most preferred nation (after Russia at 47.5%), with which Greece should presumably pursue closer relations (39.5%) – though in this case it is not clear whether the respondents referred to political or economic relations (Annex 4.2.3.2.)²² As has been pointed out, while Greeks are not indifferent to China, they do not consider it to be their main ally either.²³

Furthermore, it is unclear what the vast majority of Greeks have in mind when they state that they favour the promotion of cultural cooperation between the two countries. Yet, this area is one of the increasingly prominent features of Sino-Greek relations and some relevant examples will be discussed in other chapters of the report.

1.3. Contradictions in the Perceptions of China in Greece

While Greeks definitely do not seem to admire the Chinese lifestyle, in general they view China positively as a potential political ally and a source of finance with regard to economic recovery and job creation. China's image clearly is affected, if not distorted, through the lens of Greek national priorities.

In particular, one should highlight:

1. The fact that China has a largely negative image in Greece in terms of living standards, lifestyle, social cohesion, form of government, human rights, etc. Yet, Greeks have high expectations and view China as an important economic partner who can help Greece overcome its decade-long economic predicament. In other words, Greeks appear to have a generally positive view of a country that they do not envy at all and would not like to emulate.
2. The perception that China's growing prowess is bad news for Europe, but good news for Greece, as if Greece were not in Europe and were not an EU member state. Two possible interpretations of this apparent contradiction are that: (i) what is a potential threat to Europe is not necessarily viewed as a threat to Greece, as long as China throws its weight behind Greece's economy, or (ii) Greeks do not feel strongly attached to the EU and, in fact, their stance has grown markedly anti-European, as argued in this report.

China's image in Greece is marked by a significant contradiction: there is a generally positive view of a country that Greeks do not envy at all and would not like to emulate.

These contradictions, as well as others, will be addressed in Chapter 3, 'Beneath the Surface', as an attempt at providing an explanation.

²¹ Source: Greek Public Opinion (GPO), December 2016, <http://gpo.gr/el/erevna-koinis-gnomis-gia-tin-eikona-tis-kinas-stin-ellada/>, p. 7.

²² Source: Kapa Research, <https://kaparesearch.com/en/survey-on-greece-us-relations-2016/>.

²³ 'The Perception of Greek People about China', *University of Piraeus*, January 2014, https://www.des.unipi.gr/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Research-Results-for-China-by-students-2013-2014-_in-english_.pdf, p. 21.

Chapter 2:

China's Image in Selected Greek Media

IIER made a deliberate choice to gauge the extent to which the Greek media frame the debate on China and, even if partly, shape the way Greek citizens perceive the Asian giant. In doing so, the research team reviewed nearly 1,400 China-related articles published by Greek newspapers and news portals (Annexes 4.1.3 and 4.1.4.). This chapter presents key findings on the basis of the media monitoring coverage of the 2008-2018 period.

It should be noted that China does not retain the predominant media spotlight in Greece. It is not a central theme in a country that has been struggling with a severe socio-economic crisis and political turmoil for nearly a decade. Due to the fiscal crunch and high political temperature in Greece, crisis-related news looms large over the content offered by Greek media. Yet, China does have its share of media coverage in Greece.

2.1. Content Range

It has been pointed out in relevant research in other countries that the international media coverage of China tends to be narrow.²⁴ However, one of the significant IIER findings is that the range of China-related issues covered by Greek media is quite broad. The Greek media outlets monitored through this research project cover a wide array of topics – in fact, the majority of issues listed in scientific literature on country image assessments.²⁵ If interested, Greek readers are given the chance to learn a lot about life in China as well as about the country's international standing.

The colossal economic achievements of China are duly reported and analysed. In addition, Greek media cover China's economic and political relations with other countries and organisations, such as the US, the EU, Russia, India, Japan, etc., which is a logical reflection of the international prominence China has gradually risen to. Relevant reports clearly contribute to the perception of China as a global superpower, as pointed out in the previous chapter.

Some of the news relates to developments that have anything but positive implications. The usual triggers for negative media coverage of China relate to politically sensitive issues, such as human rights or the rule of law in the country. In line with international coverage, Greek media duly reported the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize, awarded to the imprisoned Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo.²⁶ The Greek public is informed about serious issues with capital punishment in

²⁴ Daniel Griffith, 'The international media coverage of China: Too narrow an agenda?', *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*, 2013, <http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/research/files/The%2520international%2520media%2520coverage%2520of%2520China%2520-%2520Too%2520narrow%2520an%2520agenda.pdf>.

²⁵ A broad spectrum of twenty-one (weighted) indicators for the assessment of a country image is proposed in Alexander Buhmann, 'Measuring Country Image: Theory, Method, and Effects', *Springer VS*, 2016, pp. 111-112, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Alexander_Buhmann/publication/306280000_Measuring_Country_Image_Theory_Method_and_Effects/links/57e98e2f08ae113df5207ae4/Measuring-Country-Image-Theory-Method-and-Effects.pdf.

²⁶ 'Ston Kinezo Liu Xiaobo to Nobel Eirinis' ('Nobel Peace Prize to the Chinese Liu Xiaobo'), *Naftemporiki*, 8 October 2010, <https://www.naftemporiki.gr/story/273463/ston-kinezo-liou-siaompo-to-nompel-eirinis>.

China, the demographic and economic side effects of China's former one-child policy, grave environmental challenges in the country, opacity and corruption, work safety²⁷, etc.

The media monitoring exercise undertaken by IIER confirms one more finding coming out of the first research component, i.e. that few in Greece consider China to be a well-developed country. Greeks are aware of the fact that, despite impressive progress over the last four decades, many Chinese people still live and work in challenging conditions. Tellingly, the phrase 'Chinese salaries' is shorthand for low living standards and is commonly used as a simile referring to shrinking income in Greece. Thus, a 2011 article reviewed by the IIER team is titled 'Greece following China's labour standards', but in fact the text itself only refers to China once. Rather, the article is a lament about the high unemployment rate in Greece and the shrinking salaries of those lucky enough to have a job.²⁸

Needless to say, Sino-Greek relations have their fair share of China-related media coverage. News items about the economic cooperation between the two countries focus primarily on Chinese investment in Greece and occasionally on Greek presence in China. The gigantic Belt & Road Initiative (BRI)²⁹ is often mentioned in China-related news items. After president Xi Jinping announced his BRI vision in late 2013, the initial expectation transpiring through most relevant media reports was that Greece stood to draw significant potential benefits as a gateway to the EU and a launch pad for a major transport corridor from the Mediterranean to Central Europe. This further contributed to the discourse about the prospects of Sino-Greek economic cooperation that was boosted by the 2008 COSCO investment in Piraeus.

Picture 1:
Official Visit of Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras to China



Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias arrive in Beijing for the Belt & Road Forum, May 2017³⁰

²⁷ 'Kina: 18 nekroi apo katarrefsi toihou se ergostasio' (China: 18 dead after a factory wall collapses), *Naftemporiki*, 11 May 2014, <http://www.naftemporiki.gr/story/805597/kina-18-nekroi-apo-katarreusi-toixou-se-ergostasio>.

²⁸ 'Four out of five Greeks will leave the country looking for jobs abroad, with no career path in sight - jobs below their qualifications and long working hours. At a level of professional satisfaction comparable to that in China'. Mika Kontoroussi, 'Sta ergasiaka protypa tis Kinas i Ellada' ('Greece follows China's labour standards'), *news247.gr*, 18 June 2011, <http://www.news247.gr/oikonomia/ergasia/sta-ergasiaka-protypa-tis-kinas-h-ellada.6104766.html>.

²⁹ Initially known as One Belt, One Road (OBOR). See Una Aleksandra Bērziņa-Čerenkova, 'BRI Instead of OBOR – China Edits the English Name of its Most Ambitious International Project'. *Latvian Institute of International Affairs*, 28 July 2016, <http://liia.lv/en/analyses/bri-instead-of-obor-china-edits-the-english-name-of-its-most-ambitious-international-project-532>.

³⁰ 'Sto Pekino o Alexis Tsipras: To programma tis episkepsis tou – Poiouys tha synantisei' ('Alexis Tsipras in Beijing: The schedule of his visit – Who is he meeting'), *Iefimerida.gr*, 12 May 2017, <http://www.iefimerida.gr/news/337056/sto-pekino-o-alexis-tsipras-programma-tis-episkepsis-toy-poiouys-tha-synantisei>.

The second biggest Chinese investment in Greece to date, the purchase of a 24% stock in the Independent Power Transmission Operator (IPTO or ADMIE in Greek) by China's State Grid, has also been extensively covered by the Greek media.³¹ Until recently, a number of reports related to plans for China Machinery Engineering Corporation (CMEC) projects in northwestern Greece, in cooperation with the Public Power Corporation (PPC/DEH) of Greece.³²

Yet, Chinese investment projects in Greece have not been controversy-free, judging from their coverage in the media outlets monitored by IIER – the majority of relevant reports have to do with the COSCO takeover of the sea port of Piraeus.³³ In addition, the IIER team has found that the coverage of Chinese investment projects in Greece tends to be somewhat repetitive, often using a standardised – and conspicuously optimistic – phraseology. A large number of related news items report meetings, and are accompanied by numerous photos of Greek and Chinese officials smiling and shaking hands. Many articles are merely lists of intergovernmental agreements and memoranda of understanding (MoUs) – notably, 19 agreements and MoUs were signed by Greek and Chinese partners during prime minister Li Keqiang's visit to Athens in June 2014 alone. Apart from some spectacular developments in the port of Piraeus, there are few news items reporting measurable gains for the Greek economy – most benefits are expected in the future and have not materialised yet.

The coverage of Chinese investment projects in Greece tends to be somewhat repetitive, often referring to expectations.

Another major area of Sino-Greek economic cooperation is tourism. The ever-growing number of Chinese tourists is seen as a 'vote of confidence' to the Greek economy, to use a phrase that is a common currency in the Greek media jargon.³⁴ For instance, some 200,000 tourists from China are expected in 2018, which is an estimated rise of about 30% on a year-on-year basis.³⁵ In addition, the Golden Visa programme is touted in Greece as an indication of how attractive the country is for foreign investment, even though the purchase of small-scale real estate by individual buyers does not strictly meet foreign direct investment (FDI) definitions. By the end of August 2018, no fewer than 1,521 Chinese citizens had purchased property in Greece and accounted for nearly half the beneficiaries (48.2%) of the Golden Visa programme.³⁶

2.2. Nature of Content and Tone of Coverage

Overall, content relates mostly to China's economy and environmental challenges (44.6%), which is only natural, given the magnitude of both issues.³⁷ The market economy status (MES) of China has not stirred a debate in Greece, but some references to this highly divisive issue –

³¹ Thodoris Panagoulis, 'Stin kineziki State Grid to 24% tou ADMIE' (24% of ADMID stock goes to China's State Grid'), *News247.gr*, 26 October 2016, <https://www.news247.gr/energia/stin-kineziki-state-grid-to-24-toy-admie.6463694.html>.

³² 'Ta epomena vimata sti synergasia DEH-CMEC gia to project Meliti' ('Next steps in the PPC/DEH-CMEC cooperation on the Meliti project'), *Avgi*, 2 October 2016, <http://www.avgi.gr/article/10809/7504190/ta-epomena-bemata-ste-synergasia-dee-cmec-gia-to-project-melite>.

³³ Ilias Bellos, 'Nea apergia ston OLP tin Tetarti' ('A new strike at PPA on Wednesday'), *Kathimerini*, 5 June 2018, <http://www.kathimerini.gr/967680/article/oikonomia/epixeirhseis/nea-apergia-ston-olp-thn-tetarh>.

³⁴ On 25 April 2015, the Chinese ambassador Zou Xiaoli contributed an op-ed to *Kathimerini* titled 'O thalassios tourismos fernei pio konta Kina kai Ellada' ('Maritime tourism brings China and Greece closer together'), <http://www.kathimerini.gr/812776/article/oikonomia/ellhnikh-oikonomia/apoyh-o-8alassios-toyrismos-fernei-pio-konta-kina-kai-ellada>.

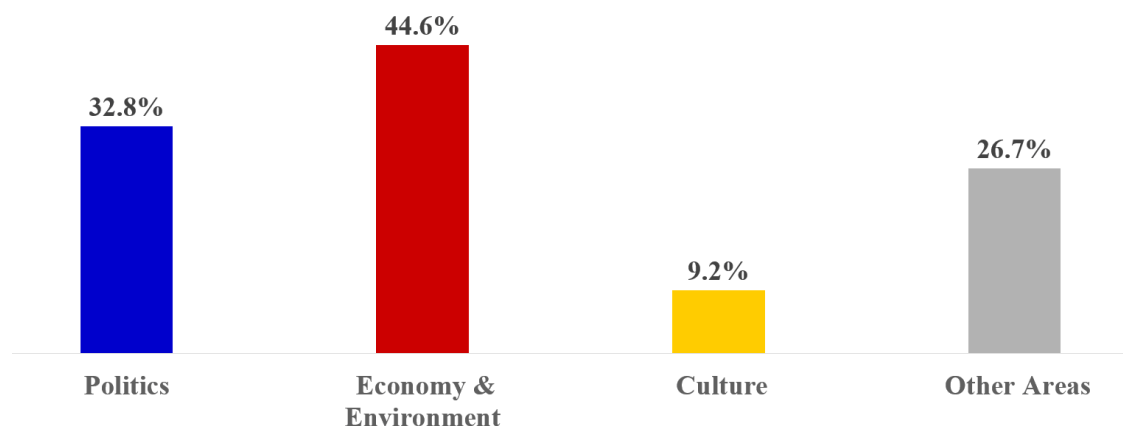
³⁵ Dimitris Balis, 'Syn 30% oi Kinezoi touristes to 2018 stin Ellada' ('Chinese tourists in Greece up by 30% in 2018'), *News247.gr*, 22 June 2018, <https://www.news247.gr/oikonomia/syn-30-oi-kinezoi-toyristes-to-2018-stin-ellada.6626499.html>.

³⁶ Source: Enterprise Greece.

³⁷ For the sake of comparison, ChinfluenCE partners report that in the Czech Republic the Chinese economy was discussed 1.7 times more often than Chinese foreign policy, and 2.1 times more often than Chinese domestic politics.

which pitched Beijing against both the EU and the US – have appeared in the Greek media.³⁸ Apart from Chinese overseas trade and investment, the country’s domestic economy is also covered by the Greek media. For instance, there have been reports about restrictions aimed at curbing capital flight from China.³⁹ Environmental challenges in China are also featured in Greek media reports.⁴⁰

Graph 3
Breakdown of Key Topical Clusters in China’s Media Coverage



* Total percentage exceeds 100% due to overlaps.

Source: Institute of International Economic Relations

The second most covered area relates to political issues (32.8%), pertaining to both China’s domestic scene and international relations. Of course, the economy hangs over China’s political relations and vice versa. Notably, China-US relations are covered to a larger extent (13.8%) than China-EU relations (10.3%). Sino-Greece relations account for 19.0% of media coverage in the sample used by IIER and constitute the single biggest topical area in the content cluster ‘China’s International Relations’ (Annex 4.3.1.1.).

Interestingly, culture only accounts for 9.2% of media coverage, which is a bit surprising, given that, in principle at least, the vast majority of Greeks (87.5%) are supportive of Sino-Greek cultural ties, as highlighted in Chapter 1 (Annex 4.2.2.2). Yet, the content and tone of reports about Sino-Greek relations are considerably more positive in the areas of culture⁴¹ and the preservation of historical heritage.⁴² Any news about links between the glorious ancient civilisations of Greece and China goes down well with the general public and is duly covered by the media, despite a possible element of hype.⁴³

³⁸ ‘Dasmous sta fthina kinezika proionta vazei i Evropi’ (‘Europe imposes taxes on cheap Chinese commodities’), *Kathimerini*, 17 November 2017, <http://www.kathimerini.gr/935027/article/oikonomia/die8nhs-oikonomia/dasmoys-sta-f8hna-kinezika-proionta-vazei-h-eyrwph>.

³⁹ Alexandros Kapsylis, ‘Capital controls ... sta synora tis Kinas’ (‘Capital controls at China’s borders’), *To Vima*, 31 January 2016, <http://www.tovima.gr/finance/article/?aid=772858&wordsinarticle=%CE%BA%CE%B9%CE%BD%CE%B1>.

⁴⁰ ‘Dekades traumaties se diadilosi kata egkatastasis epexergasias apovliton’ (‘Scores injured in a rally against a waste processing facility’), *Naftemporiki*, 12 May 2014, <http://www.naftemporiki.gr/story/805923/kina-dekades-traumaties-se-diadilosi-kata-egkatastasis-epexergasias-apovliton>.

⁴¹ For instance, ‘To elliniko vivlio paron sto Pekino’ (Greek books present in Beijing), *Kathimerini*, 3 September 2008, <http://www.kathimerini.gr/333119/article/politismos/arxeio-politismoy/to-ellhniko-vivlio-paron-sto-pekino>.

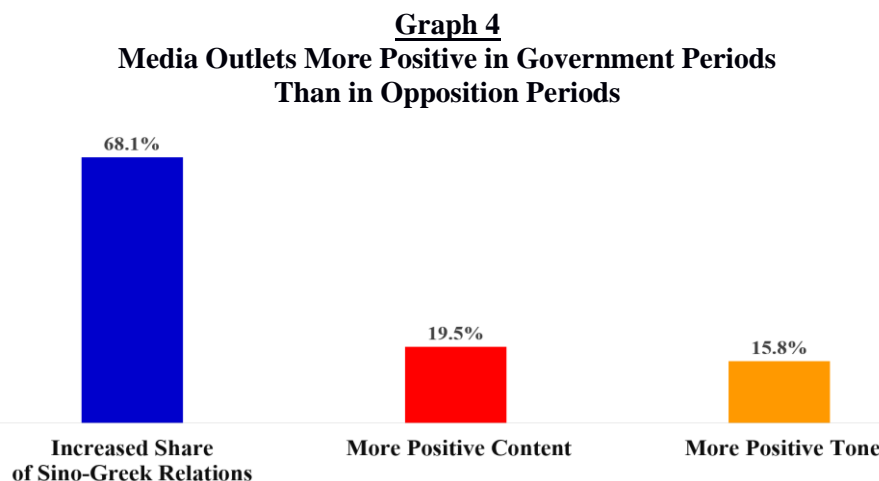
⁴² For instance, Panayotis Georgoudis, ‘Politistiki synergasia me tin Kina’ (Cultural cooperation with China), *Efimerida ton Syntakton*, 13 June 2015, <http://www.efsyn.gr/arthro/politistiki-synergasia-me-tin-kina>.

⁴³ For instance, ‘O diasimos pilinos stratos tis Kinas dimiourgima Ellinon glypton’ (The famous terracota army of China created by Greek sculptors), *Proto Thema*, 12 October 2016, <https://www.protothema.gr/culture/article/618715/o-pilinos-stratos-stin-kina-dimiourgima-ellinon-glupton/>.

By and large, both the content and tone of China-related news items in the sample used for the research are slightly more negative than positive (-0.246 and -0.239, respectively), but are close to neutral (Annex 4.3.2.1.). The fact that both China-related content and the tone of coverage by Greek media are negative fits a universal trend in the West. It has been pointed out that, in general, European media do not convey positive news about China as a country⁴⁴ and, in this sense, Greece is no exception. For all that, while there are many manifestations of growing Sinophobia in Europe and elsewhere, media coverage of China in Greece is anything but adversarial.

The generally objective coverage of China-related news is one of the commendable features of the Greek media monitored by the IIER team. Overall, the media monitored by the IIER team have been found to be fairly objective and balanced in their coverage of China, even if there are some indications of a more positive spin on the part of pro-government outlets, particularly since 2015. It is important to keep in mind that since 2008 Greece has had five general elections⁴⁵, four different governments and two caretaker prime ministers. Media coverage of China has obviously been influenced by the fickle political setting. The media tend to change their attitude towards China, depending on political affiliation or which side of the aisle they are closer to.

A distinctive pattern established by the IIER team is that pro-government media outlets are friendlier to China, as they: (i) present more positive news items in relation to China; (ii) have a more positive tone of coverage of China-related news; (iii) would focus on Sino-Greek relations to a larger extent. Thus, the positive nature of news items presented by the same media improves by 19.5% from their ‘opposition periods’ to ‘government periods’. Accordingly, in ‘government periods’ the tone of coverage improves by 15.8%. The share of China-related news items across the sample rises by 68.1% from ‘opposition’ to ‘government’ periods. Obviously, media outlets ‘sell’ China much more willingly, if not deliberately, when they support a ruling party while they are more reserved to China when in opposition (Graph 3). Interestingly, this does not seem to apply only to Greece: a similar finding comes out of the ChinfluenCE report on Hungary.⁴⁶



Source: Institute of International Economic Relations

⁴⁴ Philippe Le Corre, Yun Sun, Amadou Sy, Harold Trinkunas, ‘Other perceptions of China: Views from Africa, Latin America, and Europe’, *Brookings*, 27 May 2015, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2015/05/27/other-perceptions-of-china-views-from-africa-latin-america-and-europe/>

⁴⁵ In October 2009, in May and June 2012, and in January and September 2015.

⁴⁶ Media sources believed to be close to the Hungarian government publish significantly more positive news about China, while media outlets on the opposition side publish more negative than positive news. *Source: ChinfluenCE*, <http://www.chinfluence.eu/hungarian-media-analysis/>.

For instance, in the case of *Eleftherotypia* and *Efimerida ton Syntakton*⁴⁷, consistently left leaning dailies, the share of Sino-Greek relations in their China-related content has risen nearly sixfold (from 5.3% to 31.0%) since 2015, when the SYRIZA-led government came to power. (Annex 4.3.2.3.).⁴⁸

2.3. Impact of Media Coverage

Importantly, there is a pronounced lack of China expertise among Greek reporters. Notably, no Greek media outlet has a correspondent in China, which limits the originality and, to a certain extent, the credibility of China coverage. The predominant source of information is the Athens & Macedonian News Agency (AMNA)⁴⁹, though at times some international sources are quoted as well, e.g. l'Agence France Presse (AFP), the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Bloomberg, Reuters, The Economist, International Herald Tribune (IHT) etc.

The vast majority of news items are reports, and there are very few op-eds and opinions expressed - only several out of the nearly 1,400 items reviewed by IIER. It is as if the Greek media's mission is only confined to informing the readership, while a China-related debate appears to take place in a limited circle of decision-makers.

With reference to the nexus between the way China is portrayed in the Greek media and the final outcome, i.e. the way China is perceived in the country by society and élites, two IIER findings clearly stand out.

First, while the Greek media definitely provide a wide range of content in a fairly objective manner and thus help the general public improve its knowledge of life in China, attaining a solid understanding of the 'Chinese mystery' takes a lot more than reading media reports. Secondly, media coverage of China does seem to have some impact at the societal level, which explains why Greeks have a rather negative view of living and working conditions as well as the form of government in the Asian giant. However, the picture is quite different in terms of decision-making and foreign policy choices. This should not come as a surprise, as reportedly there is a gap between the attitudes of political and economic élites on the one hand, and society on the other hand in other European countries as well.⁵⁰

Media coverage has an impact on the Greek general public, but not necessarily in terms of decision-making at the government level.

For instance, while the South China Sea dispute⁵¹ and the outcome of the legal procedure have been reported by the Greek media⁵², this did not prevent the Tsipras government from supporting China in 2016, in the wake of The Hague arbitral tribunal's ruling, which was

⁴⁷ *Efimerida ton Syntakton* is largely seen as a successor to the now defunct *Eleftherotypia*.

⁴⁸ Presumably, this can be seen as part of a pattern. As highlighted in a similar media monitoring exercise carried out in the Czech Republic, China's image is distinctly more positive in hardline leftist media. Source: ChinfluenCE, <http://www.chinfluence.eu/media-analysis/>, Czech Media Analysis.

⁴⁹ A similar phenomenon has been recorded in Hungary: the original source of at least 52% of all news was the official Hungarian news agency (MTI). Source: ChinfluenCE, <http://www.chinfluence.eu/hungarian-media-analysis/>.

⁵⁰ For instance, in Spain élites tend to have more positive views on China than Spanish society, where either lack of knowledge about China or concerns tend to prevail. Mario Esteban, 'Spain's Views of China: The Economy is the Key', *Elcano Royal Institute*, Paper presented at the conference China: a European Perspective at Sun Yat-sen University, Zhuhai, 7-9 December 2017, p. 1 and p. 11.

⁵¹ 'Anisyhia prokalei i antiparathesi Kinas-IPA stin thalassa tis Notias Kinas' (China-US stand-off over South China Sea causes concern), *Ta Nea*, 22 May 2015, <http://www.tanea.gr/news/world/article/5241424/anhisyhia-prokalei-h-antiparathesh-kinas-hpa-sth-thalassa-ths-notias-kinas/>.

⁵² 'Sfaliara stin Kina: Dikastiki itta sti Hagi gia tis diekdikiseis sti Siniki Thalassa' ('Slap in China's Face: Legal Defeat at the Hague on Claims in the [South] China Sea'), *Iefimerida.gr*, 12 July 2016, <http://www.iefimerida.gr/news/277715/sfaliara-stin-kina-dikastiki-itta-sti-hagi-gia-tis-diekdikiseis-tis-sti-siniki-thalassa>.

largely in favour of the Philippines in its stand-off with Beijing. Similarly, while a large majority of Greek citizens do not think highly of China's democracy and respect for human rights (Annex 4.2.1.6), the Greek government blocked the 2017 statement of the EU on the state of human rights in China.⁵³ In June 2018, the Greek PM Alexis Tsipras stated that Greece was willing to join the 16+1 platform as a full member⁵⁴ a week later at the Sofia summit of the club, despite the irritation that this causes in EU institutions and some EU member states.⁵⁵ This stance of Athens is qualified by some western onlookers as a 'Trojan horse' behaviour, dictated by China in return for investment in the cash-strapped Greek economy.⁵⁶ This only comes to confirm the image of a strategic ally of Greece that China projects on numerous occasions, including at the highest possible level.⁵⁷

There are no indications that Beijing pursues to wield influence by directly controlling Greek media, unlike what is often discussed in other parts of the world (e.g. Australia) or Europe (CEE). At present, there are no Chinese-controlled media outlets to orchestrate a pro-Beijing public diplomacy campaign in Greece and there are no regular China-sponsored supplements in Greek newspapers.⁵⁸ However, over the last two years the China-friendly predilection in the reporting mode of pro-government media may well be attributed to the role of AMNA, which has had a cooperation agreement with China's state news agency Xinhua since May 2016.⁵⁹ Furthermore, in December 2017 ANNA signed an MoU with the China Economic Information Service (CEIS), an affiliate of Xinhua, for the establishment of a Belt and Road Economic and Financial Information Partnership.⁶⁰

⁵³ The EU was due to make its statement at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. A spokesman for the Greek Foreign Ministry in Athens reportedly called such a statement 'unproductive criticism'. Nick Cumming-Bruce and Somini Sengupta, 'In Greece, China Finds an Ally Against Human Rights Criticism', *New York Times*, 19 June 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/19/world/europe/china-human-rights-greece-united-nations.html>.

⁵⁴ Statement by prime minister Alexis Tsipras at a press conference in Brussels on 29 June 2018 (in Greek), at 21:11, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qaytYF11puY>.

⁵⁵ In the end, Greece retained its observer status, together with Austria, Switzerland, Belarus, the EU and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

⁵⁶ Sébastien Falletti, 'La Grèce, cheval de Troie de la Chine dans l'UE', *Le Point*, 20 June 2017, http://www.lepoint.fr/monde/la-grece-cheval-de-troie-de-la-chine-dans-l-ue-20-06-2017-2136800_24.php.

⁵⁷ President Xi Jinping is on record referring to Greece as an important strategic partner and China's most reliable friend in the EU - for instance, during the visit of Greek Prime Minister Tsipras to Beijing in 2016; Philip Chrysopoulos, 'Greece Is China's Most Reliable EU Friend, says President Xi Jinping', *Greek Reporter*, 5 July 2016, <http://greece.greekreporter.com/2016/07/05/greece-is-chinas-most-reliable-eu-friend-says-president-xi-jinping/>.

⁵⁸ By contrast, *China Watch*, the European version of *China Daily*, is regularly supplemented in *Le Soir* and *De Standaard* (Belgium), *Le Figaro* (France), *Handelsblatt* (Germany), *El País* (Spain) and *The Daily Telegraph* (United Kingdom).

⁵⁹ 'Xinhua, Greece's AMNA sign news cooperation agreement', *Xinhua*, 20 May 2016, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-05/20/c_135373144.htm.

⁶⁰ 'ANA and Xinhua sign MoU on Belt & Road Financial Information Partnership', AMNA, 4 December 2017, <https://www.amna.gr/en/article/210631/ANA-and-Xinhua-sign-MoU-on-Belt—Road-Financial-Information-Partnership>.

Chapter 3: Beneath the Surface

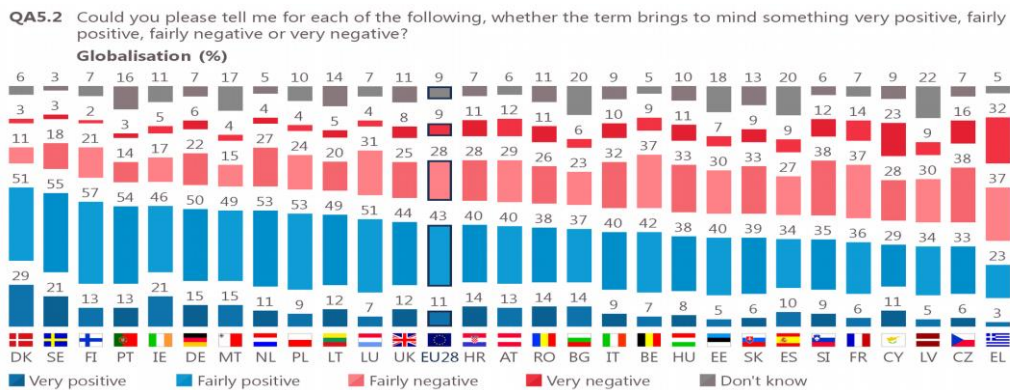
In this part of the study the IIER researchers aim to discharge three main tasks: (i) to offer possible explanations for the ambiguities and contradictions inherent to views of China in Greece; (ii) to correlate findings from the media monitoring exercise to China's image in the country; (iii) to examine China's image against a broader background and in a comparative way by juxtaposing it to the degree of acceptance of other countries in Greece.

The IIER team identified two contradictions presented in Chapter 1, namely:

- Greeks do not think highly of China's living standards, lifestyle, social cohesion, form of government, human rights issues, work safety, environmental challenges, etc. Yet, they have high expectations and view China as an important economic partner that can help Greece overcome its decade-long economic predicament.
- The perception that China's growing prowess is bad news for Europe, but good news for Greece, as if Greece were not in Europe and were not an EU member state.

There is at least one more contradiction to be addressed - the fact that the vast majority of Greeks are adamantly against globalisation, as shown in Graph 5. At the same time, many Greeks expect China, the *par excellence* beneficiary of globalisation, to help the Greek economy stand on its feet again.

Graph 5
Views of Globalisation in EU Member States



Source: Eurobarometer, December 2017

The contradictions identified so far demonstrate that there is more than meets the eye. Figuratively speaking, some of the causes for the trends highlighted above do not appear in the looking glass - hence the need for some digging beneath the surface.

There may be various possible explanations, which are not mutually exclusive, but a common theme running through all of them appears to be a mix of two significant factors: (i) the severe socio-economic and political crisis that Greece has been going through, and (ii) the way Greeks view themselves in the 21st century. Seen through a broader lens, attitudes in Greek society have been heavily affected by the fiscal and economic crunch, ensued by social and political turmoil in the country. What might be helpful is the use of some tools from the realm of psychology. Indeed, what has been happening in the Greek psyche since 2010 is nothing

short of a collective trauma: a chorus of anxiety, humiliation and frustration⁶¹, coupled with a profound sense of insecurity in a rapidly changing world.

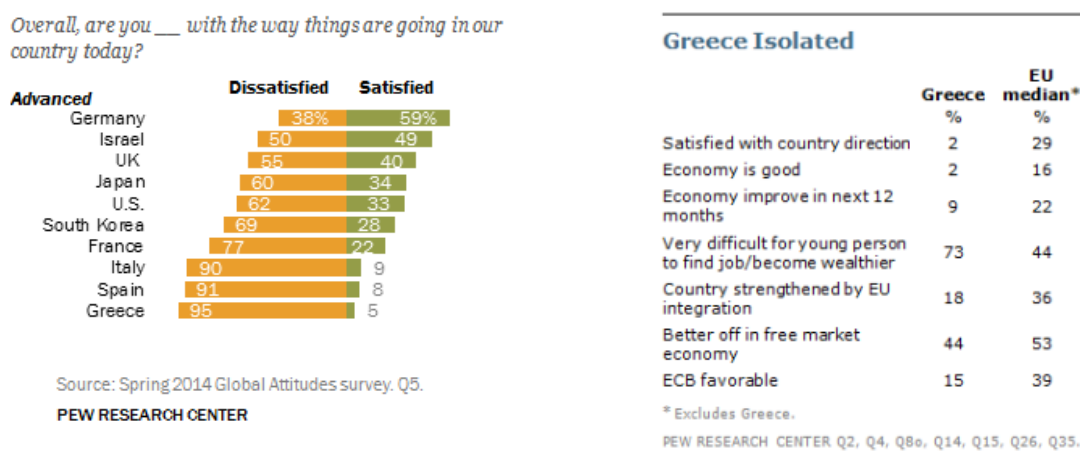
The period between 2008 and 2018, which is examined here, largely coincides with the near-decade of abrupt economic contraction, social upheaval and political instability in Greece in the wake of the 2009 debt crisis. Developments entailed by the fiscal crunch can by no means be overlooked, as they have affected every fiber of Greek society and have led to a drastic reconfiguration of the domestic political scene, as well as the international relations of the country. Perceptions of Greece’s friends and foes have changed dramatically over the last years, which is why it was deemed important for the IIER team to step back for a moment from the specific issue of China’s image and take a look at the bigger picture.

3.1. The Gloomy Decade

Despondent about the economy, largely pessimistic about the country’s prospects and worried about their children’s future, Greeks tend to see very few friends, if any. The majority of Greek people find, rightly or wrongly, that the country is heading in the wrong direction. It is only recently that the economic mood has brightened a little bit, though optimism about the trajectory of the economy has yet to return and, in general, Greeks remain downbeat about the prospects of the country.

In the spring of 2014, Greece was the least satisfied nation, at a striking 5%, among the ten advanced economies covered by the Pew Research Center (Graph 6), but also among all the forty-three countries included in the sample on a global scale (See Annex 4.4.1.1.). By this broad measure of national unease, which encompasses public perception of economic, political, social and security conditions, Greeks were profoundly unhappy about life in their own country as well as about the international standing of Greece.

Graph 6
Greeks Dissatisfied with Country Direction



At about the same time, almost every Greek (98%) referred to joblessness as the single biggest issue in the country (Annex 4.4.1.1.) – this is only to be expected, given that the official unemployment rate in the country peaked at 27.6% in May 2013.⁶² According to official

⁶¹ Helena Smith, ‘Has Greece finally escaped the grip of catastrophe?’, *The Guardian*, 15 July 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/15/greece-exit-final-international-bailout-debt-catastrophe>.

⁶² European Commission, ‘Labour Market Development: European Economy, 6/2013’, http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2013/pdf/ee6_en.pdf, Table I.2.1.

statistics, by June 2018 it had come down to 20.2%⁶³, but was still the highest in the EU. Hence the significance Greeks attach to job creation and their hope that foreign businesses, including those coming from China, would boost employment in the country.

Greeks' tumbling living standards, too, have been a major cause for concern. Hence the IIER finding presented in Chapter 1 that, although Chinese commodities are not viewed as being of high quality, at least they are affordable for many families in the country (Annex 4.2.1.8.). The average disposable income in Greece has shrunk by an estimated 25% to 30% since 2010 and prices matter a lot. Thus, cheap Chinese commodities are popular in Greece only because in the midst of the ongoing economic crisis many households do not have the wherewithal to make ends meet.

As surveys presented in Chapter 1 demonstrate, Greeks are no fans of the Chinese lifestyle or the Chinese political system. China may not be the country Greeks envy and would like to live in, but in their thinking Beijing could help them improve things in Greece. In fact, it is a give-and-take attitude or, rather, a 'transactional' stance. This appears to be the mood, albeit not a clearly articulated argument, behind the generally positive view of China in Greece. This seems to explain the first of the three contradictions identified through the IIER research.

3.2. Euroscepticism and the Quest for Alternatives

Losing more than a quarter of its national wealth and living standards, branded the 'black sheep' of the Eurozone for about a decade, facing the spectre of Grexit for several years, being next to an increasingly unpredictable and belligerent Turkey, and overrun by migrant flows since 2015, Greece is feeling lonely and abandoned by its European partners.

This relates directly to the second contradiction, Greece's psychological detachment from the EU. It is argued in this paper that the severe crisis has produced a cocktail of 'bad blood', and has led to a surge of euroscepticism in the country. This assumption is corroborated by a wealth of evidence, which points to a persistent pattern through the 2010s. According to a Pew Research Center survey as early as 2012, two years into the severe fiscal and economic crisis in the country, Greek respondents were the least happy with their country's direction, most pessimistic and most critical about the EU.⁶⁴

Another Pew Research Center survey in June 2017⁶⁵ established that 36% of Greeks wanted to leave the EU and 58% were in favour of a national referendum on EU membership (Annex 4.4.2.1.). According to a July 2017 BBC World Service survey, while views of the EU's influence were mainly positive in all the European countries polled as well as in Canada, the US and Australia, Greek respondents indicated a 35% positive and 36% negative attitude. Notably, Greeks are particularly bitter in their attitude towards Germany, the biggest EU member state and economy. All the above countries demonstrated favourable views of Germany's influence, however very negative results were recorded in Greece: 29% positive vs 50% negative.⁶⁶

⁶³ Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/268830/unemployment-rate-in-eu-countries/>.

⁶⁴ Source: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2012/05/29/european-unity-on-the-rocks/>.

⁶⁵ <http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2017/06/06160636/Pew-Research-Center-EU-Brexit-Report-UPDATED-June-15-2017.pdf>.

⁶⁶ 'Sharp Drop in World Views of US, UK: Global Poll', *BBC World Service*, 4 July 2017, p. 16, https://globescan.com/images/images/pressreleases/bbc2017_country_ratings/BBC2017_Country_Ratings_Poll.pdf.

Against this backdrop, it is a small wonder that Greeks appear extremely negative in their attitude towards the EU, as recorded in the 2017 Eurobarometer. Only 29% of those interviewed thought that the EU could protect them from the negative effects of globalisation (Annex 4.4.2.2.). Similarly, only 37% found EU assistance beneficial with a view to benefits to be drawn from globalisation (Annex 4.4.2.3.). This may well explain the second contradiction, i.e. the fact that China's growing economic might is seen as bad news for Europe, but good news for Greece which has become psychologically detached from the EU.

After a gloomy decade, Greece has been looking for powerful allies, other than the EU and the US.

It is clear that the protracted gloom feeds a high degree of euroscepticism, if not an outright anti-European and anti-Western mood, in Greece. In addition, after a near-decade of steeply falling living standards and constant bickering with the country's creditors and partners, Greece has a noticeably low self-esteem. Because of the disenchantment with the West and the acute sense of insecurity, Greece has been looking for strong allies, other than the EU and the US. It may well be that an increasingly powerful Beijing is seen as the ally that Greece needs right now. This is where China steps into the void and this is why the growing Chinese presence in Greece should be examined in light of the fiscal and economic crisis in the country.⁶⁷

3.3. China Enters the Stage

In fact, Greece's case seems to confirm a broader trend: It has been pointed out that, as China perceived the EU to be failing at appropriately addressing the crisis, it realised that it could play a more central role in global governance⁶⁸ and, in particular, in Europe itself. Greece being the 'weak link' of the Eurozone and, at the same time, at the crossroads between Europe, Asia and Africa, Beijing strategists quite understandably chose the country as an entry point in the region.

The purely economic and even geopolitical aspects of the Sino-Greek 'romance' are relatively easy to grasp. They have been discussed at length and a number of rational arguments have been put forward. Yet, a very interesting – and less visible – facet of Sino-Greek relations is a sense of cultural rapport or kindred, which has played a part in the *rapprochement* between the two countries. Given that both nations rightfully take pride in their rich history and culture, related initiatives easily make headlines and go down well with the general public in Greece as well as in China. A big part of the official Sino-Greek relations is the cultural diplomacy campaign launched mostly by the Chinese side. Beijing certainly attaches great importance to public diplomacy, which stems from a well thought-out long-term concept that China has embraced in order to promote its soft-power image worldwide.⁶⁹ In this sense, Greece is a particularly relevant 'testbed' for the implementation of such a strategy.⁷⁰

Thus, the Olympic Games in 2004 and 2008 were held in Athens and Beijing, respectively, which provided many opportunities for the exchange of visits and related expertise. The period from September 2007 to September 2008 was declared the 'Cultural Year of Greece in China'.

⁶⁷ Polyxeni Davarinou, 'Kinezikes ependyseis stin Ellada kai ellinokinezikes scheseis' ('Chinese investment in Greece and Sino-Greek relations'), *Liberal.gr*, 16 December 2017, <https://www.liberal.gr/arthro/181755/apopsi/arthra/kinezikes-ependyseis-stin-ellada-kai-ellinokinezikes-scheseis.html>.

⁶⁸ Zeng, Jinghan (2017), Does Europe Matter? The Role of Europe in Chinese Narratives of 'One Belt One Road' and 'New Type of Great Power Relations'. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 55: 1162–1176.

⁶⁹ David Shambaugh, 'China's Soft-Power Push', *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2015 issue, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2015-06-16/china-s-soft-power-push>.

⁷⁰ Plamen Tonchev, Polyxeni Davarinou, 'Chinese Investment in Greece and the Big Picture of Sino-Greek Relations', *IIER*, December 2017, pp. 51-52, http://idos.gr/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Chinese-Investment-in-Greece_4-12-2017.pdf.

Greece-China 2017 was the Year of Cultural Exchanges and Cooperation in Creative Industries. In April 2017, Athens hosted the first Ministerial Conference of the states invited to the so-called ‘Ancient Civilizations Forum’, more widely known as GC10.⁷¹

It should be noted that, in Greece, BRI is more often referred to as the ‘New Silk Road’. It may be that the official name, ‘Belt and Road Initiative’, does not translate into Greek nicely. More importantly, it may also be that the notion of the ‘Silk Road’ is associated with Alexander the Great’s expedition into Central and South Asia in the 4th century BC, as well as with the Byzantine empire in the Middle Ages. To a certain degree, this also contributes to the imagery of Sino-Greek cooperation on the basis of what is misconstrued as long-standing historical and cultural ties.

Presumably, the imagery of a glorious antiquity does unite Greece and China, though in very different ways. In the case of Greece, it seems to be a nostalgic look at a vaunted past and this may be explicable in psychological terms with a view to the country’s bleak present and uncertain future. It may be that, after all the bitterness and humiliation felt by Greeks since 2010, they need an injection of self-confidence, by making Greece appear on par with huge China, which is perceived by many as a future superpower. According to a DiaNEOsis survey in April 2017, 62.3% of Greeks polled believed that they were a people with a long history, which still stood out for its genius and culture (Annex 4.4.3.1.).⁷²

The imagery of a glorious antiquity unites Greece and China, though in very different ways.

An expression often used with reference to the ever-closer Sino-Greek relations is one attributed to the famous writer Nikos Kazantzakis, known worldwide for his novel *Zorba the Greek*. Being an admirer of eastern civilisations, including China’s, Kazantzakis once wrote ‘If you scratch a Chinese, you’ll find a Greek underneath – and if you scratch a Greek, you’ll find a Chinese underneath’.⁷³ This catchphrase is rapidly becoming a *Leitmotif* or a hackneyed figure of speech at official events dedicated to relations between the two countries. The previous ambassador of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) to Greece is on record using this expression at least twice: on 20 August 2015, at an event on the Belt and Road Initiative⁷⁴ and, once again, in his speech during the official signing ceremony of the second deal between the Greek government and COSCO on 9 April 2016.⁷⁵ As of July 2018, a quick Google search for this quote would yield more than twenty web entries in Greek (interestingly, not in English or any other languages) and their number is likely to increase over time.

No matter how solid this historical and cultural kinship between Greece and China may be, it can actually serve to help explain the third contradiction identified by the IIER team in the attitude of Greeks towards China: in a less-than-rational way, Greeks may subconsciously view China as a more acceptable expression of much-feared globalisation, inasmuch the sense of Sino-Greek kindred rightly or wrongly is at play.

At the same time, it is difficult to assess to what extent the effect of high-profile initiatives and public diplomacy at the government level trickles down to the general Greek public. Tellingly, as of September 2018 there was only one Confucius Institute in Greece, at the Athens University of Economics and Business. In addition, there are a host of Sino-Greek business and

⁷¹ Apart from Greece and China, the other countries represented at the conference were Bolivia, Egypt, India, Iraq, Iran, Italy, Mexico and Peru. The second edition of this annual meeting took place in Bolivia in July 2018, ‘Kotzias in Bolivia for Ancient Civilizations Forum’, *Kathimerini*, 15 July 2015, <http://www.ekathimerini.com/230701/article/ekathimerini/news/kotzias-in-bolivia-for-ancient-civilizations-forum>.

⁷² Source: DiaNEOsis, <https://www.dianeosis.org/en/2017/04/greeks-believe-in-2017>.

⁷³ Nikos Kazantzakis travelled to East Asia in 1935 and his book, titled ‘Travel: Japan and China’, was released three years later.

⁷⁴ <http://gr.china-embassy.org/gr/dsjh/t1290117.htm> (in Greek).

⁷⁵ <http://gr.china-embassy.org/gr/dsjh/t1354337.htm> (in Greek).

cultural associations set up over the last years, but they are of limited visibility and dubious effectiveness.

According to a survey released by the University of Piraeus in January 2014⁷⁶, 60.9% of Greeks polled stated that the Greek and Chinese cultures had things in common, and out of them 38.2% were convinced the two cultures had ‘a lot in common’. However, the same survey then reveals that China is considered to be a remote and culturally different nation, without any particular bond to Greece. It has been pointed out that, while Greeks state their respect for China, in reality they also tend to keep a respectful distance from it.⁷⁷

Therefore, this sense of kinship between Greece and China may well be fictitious, after all. The facile assumption that the two countries are ‘relatives’ appears to reflect a self-aggrandising attitude on the part of Greeks rather than an informed view and awareness of the ancient Chinese civilisation. The perception of China as a long-lost first cousin is redolent of a fuzzy collective fiction, but then fiction is not expected to be accurate in the first place.

Ultimately, China’s image in Greece is a mish-mash of four different, and to a certain extent conflicting, narratives: (i) a developing country that still faces considerable socio-economic challenges despite its impressive achievements over the last decades; (ii) an authoritarian regime that does not fully respect the rights of its citizens and has plenty of room for improvement of the rule of law; (iii) a potential ally against the vilified western/European creditors in the midst of the ongoing crisis in Greece; (iv) an ancient civilisation as glorious as the Greek one and a cultural partner, despite the lack of knowledge about Chinese antiquity.

China’s image in Greece is a mish-mash of four different and, to a certain extent conflicting, narratives.

3.4. *China vs Others*

China’s image in Greece could best be understood if gauged in juxtaposition to the perceptions of other big powers, such as the EU, Germany, the US, Russia, etc. Resentment for the EU and Germany, in particular, has been touched upon. With regard to the US, Greeks have traditionally been among the least sympathetic Europeans and there is a time-honoured practice of anti-American rallies in the country. In that sense, China clearly has an advantage over western powers.

In comparing Greece to other EU member states, an interesting example comes from Romania. It has been pointed out that, being one of the fervent supporters of EU institutions and policies, Romania takes account of any negative signals from Brussels or other western European capitals in relation to China⁷⁸, which confirms the validity of the assumption that China’s image in Greece should be examined in the context of the tense relations between Athens and other EU partners.

What certainly is a very interesting case in such a comparative approach is Greece’s psychological bond to Russia, which is much more deep-rooted and lasting than the ‘cultural kinship’ with China. The historical depth of Greece’s traditionally strong ties to Russia does not compare to that of the recent Sino-Greek romance.⁷⁹ At the same time, the November 2016

⁷⁶ The survey was carried out by the University of Piraeus and the pollster Kapa Research in December 2013, and was supervised by Prof. Nikos Kotzias, who has been foreign minister of Greece since January 2015, <https://www.des.unipi.gr/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Research-Results-for-China-by-students-2013-2014- in-english .pdf>.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11, p. 21 and p. 26.

⁷⁸ Iulia Monica Oehler- Șincai, Costin Lianu, Cristina Ilie, and Irina Rădulescu, ‘Romanian Attitudes and Perceptions towards the 16+1 Cooperation Platform’, *China-CEE Institute*, Working Paper No. 6, 11 December 2017, pp. 3-4.

⁷⁹ Plamen Tonchev, ‘Sino-Greek Romance: Is This Love?’, Announcement at a ChinaMed conference in Turin, 6 July 2018.

survey by Kapa Research shows that, compared to China (39.5%), Russia scored higher (47.5%) on Greeks' preferences as to which countries Greece should develop closer relations with - the US came third (36.5%) and Germany was a distant fourth (20%).⁸⁰

A BBC survey carried out in 2017 shows that, while Canadians, USA citizens and all Europeans polled demonstrated a negative attitude towards Moscow, 48% of Greek respondents had a positive view of Russia.⁸¹ In June 2017, Greeks clearly preferred Russian president Vladimir Putin (50%) over western leaders Donald Trump (19%) and Angela Merkel (16%) as well as over Chinese president Xi Jinping (17%). When asked to compare the US, Russia and China, Greeks favoured Russia (64%) over China (50%) and the US (43%) – see Annex 4.4.4.1.⁸²

It should be taken into account that Russia is closely linked to the emergence of the modern Greek state in the early 19th century and has been part of Greece's history since, which by no means applies to China. Arguably, this long-standing Russo-Greek psychological bond is unlikely to be affected by the recent diplomatic skirmish between Athens and Moscow that peaked in August 2018.⁸³

Given that the generally friendly views of China in Greece are not predicated on genuine historical ties and this attitude is largely based on the fiction of a 'cultural kinship', it can prove shallow and could, in theory at least, easily fizzle out. For instance, the mixed feelings transpiring through a number of media reports can be attributed to the fact that talk of Chinese investment in Greece has been disproportionately more intensive than investment projects themselves. In other words, expectations may be on the verge of exceeding real developments.

Consequently, taking it for granted that China's image in Greece is based on a steady ground is a facile assumption. Views of China may to a large extent reflect an expectations-driven stance, as well as a desire-driven fiction of a cultural kinship between the two countries. The danger is that the overuse of poetic and emotionally charged imagery in a country that expects tangible socio-economic benefits as soon as possible may turn out to be counterproductive. There is a risk that pompous and persistently optimistic statements may have an unintended negative effect, thus leading to a 'China fatigue' in Greece. Meaningful and visible investment in the Greek economy and, above all, large-scale job creation will contribute to China's image infinitely more than investing too much in the 'cultural kinship' between the two nations.

The slump in EU popularity in the country since 2010 suggests that this could happen to any other partner of Greece, including China. This is why leaders in Athens and Beijing may have to be a bit more circumspect: unless Sino-Greek cooperation delivers comprehensible gains soon, generic pronouncements about the 'strategic partnership' between the two countries may ring hollow to Greek society and backfire in the future. It is incumbent upon Greek and Chinese authorities to feel the pulse of Greek society, if Sino-Greek relations are to take root and stand the test of time.

⁸⁰ Source: Kapa Research, <https://kaparesearch.com/en/survey-on-greece-us-relations-2016/>.

⁸¹ Source: https://globescan.com/images/images/pressreleases/bbc2017_country_ratings/BBC2017_Country_Ratings_Poll.pdf.

⁸² Source: http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/08/23/in-global-popularity-contest-u-s-and-china-not-russia-vie-for-first/ft_17-08-11_china_us_russia_table/

⁸³ Helena Smith, 'Greece accuses Russia of bribery and meddling in its affairs', *The Guardian*, 11 August 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/11/greece-accuses-russia-bribery-meddling-macedonia-deal>.

4. ANNEXES

Annex 4.1. Note on Scope and Methodology of the Research

Research Questions

At the start of the project, the IIER team defined four key research questions, namely:

- a) Degrees of favourable and unfavourable views on China in general as well as in relation to specific topical areas or clusters of issues;
- b) Range and quality of information about China in the Greek media (e.g. its economy and society, international standing, relations with other partners, etc.);
- c) Role of the Greek media in contributing to perceptions of China in Greece, e.g. through the nature of news items and the tone of media coverage;
- d) Other factors, which play a part in the formation of perceptions of China in Greece, such as expectations of Sino-Greek relations, the general mood in Greek society over the period in question, etc.

The research questions were addressed through the three project components presented below.

Survey component

The report aims to provide insight into China's image in Greece, on the basis of surveys carried out by both foreign and Greek polling agencies. In doing so, the IIER team has singled out relevant findings and merely quotes them, without any processing. In many ways, the survey component offered useful insights into broader issues, which were addressed through the third component ('Beneath the surface'). In order to capture the bigger picture and offer some interpretations, the IIER took into account questions not necessarily related to China, e.g. favourable or unfavourable perceptions of other international actors, such as the EU, the US, Russia, etc. In addition, views of China in Greece were juxtaposed to relevant findings in other western countries, above all in EU member states.

It is noted that there is a variety of similar – and overlapping - terms in relevant literature, such as 'country image', 'country reputation', 'country brand' and 'country identity'. While they all constitute important concepts in different approaches from business studies, social psychology, political science and communication science, the IIER team opted for the 'image' term, which is used throughout the report.

Media Monitoring Component

The survey component relates to the 'reflective' dimension of China's image, while the media monitoring exercise aimed to highlight some of the 'formative' factors, if not all the underlying reasons behind dominant perceptions of China in Greece.

The sample of newspapers and newsportals is small, but it is also representative, as the media outlets were carefully selected by the research team. Upon preliminary research, it was confirmed that all these outlets had a considerable readership. All the selected media outlets are

mainstream and are all providers of serious content, albeit through the lens of their political affiliation in some cases. The majority of the media outlets included in the sample are known to lean towards the two main political parties in Greece and only two were presumed to be editorially independent. Notably, electoral cycles have also been factored in, so that the media monitoring exercise reflects the stance of media outlets in relation to various governments over the 2008-2018 period.

Annex 4.1.1.: Sample of Selected Media Outlets

No	Media Outlet and Translation from Greek	Website	Remarks
1	<i>News247.gr</i>	www.news247.gr	
2	<i>To Vima</i> ('The Forum')	www.tovima.gr	
3	<i>Naftemporiki</i> ('Shipping Trade')	www.naftemporiki.gr	
4	<i>Proto Thema</i> ('First Issue')	www.protothema.gr	
5	<i>Kathimerini</i> ('Daily')	www.kathimerini.gr	
6	<i>Ta Nea</i> ('The News')	www.tanea.gr	
7	<i>Avgi</i> ('Dawn')	avgι.gr	
8	<i>Iefimerida</i> ('The Newspaper')	www.iefimerida.gr	Operational since March 2011
9	<i>Eleftherotypia</i> ('Freedom of the Press')	www.enet.gr	Operational till late 2011 ⁸⁴
10	<i>Efimerida ton Syntakton</i> ('Editors' Newspaper')	www.efsyn.gr	Operational since late 2012 ⁸⁵

N.B. In many ways, the *Efimerida ton Syntakton* newspaper is a continuation of *Eleftherotypia*, so these two outlets are counted as one in the dataset.

The IIER research team devised a template geared towards recording data in two content clusters:

- a) 'Sector-specific news about China' (Politics; Economy & Environment; Culture; and Other Topical Areas)
- b) 'China's International Relations' (China-US relations; China-EU relations; Sino-Greek relations; China and the Rest of the World).

The media monitoring strand relies on a dataset that is truly unique in Greece and is based on the analysis of nearly 1,400 China-related articles spanning over a period of ten years and a half, from January 2008 till mid-2018. The list of key words and phrases in identifying sources in the selected Greek media included more than 40 different items, either words or combinations of words as well as chronology, i.e. years from within the above timeframe. Some of the key words and phrases relate directly to the content clusters and others to an array of issues, from very specific (e.g. 'Chinese investment') to quite broad ones (e.g. 'China today').

The media monitoring exercise focused on both quantitative and qualitative criteria aspects. Particular attention was paid to the content of articles and the tone of coverage, as indicative elements of the media's intention to convey messages to the audience. Of the two indicators in question, the tone of coverage is harder to determine - although it is implied, carefully chosen words can be used to persuade or influence an audience. This is why the IIER researchers worked on the basis of a uniform set of indications.

⁸⁴ *Eleftherotypia* was shut down in December 2011 and re-opened in January 2013 for a short while before its definitive closure.

⁸⁵ The *Efimerida ton Syntakton* daily became fully operational in November 2012 as a 'co-operative' set up by former *Eleftherotypia* editors and reporters.

Annex 4.1.2.:
Classification of ‘Nature of News’ and ‘Tone of Coverage’

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative
News content	An item relates to achievements and praiseworthy developments that leave the reader likely to approve the content of the article read.	An item merely reports the facts and is marked by its exclusive purpose to inform the audience about a newsworthy development.	The news item presents events that most probably evoke a feeling of sadness, e.g. when relating to accidents, natural disasters or negative aspects of individual or public life.
Tone of coverage	An item is marked by a more or less obvious editorial commentary that breeds a certain feeling or is meant to leave the reader likely to approve the content.	An item: (i) contains no sentiment or (ii) includes both positive and negative sentiment and, therefore, the resulting overall tone and perception of the reader are balanced.	An item is marked by a more or less obvious editorial commentary that breeds a certain feeling or is meant to leave the reader less likely to approve the content.

Methodological limitations

The IIER team is fully aware of the limitations inherent to this research project. Under the first component, a key limitation is the fact that the findings come from a wide array of sources, such as pollsters using a variety of survey methods. Hence, there is considerable fluctuation among data collected by different polling agencies at about the same time. For instance, it has been noticed that when asked exclusively about China, interviewees tend to provide more positive or negative answers than when asked on a multiple-choice basis about several countries, one of which happens to be China – in the latter case, answers are scattered around through a range of options and figures tend to be lower.

In addition, it is acknowledged that a broader dataset on print and audiovisual media would most probably have offered greater insights. This particular report only covers ‘print’ media outlets, which are in fact electronic, while audio-visual media outlets (such as TV channels and radio stations) were left out of the sample. This is partly offset by the fact that a number of news items are picked by TV and radio stations from reports in the ‘print’ media. As a result, there is a high degree of repetition and overlapping across the media sector. Furthermore, China not being a prominent topic in the Greek public discourse over the last decade, it is barely present in the Greek social media - a review of the Twitter and Facebook networks by the IIER team has yielded very few relevant entries. Therefore, the sample of mainstream print media selected is anything but insignificant and it certainly provides meaningful indications, if not authoritative evidence.

**Annex 4.1.3.:
Breakdown of All Articles Reviewed as of July 2018**

Media Outlet	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	TOTAL
News247.gr	6	4	7	11	18	10	12	8	8	32	16	132
To Vima	11	8	41	14	18	13	12	7	10	36	20	190
Naftemporiki	9	12	24	10	12	22	83	36	11	26	40	285
Proto Thema	6	6	7	10	6	7	6	9	12	47	58	174
Kathimerini	7	8	12	9	6	13	10	8	13	21	16	123
Ta Nea	6	6	6	4	2	11	14	12	9	34	24	128
Avgi*	0	0	0	0	0	8	5	8	7	18	30	76
Iefimerida	#	#	#	11	8	10	13	7	13	45	56	163
Eleftherotypia	6	7	10	8	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	44
Efimerida ton Syntakton	#	#	#	#	3	2	8	11	8	19	33	84
TOTAL	51	51	107	77	73	96	163	106	91	278	293	1,386

* Articles before 2013 not available on the Avgi website.

**Annex 4.1.4.:
Breakdown of Content Clusters by Media Outlet as of July 2018**

Media Outlet	Politics	Economy & Environment	Culture	Other Areas	China-US relations	China-EU relations (incl. EU member states)	Sino-Greek Relations	China & the Rest of the World
News247.gr	31.8%	37.9%	3.8%	40.9%	8.3%	8.3%	19.7%	68.9%
To Vima	40.0%	55.8%	11.6%	13.2%	11.6%	12.6%	40.5%	40.0%
Naftemporiki	31.9%	49.5%	7.4%	22.5%	10.5%	15.8%	15.8%	60.4%
Proto Thema	27.0%	38.5%	8.6%	39.7%	12.1%	11.5%	13.8%	67.8%
Kathimerini	26.0%	60.2%	5.7%	22.8%	17.1%	10.6%	21.1%	57.7%
Ta Nea	31.3%	34.4%	9.4%	31.3%	15.6%	3.9%	10.9%	73.4%
Avgi	48.7%	42.1%	9.2%	14.5%	18.4%	17.1%	18.4%	51.3%
Iefimerida	32.5%	31.3%	12.9%	35.6%	14.7%	6.7%	11.0%	76.7%
Eleftherotypia	6.3%	20.3%	2.3%	10.9%	6.3%	0.0%	2.3%	26.6%
Efimerida ton Syntakton	19.5%	31.3%	11.7%	9.4%	9.4%	6.3%	17.2%	35.9%

* Percentages exceed 100% due to overlapping across topical areas and clusters.

Annex 4.2.

Surveys of China's Image in Greece

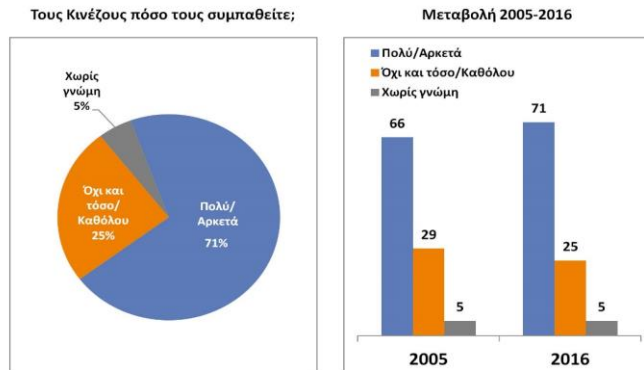
Annex 4.2.1: General Image of China

Annex 4.2.1.1.

Popularity of the Chinese people and China as a country, July 2016

In July 2016, 71% of the Greek citizens polled expressed a positive or very positive attitude towards the Chinese people (the respective share in a similar survey carried out eleven years earlier being 66%). The popularity of China as a country reached 70%: four out of ten had a definitely positive opinion and three had a rather positive view.

ΣΥΜΠΑΘΕΙΑ ΓΙΑ ΤΟΥΣ ΚΙΝΕΖΟΥΣ Ιούλιος 2016



Source: Political Barometer 158, Public Issue, July 2016

**Annex 4.2.1.2.
Foreign countries' popularity in Greece, 2005-2016**

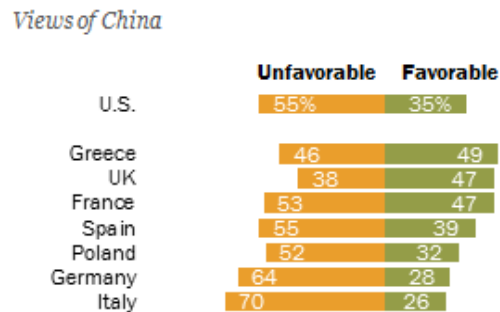
Between 2005 and 2016, China's popularity peaked at 60.0% in 2013. It is not clear what factors the slump in its image in 2010 (36.8%) can be attributed to.

	2005	2010	2013	2016	Change 2005-2016
France	77.5	84.0	72.0	75.0	-2.5
United Kingdom	41.5	25.5	43.5	61.5	+20.0
Russia	58.5	54.5	68.0	61.0	+2.5
United States of America	28.0	31.0	56.5	57.5	+29.5
China	55.5	36.5	60.0	53.0	-2.5
India	48.5	41.5	52.5	47.0	-1.5
Germany	78.5	29.0	33.0	44.5	-34.5
United Arab Emirates	43.5	41.0	43.5	25.0	-18.5
Turkey	19.5	12.5	22.0	7.5	-12.0

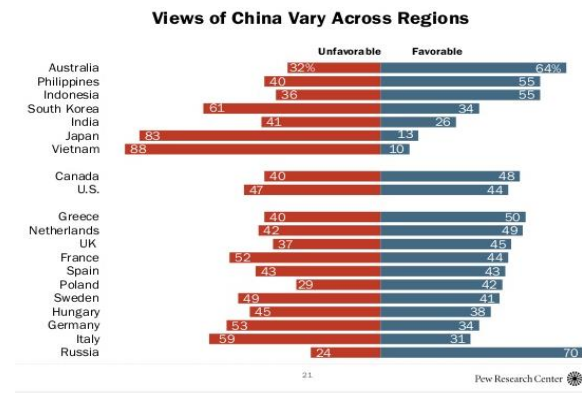
Source: Kapa Research, November 2016

**Annex 4.2.1.3.
Compared to other western states, Greece stands out with its positive view of China**

Greeks display a generally positive view of China when compared to other nations polled. In July 2014, Greeks had the most positive view of China, at 49%, within a sample of eight countries, including seven EU member states and the US. Three years later, Greece came across as the most positive EU member state vis-à-vis China within the survey sample.



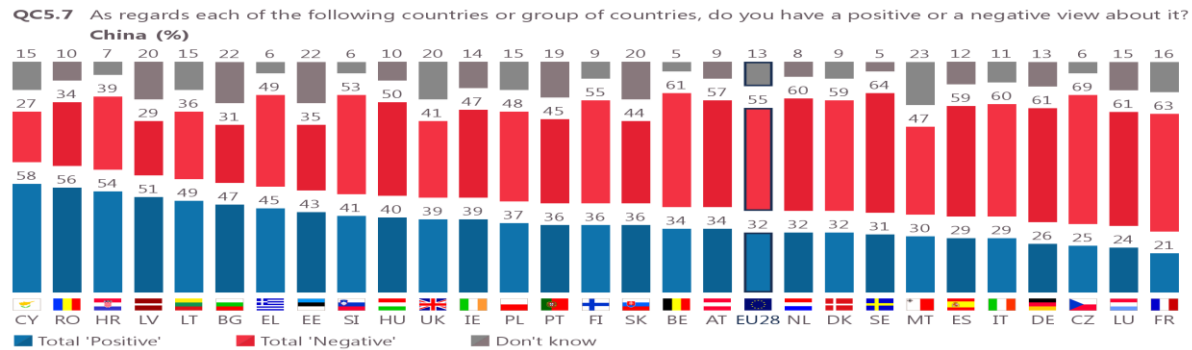
Source: Pew Research Center, July 2014



Source: Pew Research Center, Spring 2017

**Annex 4.2.1.4.
Positive Views of China: Greece in Top Seven EU Member States**

The 2017 Eurobarometer showed that 45% of Greek respondents had a positive view of China (compared to 49% who expressed a negative opinion). Only in six other EU member states did citizens have more positive perceptions of China.



Source: European Barometer, December 2017

**Annex 4.2.1.5.
Chinese Governance Model Not Accepted by Greeks**

In April 2017, only 2.4% of Greeks polled approved of China's form of government. The most popular model was that of Sweden (57.8%), followed by the US (12.0%), Russia (10.0%), and France (6.3%).

B25. Which of the following countries do you think provides the best model of governance...

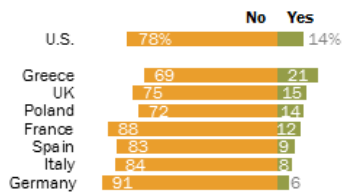


Source: DiaNEOsis, April 2017

Annex 4.2.1.6. China Not a Democracy for the Majority of Greeks

In July 2016, to the question whether they thought that China was a democratic country, 60.7% of Greek respondents replied ‘no’ and ‘not really’. 62.4% expressed the view that human rights were not respected in China. This is in line with the findings of a 2014 Pew Research Center survey, in which as many as 69% of Greek respondents did not believe that Chinese authorities respected the personal freedoms of their people. At the same time, Greece held the most favourable view of China on this specific account (at 21%), compared to several other western countries polled.

Does the government of China respect the personal freedoms of its people?

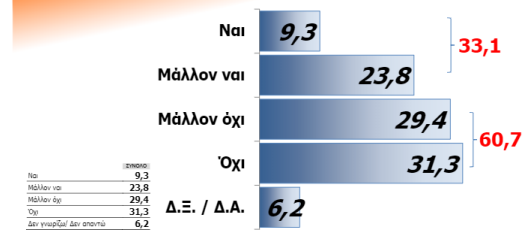


Source: Pew Research Center, July 2014

Θα λέγατε ότι σε γενικές γραμμές η Κίνα είναι μια χώρα που σέβεται τα ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα;



Θα λέγατε ότι σε γενικές γραμμές η Κίνα είναι μια δημοκρατική χώρα;



Source: Greek Public Opinion (GPO), December 2016

Annex 4.2.1.7. Lack of Clear Understanding of China’s Political System

When asked about China’s political system, the majority of Greek respondents (54.6%) thought it qualified as a ‘socialist republic’. More than one in five came up with clearly inaccurate answers, such as “parliamentary democracy” (11.8%) and ‘federal republic’ (10.7%).

Ποιο είναι το πολίτευμα της Κίνας;



Source: GPO, December 2016

**Annex 4.2.1.8.
China Still a Developing Country in the Eyes of Greeks**

In December 2016, the vast majority of Greeks (79.3%) viewed China as being marked by considerable economic inequality, though 17.8% thought it would qualify as a rich country.



Source: GPO, December 2016

**Annex 4.2.1.9.
Greeks Find Chinese Goods of Low Quality**

When asked about the quality of Chinese products, only 15.8% of Greek respondents find it very high or high. The majority, 51.9% find it 'mediocre', while 31.4% think it is 'low' or 'very low'. The vast majority of the respondents, 78.8%, find Chinese products worse than the respective US and European goods.



Source: GPO Survey, December 2016

Annex 4.2.2.: Perceptions of Sino-Greek Relations and Expectations in Greece

Annex 4.2.2.1. 'Friendly' Sino-Greek relations

In December 2016, a vast majority of the respondents (81.9%) qualified Sino-Greek relations as 'friendly' (51.3%) and 'relatively friendly' (30.6%).



Source: GPO, December 2016

Annex 4.2.2.2. Greeks Support Closer Ties with China

In December 2016, 87.5% of the Greeks polled were of the view that Greece should pursue closer cultural relations with China, compared to 83.5% in favour of closer economic cooperation and 71.1% supporting closer political ties.

Πιστεύετε ότι η Ελλάδα πρέπει να επιδιώξει την ανάπτυξη στενότερων οικονομικών σχέσεων με την Κίνα;



Πιστεύετε ότι η Ελλάδα πρέπει να επιδιώξει την ανάπτυξη στενότερων πολιτικών σχέσεων με την Κίνα;



Πιστεύετε ότι η Ελλάδα πρέπει να επιδιώξει την ανάπτυξη στενότερων πολιτιστικών σχέσεων με την Κίνα;



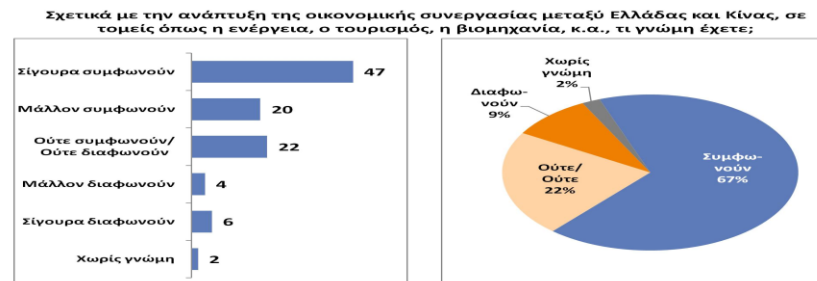
Source: GPO, December 2016

Annex 4.2.2.3.

Two-Thirds of Greeks Support Sino-Greek Economic Cooperation

67% (47% ‘yes’ and 20% ‘perhaps yes’) of Greeks polled in July 2016 favoured economic cooperation between the two countries in the sectors of energy, tourism, manufacturing, etc. The group of ‘neither agreement nor disagreement’ amounted to 22% of the total.

ΠΡΟΟΠΤΙΚΗ ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΚΗΣ ΣΥΝΕΡΓΑΣΙΑΣ ΜΕΤΑΞΥ ΕΛΛΑΔΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΚΙΝΑΣ Ιούλιος 2016



Source: Public Issue, July 2016

Annex 4.2.2.4.

Greeks Hope that Chinese Presence Will Boost Employment

With regard to economic cooperation, 64.1% of Greeks (‘yes’ and ‘perhaps yes’) believed that the presence of Chinese enterprises could prove beneficial to the Greek economy. An impressive 77.9% (‘yes’ and ‘perhaps yes’) was of the view that Chinese enterprises could create new jobs. Negative replies (‘no’ and ‘not really’) to the above questions amounted to 34.3% and 21.0, respectively.

Πιστεύετε ότι η είσοδος κινεζικών επιχειρήσεων στην ελληνική αγορά μπορεί να τονώσει την ελληνική οικονομία;



Source: GPO, December 2016

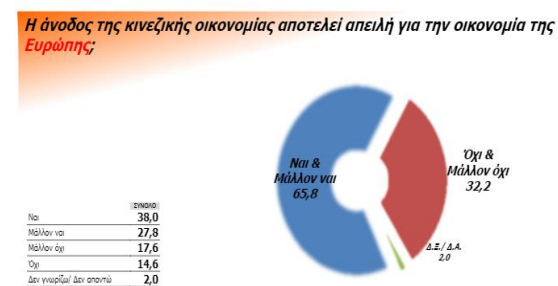
Η είσοδος κινεζικών επιχειρήσεων στην ελληνική αγορά μπορεί να δημιουργήσει νέες θέσεις εργασίας;



Annex 4.2.2.5.

China's economy viewed as a threat to Europe, but not to Greece

61.5% of Greek respondents viewed China's growing economic power as a positive development for Greece. At the same time, however, an even larger share of the Greeks interviewed, 65.8%, deemed China's growing economic power a threat for Europe. Two possible interpretations of this apparent contradiction are that: (i) what is a potential threat to Europe is not necessarily viewed as a threat to Greece, as long as China throws its weight behind Greece's economy, or (ii) Greeks do not feel strongly attached to the EU.



Source: GPO, December 2016

Annex 4.2.3.1.

China Viewed as a Significant Political Partner, But Not a Key Ally

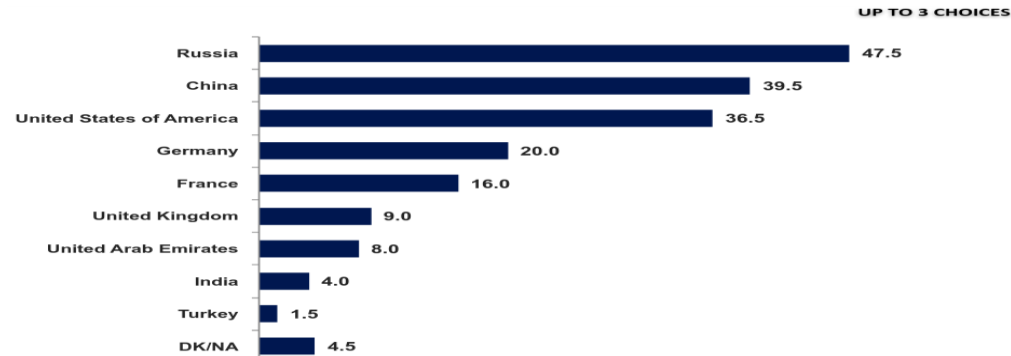
64.1% of respondents view China as a potential ally of Greece on the international scene. To the question ‘Would you say that China is an ally of Greece on the international scene?’, 17.7% replied ‘yes’ and 46.4% ‘probably yes’. However, things change markedly, when Greeks compare China to other choices. Thus, in October 2015 only 3% of Greeks polled thought that China could be the country’s key ally. The EU came first (44%), with Russia as a remote second (12%).



Annex 4.2.3.2.

China – the Second Most Popular Country Greece Should Develop Closer Relations With

In November 2016, to the question ‘In your opinion, with which of the following countries is it in Greece’s interest to develop closer relations?’ (up to three choices), 47.5% of the respondents pointed to Russia, 39.5% favoured China and 36.5% opted for the US. Germany came fourth at 20.0%, followed by France (16.0%), the United Kingdom (9.0%), the United Arab Emirates (8.0%), India (4%) and Turkey (1.5%). Notably, the question did not distinguish between political and economic ties.



Annex 4.3. **China's Coverage in Selected Greek Media**

Annex 4.3.1.1. **Breakdown of Coverage of China's International Relations**



*Total percentage exceeds 100%, due to overlaps

Source: Institute of International Economic Relations

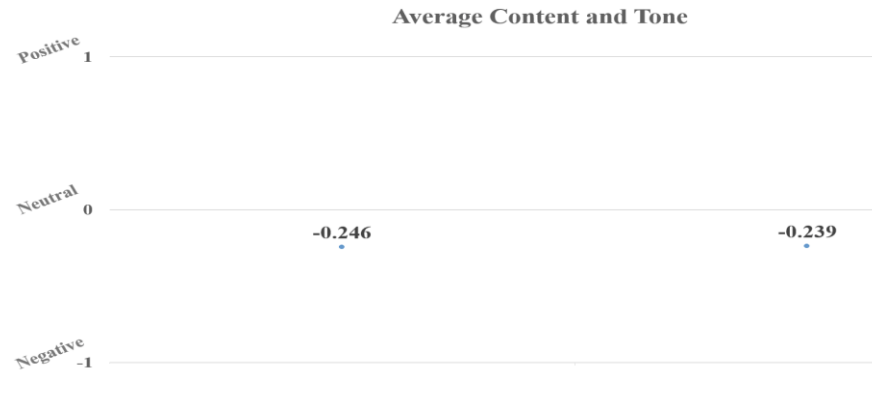
Annex 4.3.1.2. **Chinese newly weds in Santorini**



Source: Kathimerini, 25 April 2015

Annex 4.3.2.1.
Average Values for Content and Tone of China's Media Coverage

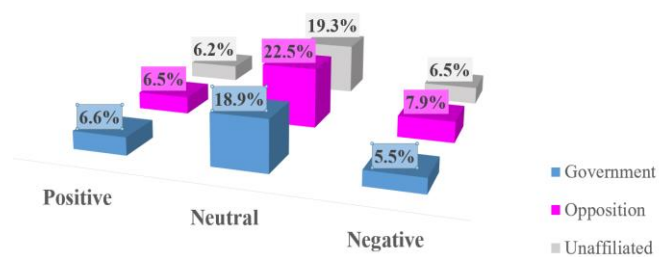
Both the content (-0.246) and tone (-0.239) of China coverage are negative, though very close to neutral.



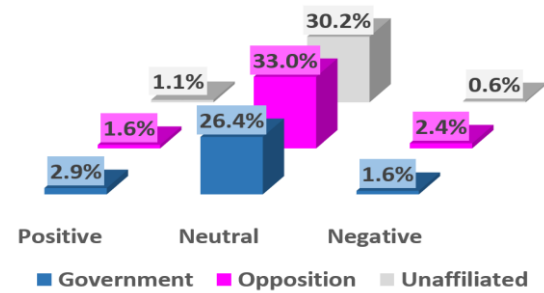
Source: Institute of International Economic Relations

Annex 4.3.2.2.
Content and Tone of Coverage by Political Affiliation

Nature of Content by Political Affiliation



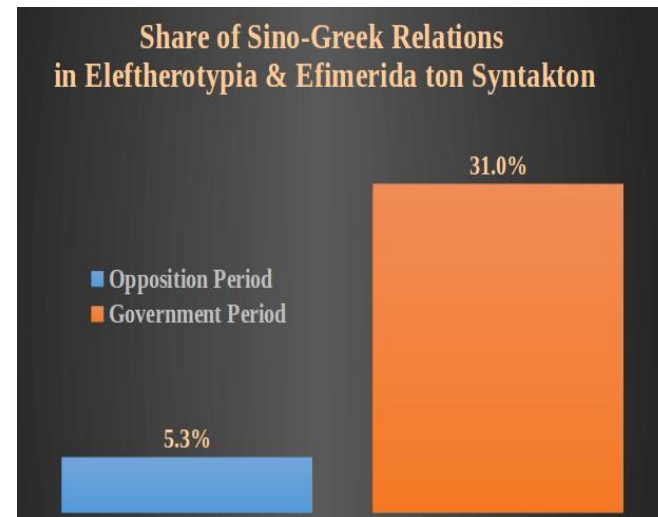
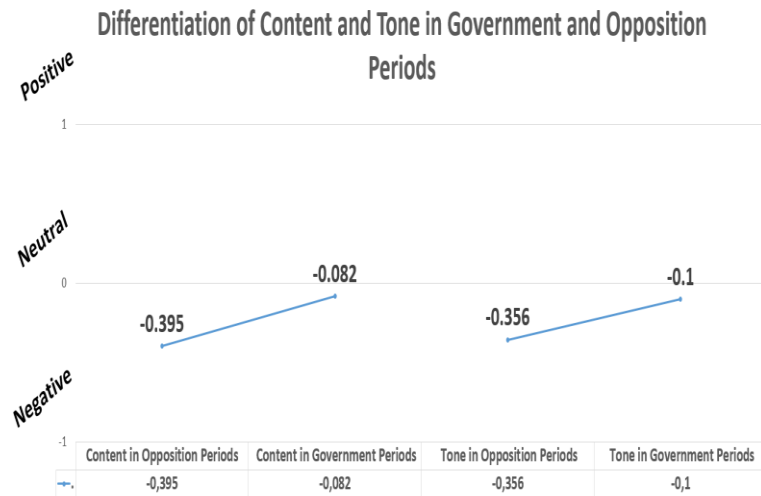
Tone of Coverage by Political Affiliation



Source: Institute of International Economic Relations

**Annex 4.3.2.3.
Pro-government media tend to sell China**

The average values of both key indicators, nature of content and tone of coverage, are moderately negative and close to the neutrality line. However, pro-government media tend to have more China-friendly content and tone, compared to the time when the parties they support are in opposition. In addition, the share of Sino-Greek relations in the China-related news carried by pro-government media increases by an impressive 68.1%. For instance, the share of Sino-Greek relations in the left-leaning *Eleftherotypia* and *Efimerida ton Syntakton*, staunch supporters of SYRIZA, has risen sixfold since 2015, when the Tsipras government came to power.



Source: Institute of International Economic Relations

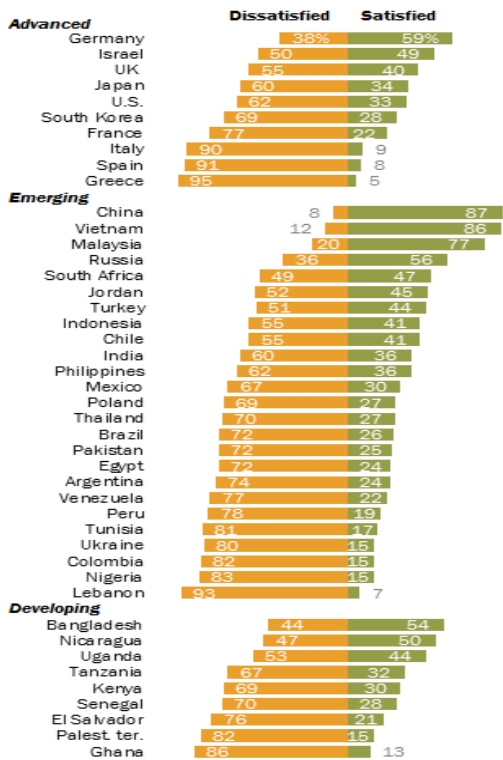
Annex 4.4. Factors Beneath the Surface

Annex 4.4.1.: Greek Gloom

Annex 4.4.1.1. Dissatisfaction and Anxiety, Mostly in Relation to High Unemployment

Widespread Dissatisfaction

Overall, are you ___ with the way things are going in our country today?



Source: Spring 2014 Global Attitudes survey, Q5.

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Jobs Overwhelming Concern in Greece, Italy, Spain

Very big problem

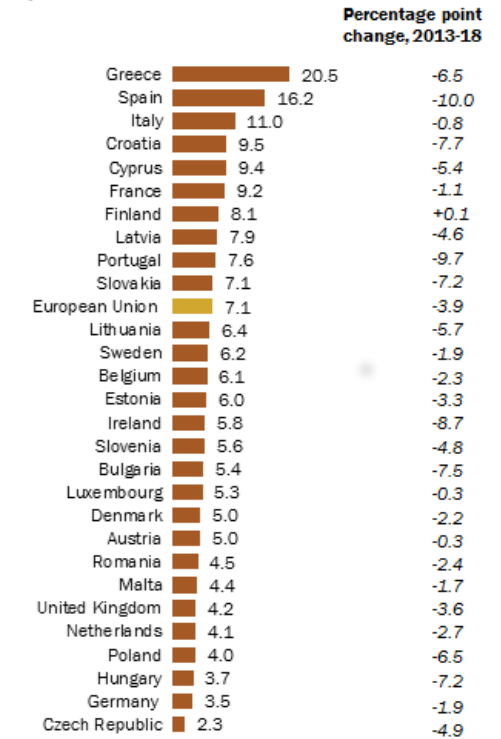
	Rising prices	Lack of employment opportunities	Rich-poor gap	Public debt
Advanced	%	%	%	%
Greece	89	98	84	89
Italy	78	94	73	79
Spain	68	93	74	75
France	64	77	60	65
Israel	58	57	57	33
U.S.	53	54	46	63
UK	46	54	47	54
South Korea	44	58	55	58
Japan	31	45	28	67
Germany	23	24	39	34

Note: Highest percentages for each country highlighted in bold.

Source: Spring 2014 Global Attitudes survey, Q23a-d.

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Unemployment rate in EU countries (%), first quarter of 2018



Note: European Union consists of 28 countries, including the UK. Unemployment rate is among 15- to 74-year-old workers. Estimates are seasonally adjusted. The change in the unemployment rate is between the first quarter of 2013, the end of the EU's last recession, and the first quarter of 2018.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Eurostat data, accessed July 5, 2018.

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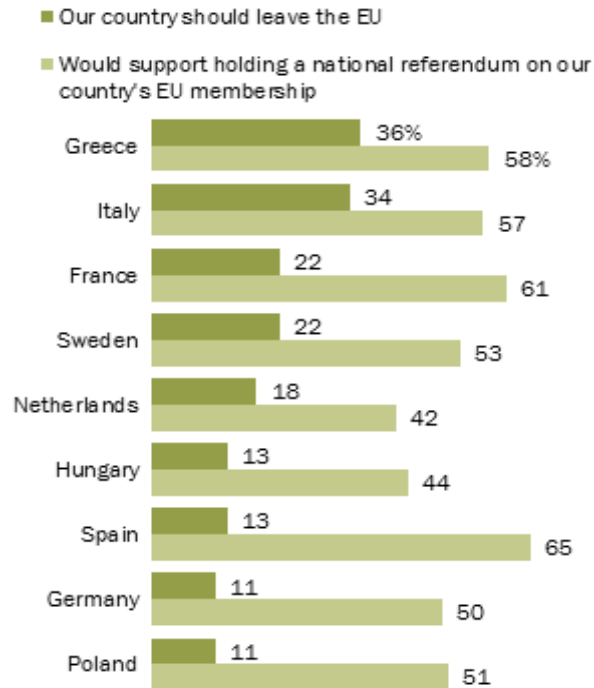
Annex 4.4.2.: Euroscepticism and the Quest for Alternatives

Annex 4.4.2.1.

More Than One in Three Greeks Support Leaving the EU

In early 2017, 36% of Greeks polled supported the idea that the country should leave the EU and 58% were in favour of a referendum on this issue.

Little support for leaving EU, but many want a referendum on membership

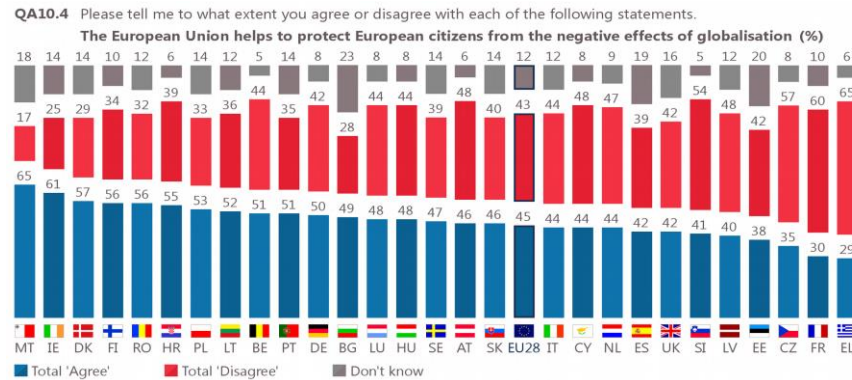


Source: Spring 2017 Global Attitudes Survey. Q44 & Q45.

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**Annex 4.4.2.2.
Greeks Distrust the EU as a Shield Against Globalisation**

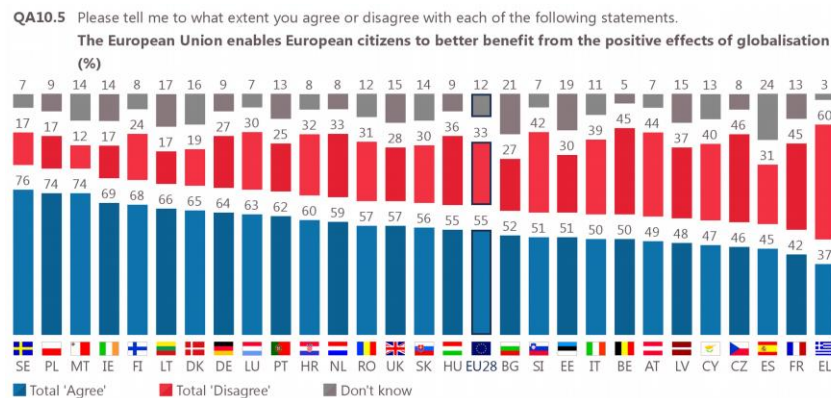
In 2017, Greece hit rock bottom in the ranking of EU member states with regard to globalisation: only 29% thought the EU could protect Greek citizens from the negative effects of globalisation.



Source: Eurobarometer-2017

**Annex 4.4.2.3.
Greeks Distrust the EU as a Benefactor in Relation to Globalisation**

Similarly, only 37% found EU assistance beneficial with a view to benefits to be drawn from globalisation.



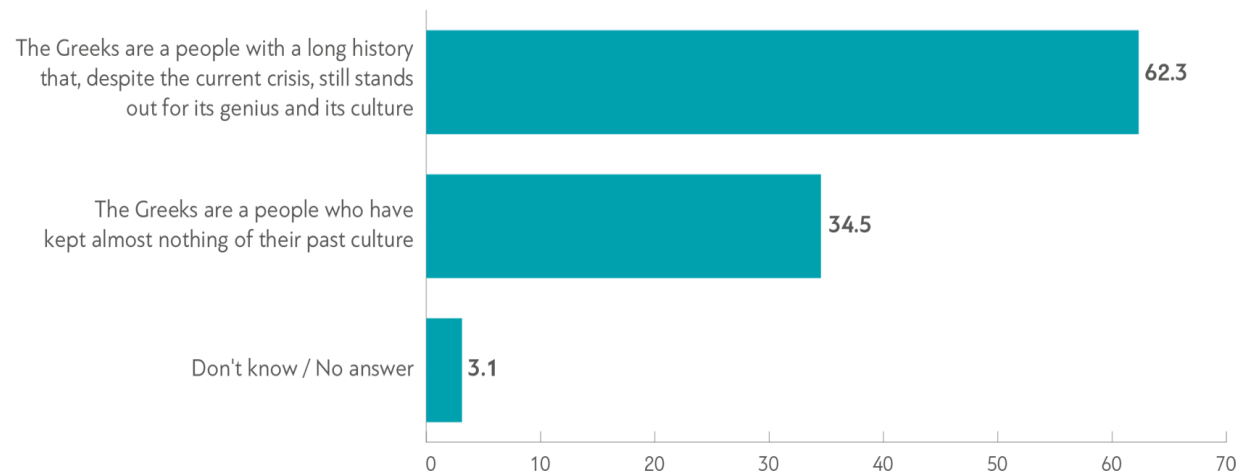
Source: Eurobarometer-2017

Annex 4.4.3.: China Enters the Stage

Annex 4.4.3.1.

Majority of Greeks Proud of Their Long History and Rich Culture

A31. I'll read you two phrases - which one do you agree with more?



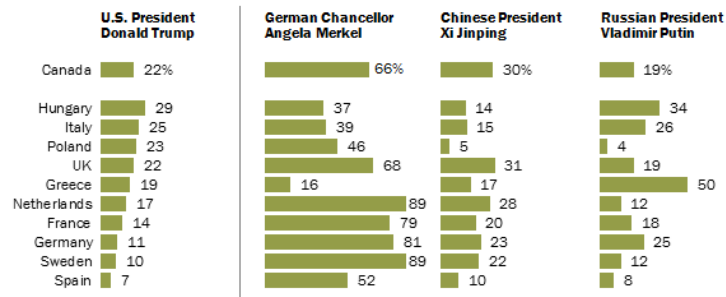
Source: DiaNEOsis, April 2017

Annex 4.4.4.: China vs Other Powers

Annex 4.4.4.1 Russia's Popularity in Greece

In June 2017, Greeks clearly preferred Russian president Vladimir Putin (50%) over western leaders Donald Trump (19%) and Angela Merkel (16%) as well as over Chinese president Xi Jinping (17%). At about the same time, Greeks favoured Russia (64%) over China (50%) and the US (43%).

Confidence in ___ to do the right thing regarding world affairs



Source: Pew Research Center, June 2017

Depending on the country, U.S. or China is the more favored nation

Favorable view of ___

	Russia	U.S.	China	China-U.S. diff
Canada	27	43	48	5
Europe				
Netherlands	15	37	49	12
Spain	27	31	43	12
Greece	64	43	50	7
Germany	27	35	34	-1
France	36	46	44	-2
Sweden	18	45	41	-4
UK	26	50	45	-5
Hungary	39	63	38	-25
Italy	35	61	31	-30
Poland	21	73	42	-31

Source: Pew Research Center, August 2017