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Turn the Other Greek. How the Eurozone Crisis Changes the Media Image of Greeks and What Do Visual Representations of Greeks Tell us about European Identity?[i]

Abstract

This paper analyzes discursive practices of political cartoons in construction of Greek and European identity in light of the European sovereign debt crisis. The goal of this paper is to assess the emergence of Greeks as significant Others in relation to Europe and its impact on European identity. To this end, the paper develops a theoretico-methodological framework that brings together identity as a process and a project, and multimodal discourse analysis tailored to political cartoon research. The paper first tests for existence of a Europe-wide discourse of the crisis and Greeks, using qualitative methodology. After existence of such discourse is confirmed, the paper examines the contents of the discourse concluding that a Greek Other has emerged from the discourse and continues to search for common interpretive frames and shared meanings that would point towards a common European identity. The political cartoon data sample comes from these examined countries: Austria, France, United Kingdom and Slovakia.

Key words: European identity, Greece, political cartoons, Self/Other, Eurozone crisis, multimodal discourse analysis

Introduction

The European sovereign-debt crisis[ii] haunting European economies today is gradually changing the landscape of European integration and politics. Uneven economic performance in the Eurozone and southern countries' debt burdens serve as food for thought for discourses of new dividing lines across the continent[iii]: north vs. south, core vs. periphery, Eurozone vs. the rest etc. In this context, the setup of new temporary and permanent financial mechanisms, safety nets and fiscal compacts is redefining the European financial-institutional architecture and, at least for some members, means further deepening the European integration process. While for others, the crisis serves as breeding ground for populist rhetoric and opens up room for blame-games between the financial markets, rating agencies and member states with hefty input from the media. In this game, Greeks often stand in the spotlight, filling the front pages of major European newspapers. Such attention and the drive for sensational fresh news leads to a situation in which the thin line between fact and fiction begins to blur giving rise to all kinds of misconceptions, shameful labels, clichés and negative stereotypes that can reverberate even to the highest political levels (e.g. Böll – Böcking 2011). These stereotypes, repeated from a position of authority, can reinforce negative associations in the minds of the audience even further, with real life behavioural implications in form of avoidance, discrimination, social exclusion, and eventually construction of a barrier between the stereotyping group and the stigmatized group[iv]. As Susan Dente Ross observes in her introduction to *Images That Injure* "stereotypes offer a blunt, effective tool for communicating – and, as with most blunt tools, their impact is most often overbroad and harmful" (2011: 2). Stereotypical representations of Greeks as lazy, incompetent, ouzo-drinking slackers presented throughout the European media can have a harmful impact on Greek identity and self-consciousness. However, examination of the stereotyping, differentiating, alienating practices[v] can tell us something too about the condescending group itself, in this case the rest of the European Union (EU).

After sixty-years of evolution, European Union is much more integrated economically and politically than ever before, but the expected spill-over of citizens' loyalties from the national to the European level, prophesized by the neofunctionalists, did not occur and European identity remains as elusive as ever. Present day politicization of European publics, in reaction to the economic (and political) crises (Menéndez 2011), offers a new case to study attitudes of the European population towards the European project as echoed by the media commentators. Thus, the *goal of this article is to examine constructions of European identity and Europe as an imagined community through practices of differentiation and othering based on the visual representations of Greeks in European editorial cartoons*. In reaction to the Greek-bashing and the doubts about Greek future in the Eurozone and within the European

community we need to ask whether there is a discernable Greek Other emerging? What is Europeans' relationship to this Other? And lastly, what do the visual representations of Greeks tell us about Europeans?

First, I need to confirm the existence of a European discourse about the crisis and the Greeks. This will be done through a temporal quantitative analysis of the collected data. Second, I will assess whether a process of othering is really happening, deconstruct the visual representations of Greeks and Europeans and consider whether the chosen media share meanings of Greece and the Greeks through examination of representations, stereotypes, norms and values connected to the Greeks vis-à-vis the rest of the portrayed actors and assess whether there is an othering process in effect. Part of this process includes interpretation of the relationship between the two groups (should they emerge) because it might uncover a relationship of power.

Europe as an Idea and a Construction

Europe and its identity are very ambiguous concepts. Answers to the relatively simple questions "what is Europe" or "who are the Europeans" very much depend on who gets to answer them: whether it's EU officials, business elites, EU citizens, candidate countries or the Americans and Russians. As Lars-Erik Cederman rightly observes: "[d]espite its ostensibly self-evident quality, Europe belongs to the most elusive and contested entities in today's international system. It is certainly not for lack of trying that Europe resists a commonly agreed-upon definition" (Cederman 2001a :1). For one thing, Europe and its identity are not static. Much like the concepts of nation, ethnic group or race, meaning(s) of Europe tend to change throughout time and territory (af Malmborg – Stråth 2002).

If we look into the past we see that 'Europe' had meant many different things over the course of its history. In antiquity, Europe designated a rather "vague area to the north of Hellas." From Aristotle's notes we learn about a threefold distinction between Greeks, Europeans and Asians (the Persians), but to him, the other two were essentially 'barbarians' (Delanty 1995: 18). Birth of Europe is usually dated back to early medieval times to the division of the Roman Empire into western Latin part and eastern Greek/Byzantine part. Here, Europe is associated with the Latin west. Later on, at the turn of the 7th and 8th century, Charlemagne was crowned the King of Francs and the Emperor of the Romans. Although the term 'European' was seldom used at that time, after the coronation Charlemagne[vi] was often heralded in poems as the king and the father of Europe (McCormick 2000: 33). Also during his era, Christianity became the dominant religion of the continent and served as a uniting base for the Crusades in the following centuries. In later Middle Ages, as the church discredited itself, it became more usual for the chroniclers to use Europe as a synonym for Christendom in a sense of a Christian bulwark against Ottoman expansion (McCormick 2000: 34)…The enumeration of various meanings of Europe could go on and on as there is no final definition of Europe towards which to strive.

The list above serves also as a good illustration of the discursive nature of the term Europe and its features: there is no one 'Europe' but many, and although some historians do repeat the obligatory figure of speech about "'Europe' [being] a relatively modern idea" (Davies 1997: 7), they still go on to trace the notions of Europe throughout history, like miners panning for specks of gold in the sediments of time, and by doing so, they too contribute to the construction of a historical community that never was, much like nationalist historians follow their nations' roots across centuries (see for instance Norman Davies' thousand plus page long *opus magnum* called *Europe. A History*, see also Duroselle 2002, McCormick 2000)[vii]. The idea of Europe, open to interpretation, however, shouldn't stop us from studying European identity because of its sheer volatility. On the contrary, by looking at Europe as an idea, a construct created and maintained through narrative and discourse, we can study not only what Europe is, but also how its meanings change over time, and the processes and practices used to create it and maintain it. Such approach – the *social constructivist approach* – presently dominates the studies of European identity (Brague 1992, Cederman 2001b, Checkel – Katzenstein 2009, Delanty 1995, Neumann 1996a, 1999, Pagden 2002b, Stråth 2000 and many others).

Returning to the enumeration of historical Europes for one last time, already here we can discern signs of formation of Europe vis-à-vis external Others: (barbaric northern territories of) Europe as opposed to Hellas (the land of culture and civilization); the Latin-writing European West differentiated from the Byzantine East; Christian Europe versus the Muslim/Ottoman Asia; fast-forward into the 20th century, we see a democratic Europe locked in ideological battle against the Soviet Russia, and so on, and so forth. But Others need not emerge only on the outside: Europe's Others could be found on the inside too. "Europe can also emerge as the Other from within, that is, from within what others consider to be Europe, as a kind of self-imposed exclusion", as is the case with the British, who refer to Europe as "the Continent" (Stråth 2000), Europe's Muslim minority that is *in* Europe, but not *of* Europe, or Europe's war-ridden nationalistic past standing in stark contrast to a prosperous postmodern Europe of today (Diez 2004).

The inherent volatility of meanings, the changes in ideas about community, the need to identify Others, all these are predetermined by the very nature of said communities. Because as Benedict Anderson theorized, nations, and other

human collectivities "larger than primordial villages", are imagined. "[*I*]*magined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson 1991: 6 original emphasis). However, these imaginations and images are subject to change over time, since their understanding and interpretation differ slightly from person to person, their representations and importance change with political regimes. It comes as no surprise then, that identities, especially in constructivist understanding are often defined as fragmented, fuzzy, and in flux (Brubaker and Cooper 2000), thus the existence of a (seemingly) unified Other, a mirror into which a community only needs to look to define the Self more precisely, is necessary (for more see below - theory). European Union is no exception to this. Europe too is in need of imagination and of its significant Others, especially in times when European unity is at stake. Due to the Eurozone crisis, we are in such situation today, thus we need to ask ourselves: what practices are used to promote European identity – a sense of community – and who is being ostracized as the Other?

Crises, Others and the Role of the Media

Previously in times of crises a whole variety of Others emerged to reflect the European Self (Neumann 2006, Risse 2010: 53–55): historically and especially throughout the Cold War, Russia played an important role as a constitutive Other in construction of a European Self (Neumann 1999), in 2002–2003 the United States of America under president G.W.Bush emerged as the Other for a brief moment, during the transatlantic rift over the issue of war on terrorism and especially the war in Iraq. The diplomatic and political exchange gave rise to specific representations of the US and the EU, personified as Mars – the god of war, and Venus – the gentle goddess of love and beauty respectively (see Kagan 2002, 2004, see Kumar 2008 for analysis). In 2004, before the referendum on the EU Constitutional Treaty, a campaign against the ratification invoked, on the one hand, images of the Polish plumber suggesting a threat to employment, on the other hand, images of Turkish women clad in European flags suggesting infiltration of Islam and a dangerous prospect of Turkish membership for the EU, supposedly made easier with the passing of the Constitutional Treaty (Kösebalaban 2007). Even after 1989, Russia often figured as the European Other in times of crisis, as in the 2008 Georgian occupation affair or the winter gas crisis of 2008–2009.

Today, the European Union has reached yet another turning point in its history. European sovereign debt crisis is perhaps the most serious issue the European community has ever faced. The fate of the European Union lies with successful overcoming of the crisis and there are only two ways to go: integrate further or split up. So far, it seems the EU member states have opted for closer integration (in the area of fiscal policies) but the public support remains low and now more than ever a united European front is needed.

Current crisis, apart from its politico-economic impact, is a stepping-stone for European identity in another way as well. To paraphrase Thomas Risse in his earlier work: 'identities 'do not float freely'' (Risse-Kappen 1994), 'they become salient and are fought over in particular historical moments, especially in times of crisis' (Risse 2010: 2). Because, "[i]t is within [these] crises, understood here as *disruptive moments of history*, that sensitive perceptions of different common objects of reference (e.g. 'Europe', 'nation-state' and relations between them) become particularly salient and vibrant, and open for a context-dependent (re-)negotiation and (re-)appropriation" (Triandafyllidou 2009: 6), with the (national) media playing a unique role as "the key *carriers* of the ongoing negotiations of different ideas and different actors' standpoints" (ibid 2009: 5 original emphasis). In other words, as the economic crisis unfolds, we have a chance to observe the ongoing transformation of European polity (including the citizens' relationships to it), we can watch European public sphere at work live.

But where do ideas, imaginations and representations of a community come from? Identity constructions are by no means a created through a consciously coordinated effort. We are socialized into our respective communities by our parents, through education and work, but also by public figures, political authorities and of course the media. However, it is characteristic of social construction of reality (including that of European community) that not all actors have an equal share in its creation and reproduction (Findor 2011: 26). For instance, politicians and respected public figures are more authoritative than, say, your friends in a pub[viii]. Yet, even authorities do not have a monopoly on reality construction, since an idea disconnected from the public cannot stir the feelings of belonging among the general population. Hence, as Lene Hansen postulates, even authorities have to be "situated within a larger political and public sphere", and their discursive "representations […] draw upon and are formed by the representations articulated by a larger number of individuals, institutions, and media outlets" (Hansen 2006: 7). Thus, the media, poised at the nexus of communication between the elite and the population, play a double role both as channels for negotiation and formulation of ideas, and as authoritative platforms for narration, dissemination and reification of community representations and imaginations. Indeed, as Michael Bruter has shown, exposure to news on Europe *does* have an impact on citizen's identification with Europe (2005: ch 6). In his analysis of the news and symbols of and about the European union[ix], he concludes that "the mass media, by disseminating good or bad news on Europe and European integration has a strong identity-building power over the citizens of the European Union" (Ibid: 124).

If indeed media serve as arenas of negotiation and deliberation, and play an important role as constitutive and reproductive channels of European identity in times of peace but especially in times of crisis, we need to ask ourselves what images, *what* representations of the crisis, Europe and the Greeks are communicated, and *how* these representations are constructed and sustained. In other words, what is the current media discourse on Europe? How are the Greeks (or other countries in crisis) represented, and what is their relationship with Europe? Since Greece features frequently in relation to the Eurozone crisis (see Figure 3. below), isn't among all this Greek-bashing a Greek Other emerging?

To this end, the article will analyse European identity within the media discourse on Europe in editorial cartoons of four newspapers in the following EU member states: United Kingdom, France, Austria and Slovakia.

Theoretical approaches: Discursive constructions of identity

This article, as is perhaps clear from the previous parts, approaches the topic of identity from a social constructivist perspective. In contrast to essentialist views on emergence of social communities (Davies 1997, Duroselle 2002, McCormick 2000; for discussion of essentialism and constructivism see Brubaker – Cooper 2000 and Cederman 2001a), it sees the existence of Europe in the minds and its identity in the hearts of its population as dependent on constant imagination and representation (Anderson 1991). In this line of thought, neither Europe "has [an] essence *per se*, but is a discursive construct and a product of many overlapping discourses" (Stråth – Wodak 2009: 15). The decades-long (re)search of collective identity hasn't brought us any broadly accepted definition. But within the constructivist approach to exploration of processes of identity formation, collective identity can be thought of in at least in these three different ways:

> First, it can refer to the boundaries of the group and explore who is considered a part of the group. Second, it can refer to the attributes of a prototypical group member or to the features and values shared by the modal member. Third, identity can refer to the relationship a collective actor assumes vis-à-vis other collective actors.
>
> (Hermann 2008: 130)

The above conceptions of collective identity are not mutually exclusive. Quite to the contrary, they are rather mutually supportive and virtually all of these general concepts can be found within a more nuanced poststructuralist conception of collective identity proposed by Lene Hansen that will be adopted for this article. In her book on securitizing discursive practices and the Bosnian war, Hansen theorizes identity as *discursive*, *political*, *relational* and *social*.

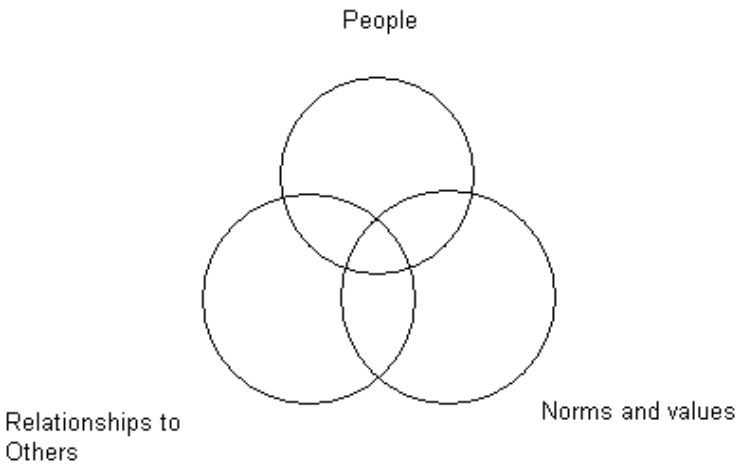

Figure 1.: Building blocks of identity construction - *contents* of the discursive practices

Returning briefly to Hermann's definition of identity we could say that it deals more with the contents – *the what* – of identity, whereas Hansen's definition pertains more to the processes – *the how* – of identity construction and its qualities[x]. Based on Hermann's general definition, the contents of identity constitution could be analytically sorted roughly into three categories: *people* (the members and non-members), normative characteristics – *norms* and *values* of a community, and *relationships* towards Others (see also Figure 1.). Hansen's conception of identity as *discursive*, *political*, *social* and *relational* places identity construction within broader societal discursive practices that both transform and sustain collective representations of who we are, and put them alongside other entities of the social

world. Put differently, Hansen uncovers the practices that help sustain or change the contents of identity constructions. Let us now look at the processes and contents of identity construction respectively in greater detail.

Processes of identity construction (The How)

"To say that identity is *discursive* and *political* is to argue that representations of identity place […] issues within a particular interpretative optic" (Hansen 2006: 6, original emphasis). The view that identities, are discursive constructions, and cannot be separated from the communication practices that form them, is today embraced by a broad community of researchers including Stråth – Wodak 2009, Wodak et. al. 1999[2009], Pagden 2002a, Risse 2010, Triandafyllidou et. al. 2009, Campbell 1992[1998], or Iver B Neumann (1999) who prefers a dialogical constructivist understanding of identity formation, as opposed to dialectical essentialist understanding. Bo Stråth sees Europe as "a discourse which is translated into a political and ideological project" (2000: 14) and Checkel and Katzenstein, in their edited volume on European identity, take their studies a notch further, investigating Europe as a project, and a process (2009).

Speaking of identities, be it collective or individual, as *relational* acknowledges the fact that identities do not and cannot exist in a vacuum. According to Hansen: "[p]oststructuralism's *relational* conception of identity implies that identity is always given through reference to something that it is not" (Hansen 2006: 6 original emphasis) through an eternal construction of an out-group, an Other. Analytically, we can distinguish between two processes employed in identity construction: linking and differentiation. In very general terms, positive *linking* describes the process of interconnection between typical features attributed to the identity of an individual or a community in question into a coherent Self. For example typical features attributed to women include: emotionality, motherhood, reliance and weakness. As a set of characteristics positively linked together, these features make up the identity of womanhood. Men on the other hand are typically characterized as rational, intellectual, independent and strong. Linking of these features positively constructs the identity of manhood. However, when put alongside each other we can see that the typical traits of men and women differ: emotionality is the opposite of rationality, reliance is the opposite of independence, motherhood entails a different set of mind than intellectualism. Thus by subjecting the female Self to the mirror of the Other – manhood – from the reflection, we can construct female identity though negative process of *differentiation* from the male identity[xi] (Hansen 2006: 19-21, see also Chalániová 2011b: 17-18). And "[a]lthough the two processes can be separated analytically, it is important to stress that they are both part and parcel of the process of identity construction and [are] enacted simultaneously" (Hansen 2006: 19).

Iver Neumann concurs: "[c]ollective identities may be imagined and patchy, but since they are relational, there always exist other identities which confirm them by being different. Which these Others are, will vary within the group, and also historically" (Neumann 2006: 8). Thus by subjecting Europe to its many constructed Others, we can explore the reflections of European identity in its many mirrors (Kumar 2008, Delanty 1995 ch. 6. *Europe in the Mirror of the Orient*). As Chris Shore points out, terms such as "'non-EC nationals,' 'third countries' and 'non-Europeans' are being defined with increasing precision and thus, as if by default, an 'official' definition of European is being constructed" (Cris Shore 1993 in Cederman 2001: 9). Because, if European identity is really tied to the existence of an Other, as its relational character suggests (see above) "this other will be constitutive of Europe, and so *European representations* of that other will necessarily be marked by that very fact" (Neumann 1999: 41). Simply put, the way we characterize, imagine and represent the Other(s) tells also a great deal about ourselves. The discursive practices employed in any identity construction necessarily contain typologies of who is who, typical characteristics and attributes (norms, values, rules etc.) of a community, and normative judgments about the Self as well as the Other(s) – a relationship between the Self and Other.

Finally, conceptualizing identities as *social*, entails to "understand [identity] as established through a set of collectively articulated codes, not as private property of the individual or a psychological condition." That is to say, identity does not exist in some presocially given "objective reality" just waiting to be discovered and appropriated (Risse 2010: 20). Rather, identity resides in the collective terrain of norms and values, narratives, myths and stereotypes. One has to be socialized into this environment through collective discursive practices such as education (Findor 2011), interaction or exposure to the media. Identities, seen as social constructs, link individuals to each other and to the social group by establishing collective meaning structures and interpretative frames (Risse 2010: 20). "Collective identity is thus always a product of social communication" (Bernhard Giesen 1993 in Cederman 2001: 7).

Contents of Identity Construction (The What)

First, n*orms and values* are the natural definition of a community, they are a description of what do 'we' stand for: the rules, traditions and taboos, patterns of bahaviour, the characteristics we cherish and the customs we preserve. Norms and values constitute an integral part of European identity studies: see for instance EU's foreign policy identity debate on civilian/normative/ethical power (Bull 1982, Kagan 2002, 2003, Manners 2002, 2006, Eriksen 2006, Sjursen 2006,

Aggestam 2008) or a more traditional discussion of European values and identity (in Brague 1992, Delanty 1995, Davies 1997, Fligstein 2008, Kösebalaban 2007, Rifkin 2005 and many others). Thus at this point, there is no need to theoretically flesh out the normative aspects of identity construction and instead we will turn our attention to the remaining 'contents' of identity construction: the people and relationships to Others.

Second, every kind of identity contains a human aspect. "We" – the *people* – individuals and communities are the focus of any identity research. Identification of who is a member of a group and who is not is crucial for any identification. And European identity scholars have tried to answer the question "who are the Europeans?" virtually in every study on European identity. However, I argue that their inquiries into the subject are pursued on a rather general level only. They investigate the relationships between national and European identities (Fligstein 2008: ch. 5, Risse 2010: 50-52), measure peoples' civic and cultural identities (Bruter 2005) or employ statistics and public opinion surveys to find out what makes Europeans European (Fligstein 2008, 2009). The ensuing body of literature typically describes a *prototype* of a good European: characterized by all kinds of attributes indicating for example what social strata is he/she from, how many languages he speaks, what kind of a job he has, what's his education, what's his income, how often he travels abroad etc. In other words, the literature tells us quite precisely what a typical European is like, what norms and values he cherishes, what jobs he holds, yet it never actually tell us who he/she is[xii].

The whole situation is a bit curious though. Essentialist accounts of Europeanness and European history are beset with 'heroes' from Charlemagne to Charles de Gaulle, to Jean Monnet and Jacques Delors. Constructivist accounts of European identity, however, rarely if ever mention any concrete people that could be associated in any way with constructions of European identity. But despite the lack of 'people' in constructivism, it doesn't mean that identity narratives aren't in real life connected to the very real people who embody Europe, just like Jean Monnet did in the 1950s. Other collective identity narratives too are full of 'heroes' and 'villains': the founding fathers, liberators, scholars, artists, thinkers and great war-time leaders[xiii] who defend the collective from the barbarians, marauders and crusaders collectively known as the enemy. In any identity discourse, there are people identified as the carriers of community values, recognized by the majority of its members and even non-members as important symbols standing in for the group; be it Britons and Ivanhoe, Winston Churchill or Margaret Thatcher; the Americans and their presidents George Washington, Barack Obama or the character of Uncle Sam; gay people and Freddy Mercury, Frida Kahlo or Virginia Woolf; the rockers and Black Sabbath, Foo Fighters and so on and so forth. The point is, that every (even imagined) community has its historical and contemporary representatives - its 'heroes' - real or fictional individuals who are associated with the community, people who are assumed to be carriers of collective norms, values and characteristics and people who occasionally even represent the group as a whole. Does European community have any such individuals?

Jean Monnet and Jacques Delors are often celebrated as two historically important Europeans, the founding fathers of the European Communities and the European Union respectively. But are there any contemporary persons identified as Europeans today? The Lisbon treaty established two new very European institutions: the President of the European Council, a post taken up by Herman van Rompuy, and the office of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy with Baroness Catherine Ashton at the helm. Together with the European Commission's president José Manuel Barroso, this trio could be considered as European as it gets, however my research into representations of European Union in foreign policy has shown that these 'official Europeans' do not take the limelight in discourses on Europe (Chalániová 2011b: 20). Thus the question remains: *who* is associated with Europe if not its official appointees and what does it say about European identity today?

Just because contemporary research on European identity tends to lean in direction of norms and values, and relationships with Others, it doesn't mean that discourse does not communicate *who* is considered to be European out there in the real life. Newspapers for instance identify important actors in stories, accompany their articles with photographs portraying politicians associated with the European agenda; television newsreels show us images/videos of press conferences filled with politicians; even opinion and commentary columns on EU often revolve around personalities either pro or against an issue. And above all editorial cartoons, as a genre of visual news and political opinion, are all about people and characters! Perhaps we shouldn't call them heroes or founding fathers, but still, who are the Jean Monnets and Jacques Delorses of today? Who are the people associated with Europe? Who are Europe's representatives? Who are the group members and how do they fit into the imagined community?

Third component of the construction is the *relationship* to the Others. Thus far, we have established that conceptualizing identity as "discursive, political, relational and social implies that […] discourse always articulates a *Self* and a series of *Others*" (Hansen 2006: 6). However, the relationship between a Self and the Other can come, so to speak, in all shapes and sizes. The modes of differentiation can range from ambiguity, to recognition, to stigmatization, to open hostility, and the Others can gain (or lose) salience depending on the time and place in history (see especially Rumelili 2004: 36-39 and Hansen 2011a but also Hansen 2006, Neumann 2006). Therefore, Europe's many Others can appear at times of crisis and disappear when the moment in time passes and the emotions cool, just like the

'Americans from Mars' disappeared from discourse with president Bush's end of term and relations between Europe and the U.S. returned from stigmatization back to normal[xiv].

I dare theorize that since relational construction of the Self is done through *negative* differentiation from Others, the more radical the differentiation the more clearer the Self becomes. In other words, we could theoretically define degrees of differentiation and othering ranging from acknowledgment of a difference to, say, radical incompatibility (see for instance Hansen 2011a or Steuter and Wills 2011) and grade relationships to the Others accordingly, thus recognizing a variety of power relationships including equality, superiority or utter degradation and dehumanization. Such an approach would mean not only identification of the Other, but also gradation could indicate the potential of the Other to act as a unifying force – a mirror – and bring out the European constructions more (or less) clearly. In line with the topic, the question then stands: in what relation are the Greeks to the rest of Europe in times of the European sovereign debt crisis?

Method: Words, Meanings and Political Cartoons

The crucial question for any constructivist venture into identity research is: how to isolate 'identities' from day-to-day social interactions and subject them to deconstruction? Thomas Risse suggests that studying "identities as social constructions that connect individuals to each other and to social groups requires that we treat them as meaning structures and interpretive frames" (2010: 20). Checkel and Katzenstein are a bit more specific in their description of identity-related meaning structures: according to them "[i]dentities refer to shared representations of a collective self as reflected in public debate, political symbols, collective memories, and elite competition for power. They consist also of collective beliefs about the definition of the group and its membership that are shared by most group members" (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009: 4). Thus, conceiving of identity as a construct of belonging to an imagined community maintained through social and political discursive practices predestinates the empirical move in direction of uncovering *meaning-making practices*, *shared representations* and *common interpretive frames* throughout a variety of channels of communication such as language, image, art or architecture.

Indeed, language is according to many *the* key to uncover the meanings and imaginations of social realities. According to Berger and Luckmann, it is the ability and capacity of language to typify, stabilize and accumulate *meanings* and experiences and to transmit them to future generations (1967: 37-39). That is why language (and discourse) analysis is usually the preferred method of choice. However, language is just one of the possible modes suitable for transmitting information, and I would like to argue here in favour of image discourse analysis, based on at least two reservations why language might not be the most appropriate mode for identity discourse analysis in a transnational setting.

First reservation pertains to language in identity research as such and the processes employed to communicate[xv]. There is a difference in logical structuring of meanings in texts and images. In general, 'reading' images follows a *logic of association* rather than *logic of argumentation*. While academic and journalistic texts (the common empirical material of language-based discourse analysis) are "based on argumentation and reasoning, visuals follow a logic of association, *connecting different meanings that would not necessarily make sense if written down* or communicated orally" (Müller and Özcan 2007: 287 my emphasis). This is important especially for symbols and representations that can be communicated more effectively as an image than a description or argumentation. Furthermore, logic of argumentation presupposes a degree of rationality needed to comprehend a communicated meaning while, logic of association presupposes some degree of social knowledge to comprehend meaning. Therefore we can analytically distinguish two different cognitive processes employed to decode a meaning: one making use of a rational/logical approach, the other putting to use emotions/social knowledge. My point that I want to stress here is, that identity as feeling of belonging and as a relationship to a community does not stem from rational deduction or logical argumentation, but rather from an emotional conviction based on 'common knowledge' that is inherently social. Indeed, as Öhner et al argue: "it is not only discourses, through which collective identities are constructed, but it is above all also images, that create powerful collective imaginations" (2005: 7).

Second reservation pertaining to study of language in identity research is directed at the contents of what could be communicated/understood in a community that does not share a common language. Limits of language proficiency put serious constraints on the amount and quality of information communicated and meanings understood. And although "[v]isual language is not – despite assumptions to the contrary – transparent and universally understood" and is culturally specific (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 4) it offers more room for imitation and transcendence beyond national borders. Some visual motifs initially having relevance for a particular community (e.g. photograph of four soldiers raising a flag at Iwo Jima or the image of crumbling Twin-towers) and are repeated across contexts, topics and meanings. It is indisputable that EU member states retain their cultural differences, therefore they code meanings into images differently, yet it is possible that some images and motifs do get repeated and shared across the national communities and can be common to the European level.

Political Cartoons

In the paragraphs above, I have argued why discourse analysis should go beyond text and language, and embrace other modes of communication, for example the visual mode of images. In my search for empirical material, that would continue in the footsteps of textual discourse analysis sources and at the same time provide equally salient data set, I decided to focus on political cartoons.

Media are social and political, media create, facilitate and maintain a discourse, media communicate the contents of identities within a socially set space. If we understand politicization as a process that makes issues part of politics (de Wilde 2007 in Checkel and Katzenstein 2009: 11) then European sovereign debt crisis definitely contributed to greater visibility for the EU and the PIIGS in politics, as reflected by the increased media coverage over the past two years. Naturally, the crisis did not escape the sharpened pens of cartoonists, thus Europe in crisis was communicated to the publics in image too along with textual information in other parts of the newspaper. Thus we can say that cartoon discourse too constitutes a part of the interpretive framework within which identities are politicized, negotiated, constructed and contested.

Being part of the media, political cartoons are part and parcel of the discursive processes Lene Hansen described in her identity research methodology (2006, see also above p.5). Political cartoons are not just funny pictures. Political cartoons are inherently *political*. Cartoons critically comment on an issue and therefore can be considered to be a form of opinion rather than a humorous visualization. As a rule editorial and political cartoons can be found in the opinion, commentary or editorial sections of the newspaper. Daryl Cagle, a renown American cartoonist, even argued the importance of editorial cartoons as the most read parts of the opinion section (2012). Political cartoons are *social*. Although cartoon-drawing is usually a one-man enterprise, a cartoonist has to take into consideration his readers' social background to get the message across, to be understood. A cartoonist relies on a plethora of socially recognized symbols, stereotypes, puns and idioms, popular culture and metaphors to communicate the intended meaning to the public (for more on cartoonists' instrumentarium see Chalániová 2011a: 6-8). Political cartoons are *relational*. By being racist and sexist, by using exaggeration, demonization or beautification, hyperbole and stereotypes (Mazid 2008: 434-435) they introduce us to Others and establish our relationship with them. Political cartoons are *discursive*. As argued above, political cartoons are part of the discursive media reality that constructs and maintains the imaginations and representations of our social reality. Andrej Findor posits that it is characteristic for social reality construction that not all actors have equal access and influence in its constitution and reproduction (2011: 26). I agree that some authorities are more important than others in communication of ideas about community and others. In countries with free media political cartoonists, because of their critical voice, have gained a reputation of respectable authorities whose opinion is appreciated and followed. Thus, I am persuaded that political cartoons should be scrutinized as part of a process of identity creation, reproduction and change.

Some authors, including this one, consider political cartoons a good site for identity exploration (Najjar 2007). Cartoons, with their humour and perceived half-seriousness, are powerful tools especially in endangered societies with restricted freedom of speech or explicit voicing of their demands: Najjar 2007, Haddad 2000 and Sufian 2008 have covered editorial cartoons and identity in Palestine; Hung 1994 examined public opinion in late 1940s China; Stein 2002 explored the Jewish views in Revolutionary Russia of 1905. "Political cartoons often express what is otherwise hidden in the mindset of the cartoonist; they provide windows through which to perceive elements of identity" (Kösebalaban 2007: 91). By perpetuating symbols and stereotypes comprehensible to the designated audiences, cartoons strengthen and fix a given social reality over and over again: "political cartoons not only grasp the way in which visual discourse conveys social experience, but cartoons also help constitute the subjectivities and identities of social subjects, their relations and field in which they exist" (Purvis and Hunt 1993 in Greenberg 2002: 185).

Thus, what I'm looking for in this paper is to uncover common *meaning-making practices*, *shared representations* and *common interpretive frames* within the cartoon narratives of the Greeks and the European sovereign debt crisis. In other words, I look for *structures of collectively shared meanings about the Self and the community that become manifest in the discourse of the crisis*. Because I am of the opinion that identities are vital for political and social collectivities in times of crisis for several reasons: not only do they provide a sense of belonging, fellowship and a common narrative, but also because social identities have *behavioural implications*: "[a]ttachment leads to loyalty together with a sense of obligation to the group. It is this loyalty that constitutes a resource for social mobilization, collective action, and support for institutions such as the European Union" (Risse 2010: 22).

Operationalisation and Data

Political cartoons offer the readers complex, continuous and multilayered narratives of the social and political reality we live in. They do so using a mix of techniques and means of expression in a combination of graphics and text. Thus the question stands: *how to decode meaning structures, representations and common interpretive frames from political cartoons* in a transnational (European) context? As argued above, language is not the only discursive mode that transfers meanings, and political cartoons use visuals in combination with language to communicate a meaning: "[f]or instance, what is expressed in language through the choice between different word classes and clause structures, may, in visual communication, be expressed through the choice between different uses of colour or different compositional structures. And this will affect meaning. Expressing something verbally or visually makes a difference" (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 2). Thus an *interpretive approach – a multimodal discourse analysis* – will be used to deconstruct cartoon meanings and representations of community and identity.

As hinted above, political cartoons use a plethora of techniques to express an opinion including: persons and characters; personification; symbols and icons; stereotypes and archetypes; composition and body language; classifications such as size, age, skin colour, clothing etc.; exaggeration and ridicule; puns and play on words; metaphors and metaphorical expressions; pop culture references; colour or weather conditions to touch up on the mood of the cartoon (for a detailed description of the cartoonist toolbox see Chalániová 2011a: 6-8).

Returning to Hermann's general definition of identity for the last time (p.4) and the contents of identity discourse (p. 5-6), we need to identify those means of expression in cartoons that pertain to the people portrayed (both the in-group and out-group), norms and values associated with each community and the relationships between the in-group and out-group, between the Self and the Other. Just as grammar structure or choice of a particular vocabulary in a sentence can help us uncover the meaning of a text, so can the individual elements out of which each cartoon is composed help us deconstruct the contents, the meaning of who we are, what do we stand for and how do we relate to others depicted in an image (see Figure 2.).

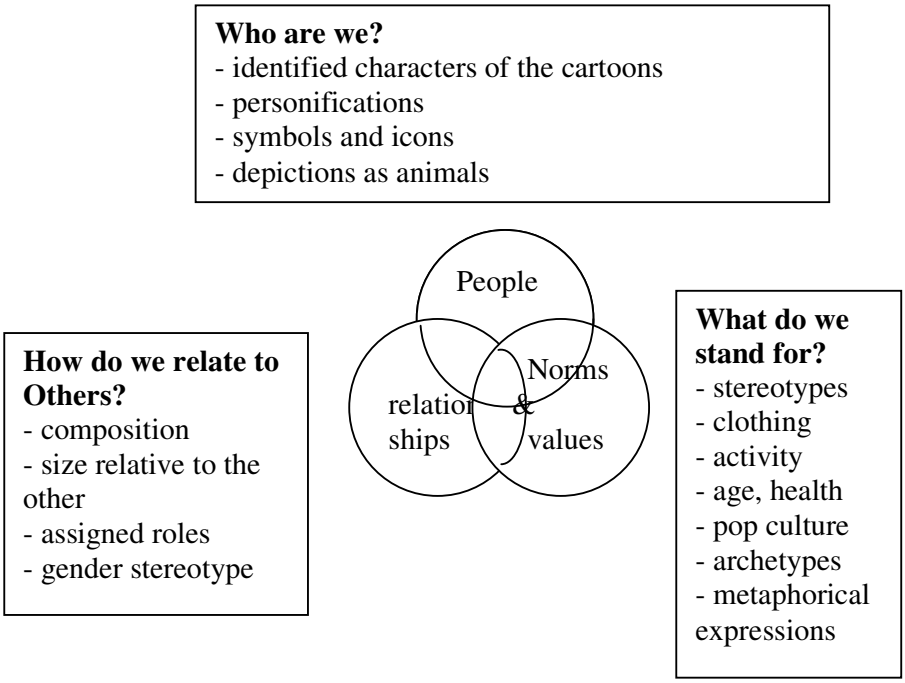

Figure 2. Operationalisation of identity contents through political cartoons' means of expression.

Almost the entire political scientific and social theoretical literature depends on anthropomorphization of human collectives (Neumann 1996b: 140). Perhaps the most frequently anthropomorphized collective in international relations literature (but also in everyday life) is the state. We ascribe all kinds of features and characteristics to it, essentially treating it as a person that based on this and that would do something or not (for more see Wendt 2004). Cartoonists do this 'literally': cartoon characters *are* visual antropomorphic representations of social and political communities. Cartoonists anthropomorphize nations and groups directly, either by drawing its representatives acting on behalf of the state or through personifications acting as a functional representation of the collective: in this way Uncle Sam represents the American people (Cagle 2012); in a more international setting Uncle Sam comes to represent the United States as a stand alone actor of international relations and variations on the likeness of the

Phoenician princess Europè come to represent the European Union (Chalániová 2011b, 2011c). To identify the desired community cartoonists also rely heavily on use of symbols (authentic or fake ones parodying the originals) and icons officially associated with a community. Identification by symbols or personification does not only apply to the construction of the Self, the same process applies to Others, it is by means of character traits, the normative and value judgments, that differences arise and negative identity constitution takes place.

Norms and values designating a particular community can be expressed in many ways: stereotypes (both auto-stereotypes and xeno-stereotypes) play a crucial role in perception and categorization of a group. Stereotypes, although simplistic and blunt as they come, help us determine group membership, and at the same time, they provide us with information about the nature of the group. According to McGarty et al stereotypes act as "psychological representations of the characteristics of people that belong to particular groups" (2002[2004]: 2). In visual mode there are other tools communicating information about a group's standing: for example by the choice of clothing we can assess the character's social status, age and health of the characters hint at the condition of the society – old and fragile or young and strong. In combination with pop culture references, puns and metaphorical expressions or the character's activity, these tools make powerful visual statements about the nature of depicted communities, their norms and their current condition.

Last but not least, cartoon discourse comments on relationships between us (the readers) and others. It is possible to express a relationship of affection or domination, equality or belittling, familiarization, worshipping or humiliation (see also Hansen 2011a). To do so, cartoonists can either use composition of the image, with the more important actors taking the centre of the image or 'higher ground' as compared to others depicted. Depiction of a person at the top of a visual food-chain has clear implications as to its importance and superiority. Size too can be a decisive characteristic in a power relationship: giants command more respect than dwarfs, and cartoons are full of illustrations of giants stomping on the lesser folk. A power relationship could be communicated through roles assigned to the characters such as in a teacher/student, parent/offspring, guard/prisoner relationship. Gender, and especially gender stereotypes, could give away the nature of the relationship between the in- and out-group (Chalániová 2011b: MV see especially page 20).

Additionally, the cartoonists can drive home the meaning by using metaphoric expressions, play on words and punch lines, or touch up on the attitude of their drawing with colouration, weather or seasonal effects such as whirlpools, tornadoes, snowfalls or earthquakes.

Data

The data sample for this analysis is composed of political cartoons collected across four newspapers in four EU countries: Austria, France, Great Britain and Slovak Republic. These four countries represent a mix of the old and the new member states (each of the chosen countries became an EU member in a different enlargement wave), the Eurosceptic and Eurooptimistic members (United Kingdom and Slovakia respectively), the small and the big members, the neutral and the more active members. Also, language proficiency was a factor of choice.

The four analyzed newspapers include the *Salzburger Nachrichten* (AT), *Le Monde* (FR), *SME* (SK) and *The Guardian* (UK). All of the selected papers are dailies and only with the exception of *Salzburger Nachrichen* belong to the nation-wide media. *Salzburger Nachrichen* was included in the sample because of its comparable circulation (3rd best selling non-tabloid newspaper in Austria) but also because its cartoon archive is freely available on the newspapers website, thus in terms of cartoon 'impact' it has an advantage of its nation-wide counterparts *Die Presse* and *Der Standard*. Although the selected papers reflect a spectrum of political orientation, the one thing in common is their liberal profiling (see Table 1.).

Newspaper	**Political Orientation**	**Circulation**
Salzburger Nachrichten (AT)	Christian-liberal, conservative	71,100 (2010)[xvi]
Le Monde (FR)	Left-liberal, bringing together socialist reformist and socialist-Christian currents	323,000 (2009)
SME (SK)	Liberal	55,500 (2010)
The Guardian (UK)	Left-wing liberal	283,000 (2010)

Table 1.: Political orientation and daily circulation of selected newspapers (Eurotopics 2012).

The papers were scrutinized for cartoons for four years from 1st January 2008 to 31st December 2011 (with the exception of *The Guardian* which was followed from 1st of May 2008 to 31st December 2011). Throughout this period

399 EU-related cartoons were collected. From this group only 81 cartoons directly depict the Greeks and the European sovereign debt crisis – this is the data sample for the multimodal discourse analysis.

To fulfill the initial goal of this paper: *examination of constructions of European identity and Europe as an imagined community through practices of differentiation and othering based on the visual representations of Greeks in European editorial cartoons*, in line with the identity traits outlined above (see Figure 1 above) I have identified the processes - the how - and the contents – the what - of identity construction. As a process, identity is constructed through discursive practices implying some form of social communication as a prerequisite. Within the discourse, by means of linking (of the contents) and differentiation, a Self and a series of Others are articulated and maintained.
On the level of identity contents, three important components seem particularly relevant to identity constitutions: the people (who is the Self), the norms and values 'we' share and the nature of relationship to the Others operationalized above.

Thus, in the following paragraphs, I will first ascertain the existence of socio-political communication on European sovereign debt crisis and Greeks by quantitative comparison of the occurrence of cartoons depicting both the crisis and Greeks across the followed newspapers. In other words, I will measure the salience of discourse and the simultaneity of discursive processes employed in political communication about Greeks. In the second part of the empirical analysis I will examine the contents of identity discourse focusing on three components of identity construction: the people (construction of Self and Others through a process of linking), norms/values and relationships to others (differentiation and othering). Results of this analysis should tell us whether newspapers across the selected EU member states actually formulate a coherent Other and whether we can find any common representations of the Greeks and the Self, any shared meaning-making practices or common frames of reference.

Can we find some common position that would suggest a European approach to Greeks rather than just national ones? Do the Greeks constitute a significant Other to Europe?

The Greek Other

Discourse salience across the member states

Before assessing any *discursive* qualities of European identity construction in the Greek mirror, we first need to check whether actually any discursive practice take place. The necessary requirement for any discourse to exist is communication. Therefore I first looked at the volume of communication concerning the Greeks throughout the political cartoons in the collected data sample.

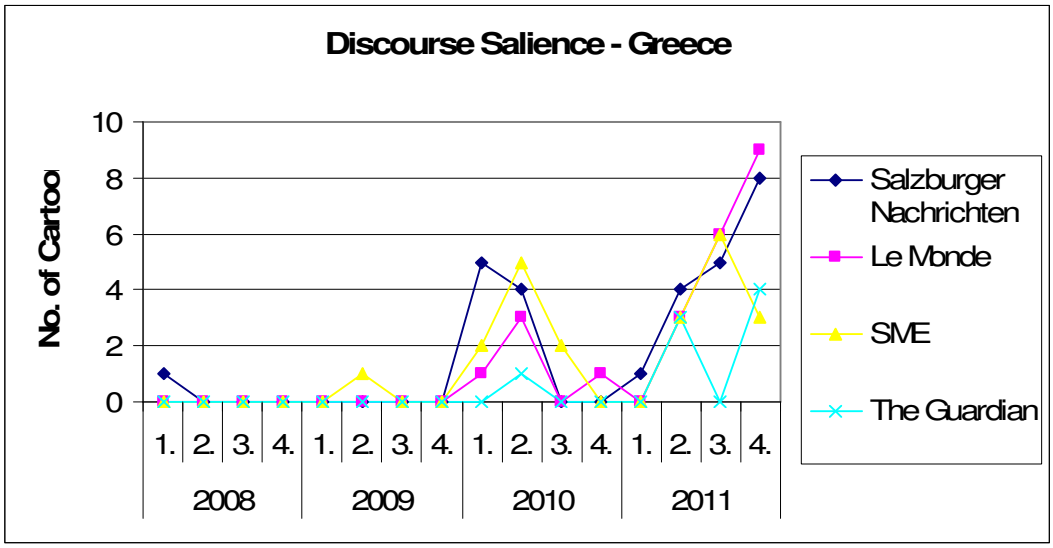

Figure 3. Discourse salience 2008-2011. Volume of communication about Greeks.

As is clear from Figure 3. the occurrence of references to Greeks in newspapers under consideration follows the same pattern across the countries: there is hardly any communication about the Greeks in years 2008 and 2009, but the situation changed with the advent of the European sovereign debt crisis. The two most prominent peaks in communication, one in the second quarter of 2010 (Figure 3.) and the other peak clearly visible in November 2011

(Figure 4.) correspond to the discovery of the true state of Greek finances and the first bail-out by the EU and IMF in April/May 2010, and the negotiations of a second bail-out deal on the background of announced-and-then-cancelled referendum on the deal and the resignation of the Papandreou cabinet respectively.

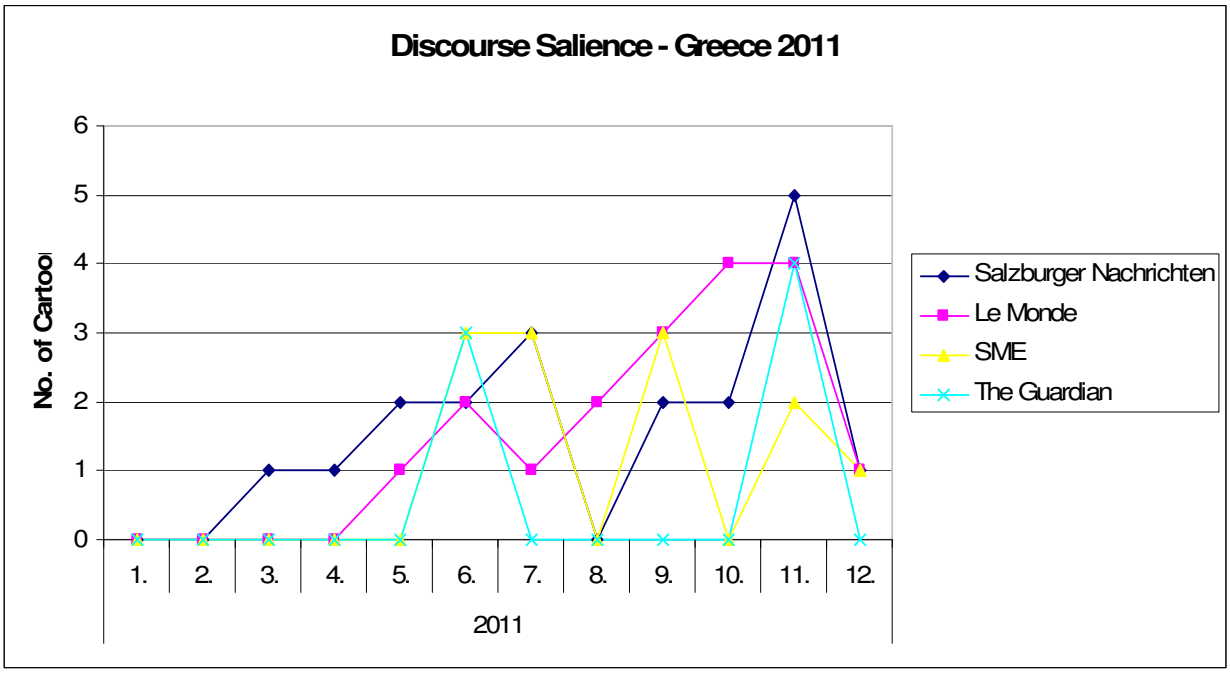

Figure 4. Discourse salience 2011. Volume of communication about Greeks.

The results of the quantitative measurement reveal that there indeed exists some social communication about the events concerning Europe and Greece across the followed countries, and that there actually is a pattern of discourse salience applicable to the communication: the communication increases around important events such as the Greek 'bail-outs'. As to the salience of discourse the continental countries are quite comparable with 22 to 28 depictions of the Greeks in the followed period, *The Guardian* does not fit the European 'average' salience with only 8 references to Greeks in four years. However, when it does depict Greeks, it is in line with the pattern of communication described above.

To assess whether the discourse on Greeks is *relational* (whether it creates a significant Other) or whether any common interpretive frames and shared meaning-making practices could be recognized, we need to turn to the contents of the political cartoons.

Turn the Other Greek?

The Greeks seem to be the most voiced 'villains' in the news about the European sovereign debt crisis. How are they represented in political cartoons, what kind of norms and values apply to them?

It is not surprising that Greeks are referred to by a lot of different antropomorphic *representations*. The most obvious one is the former Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou. He was visualized as a representative of the Greeks in all countries but Slovakia which preferred other representations and personifications of the Greeks. On the other hand, United Kingdom's *Guardian* referred to Greeks almost exclusively through the person of Papandreou. Other representations of Greeks include 'the averageman' – typically a dark-haired man with a moustache – a representation shared by the Slovaks and the Austrians. The French too refer to Greeks through a character of an averageman, but he can't be identified as a Greek by any ethnic stereotype, but only through clothing (see below). Other Greek representations and personifications include mythical figures such as Sisyphus, Hercules, Dionysus or a philosopher in an empty barrel. Furthermore animalistic personifications such as a bull (as in the legend of Europe), a pig (as in PIIGS[xvii]) or a half-dead donkey (as in carrots and sticks) occur and, a few rarities such as a Greek girl with fake breasts (as fake as the Greek statistics) or statues of Discobolus also occur (Shooty for *SME* on February 17th 2010, Steve Bell for *The Guardian* on June 29th 2011; for images see the back of the document).

If the Greeks are associated with their Prime Minister, the averageman or mythical figures, how then are Europeans represented? Although the European Union has elected officials who should represent it (H. van Rompuy and C. Ashton) these people have not been depicted in any of the 81 analyzed cartoons. 'Heroes' depicted in the European

context are of national origin: Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Sarkozy are characters recognized in all studies countries, however they are not associated with Europe directly, but as the national flags attached suggest, they act on behalf of their own nations. Nevertheless, two personifications of European Union do appear: first one is a female dressed to resemble the legendary Phoenician princess Europè (Wizany for the *Salzburger Nachrichten* on June 30th 2011) and the other is an arm in a business suit either raising a warning finger (Shooty for *SME* on September 17th 2010) or presenting itself as a helping hand (Shooty for *SME* in July 23rd 2011). From the examined representations it seems that Greeks are easier to 'pin down' than Europeans. Picturing Papandreou, whose face became known across Europe as the crisis progressed, in combination with a Greek flag reliably and unmistakably identifies Greeks in cartoons, whereas Europeans and European context is identified more on a symbolic level through European flags and euro symbols, official EU representatives do not figure in European representations. Quite on the contrary, national representatives Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy appear in cartoon discourse, but are associated with their national interest, rather than acting on behalf of Europe. If Europe is ever represented by a person, it is a horde of anonymous bureaucrats (Plantu for *Le Monde* on September 8th 2011, compare Chalániová 2011b). On the level of personifications, curiously enough, both the Greeks and Europe are equally personified by ancient mythological figures: Greeks take on the likeness of Sisyphus and Hercules, European Union takes on the likeness of a legendary Phoenician princess. In terms of animalistic representations, Europe does not take on the shape of any animal, whereas Greeks figure in cartoons as metaphorical pigs[xviii] (but so do Slovaks Shooty for *SME* on September 17th 2010) drowning bulls or half-dead donkeys.

As to the *norms and values* associated with the two communities, the situation gets a bit more complex. The first obvious impression of the Greeks depicted in cartoons is their out-of-place clothing mocking the uniforms of the present day presidential guards – the *Evzones* (Wizany for the *Salzburger Nachrichten* on May 14th 2011). The whole outfit, with white woolen stockings, kilt and red clogs with black pompons, looks alien and slightly embarrassing to a civilized European, but most of all it looks like something out of the previous century. Plantu, the French cartoonist, even adds a touch of poverty by consistently drawing the clothes ragged with patches (as seen for example here Plantu for *Le Monde* on June 23rd 2011, even the metaphorical Greek piggy-bank has a plaster Shooty for *SME* on September 17th 2010). Other clothing options for Greeks include either ancient tunics (Shooty for *SME* on May 4th 2010), *sirtaki* folklore costumes (Wizany for the *Salzburger Nachrichten* on April 28th 2010) or they are illustrated as plain naked (Shooty for *SME* on February 17th 2010). The image is the more striking when compared with politicians from other member states, all clad in suits and ties, or even the regular folk, dressed up in jeans and tees. Only *The Guardian* hasn't yielded to this trend, and depicts Papandreous consistently in a suit along with other European politicians.

Furthermore, Greeks are visualized as fat (Shooty for *SME* on February 17th 2010), sloppy and carefree (Wizany for the *Salzburger Nachrichten* on May 4th 2010), awkward (Plantu for *Le Monde* on June 25th 2010), lazy (Shooty for *SME* on May 4th 2010) and fake. These stereotypes associated with Greeks create a set of rather negative prejudices and again are in contrast from the orderly European way (the family changing its view as soon as they learn the new fiancée is Greek - Plantu for *Le Monde* on June 25th 2010). At the other end of the spectrum of representing Greeks, cartoonists visualize them in distress or in mortal danger: the *sirtaki* dance clearly does not end well as can be read from the dancer loosing ground under his feet and the terrified expression in his face (Wizany for the *Salzburger Nachrichten* on April 28th 2010); in another typical image we see a Greek getting sucked into a whirlpool or drowning at sea (Plantu for *Le Monde* on September 8th 2011 or Plantu for *Le Monde* on September 22nd 2011). Greeks frequently undergo 'torture' at the pens of cartoonists: besides drowning they perform life-threatening tricks (Wizany for the *Salzburger Nachrichten* on June 30th 2011), fight for their lives at sea between Scylla and Charybdis (Wizany for the *Salzburger Nachrichten* on November 5th 2011), solve some impossible Herculean and Sisyphean tasks (Wizany for the *Salzburger Nachrichten* on May 3rd 2010, Shooty for *SME* on June 23rd 2011), suffer in hospitals (Plantu for *Le Monde* on July 26th 2011), lose arms and legs (Plantu for *Le Monde* on June 23rd 2011), or lose the head (Shooty for *SME* on November 14th 2011) until they are finally dead (Bell for *The Guardian* on February 2nd 2010).

As is now clear from the analysis of representations of Greeks and Europeans and values/norms attached to them, a process of differentiation and othering is definitely in progress. 'We' *other* Greeks by dressing them into gowns from previous centuries or draw them naked hiding their shame (Shooty for *SME* on February 17th 2010) while we keep our crisp suits or jeans. In the cartoons we depict them negatively as either fat and lazy, awkward or we make them suffer all kinds of catastrophes.

In the third part of identity contents analysis, we look at the kinds of *relationships* visualized in the cartoons, to assess a degree of differentiation between the two communities: between us Europeans and them Greeks. Actually, the first of the French cartoons depicting Greeks at the beginning of year 2010 is setting the state of things to come: it depicts the Union, acting through Germany, kicking the Greeks out of the common raft (Plantu for *Le Monde* on March 19th 2010). *We* make them lose an arm and a leg, so they essentially become organ donors (Plantu for *Le Monde* on June 23rd 2011). We watch a Greek drowning in a whirlpool, while EU bureaucrats throw money at him instead of the swimming belts lying idly at their chairs (Plantu for *Le Monde* on September 8th 2011). We, by means of Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy, discipline them (Wizany for the *Salzburger Nachrichten* on November 4th 2011),

threaten them into submission (Wizany for the *Salzburger Nachrichten* on November 5th 2011, Rowson for *The Guardian* on November 5th 2011), we strangle them (Plantu for *Le Monde* on May 4th 2010) and we go to their funeral (Bell for *The Guardian* on February 12th 2010). In other words we do all but effectively help them. There are only two exceptions to this pattern, and Europe and Greeks are in harmony: Europe helps Greece and we all pull together in Thomas Wizany's cartoon (for the *Salzburger Nachrichten* on July 23rd 2011) and in Shooty's cartoon narrative in which the EU arm forces the Slovaks to cooperate and support the European Financial Stability Mechanism: in the first cartoon we see a reluctant skinny Slovak piggy-bank refusing to lend money to the far Greek pig (for *SME* on August 13th 2010), then the EU steps in; notice how Slovakia is not part of the EU in this image, but is actually in a similar position as Greece, being threatened into submission (Shooty for *SME* on September 17th 2010). Things do turn out OK and the EU helps the Greeks out in the end (Shooty for *SME* on July 23rd 2011).

Thus, it is obvious that in the analyzed political cartoons data sample, Greeks are definitely not treated as 'one of us'. We belittle them, ridicule them, humiliate them, however we do not dehumanize them (by visualizing them as cockroaches for instance, see Steuter and Wills 2011). The Greeks are illustrated as significant Other to Europe, but Europe tends to act either through national representatives (Merkel and Sarkozy) or through an impersonal hand, thus there are no Europeans that we can identify as the proverbial 'heroes' standing in place of the EU. As for the normative characteristics, the Self/Other conceptual pair would suggest that since the Greeks are depicted as fat and lazy, Europeans would be thin and hardworking. To an extent, this holds true for the cartoon sample as the average Europeans are distinctly thinner than Greeks, however we don't see any Europeans working hard to pay off the Greek debt – the differentiation is not perfect.

Conclusions on European Identity

To return to the research goals once again, the aim was to search for European identity by means of *structures of collectively shared meanings about the Self and the Other that become manifest in discourse*. Throughout the sample, some commonly shared *interpretive frames* could indeed be identified, namely: the (stereotypically) mythological background within which the Greeks and the crisis are framed. All of the examined countries/cartoonists tapped into antiquity to illustrate their opinions, whether it was in the personifications of Hercules or Sisyphus, Scylla and Charybdis, crumbling ancient temples (Rowson for *The Guardian* on November 5th 2011), graphic patterns resembling ancient vase decorations (Shooty for *SME* on May 4th 2010) or naked philosophers in a barrel. Also the 'weather hazards' were utilized: images of Greeks drowning in a whirlpool (or suffocating on tear gas) were shared across the counties. In all of the countries, Greeks were put into awkward positions demonstrating failure, submission or just bad luck.

There are, however some country specifics that stand out: the image of a fat and lazy Greek is most persuasive in Slovakia (Shooty for *SME* on May 4th 2010). The British don't differentiate from Greeks based on different clothing styles rather they bring the Greeks low through their own actions (Rowson for *The Guardian* on November 5th 2011). The French *Le Monde* is of a more socialist orientation and despite what has been written above, Plantu shows a bit more compassion with the Greeks picturing them in a way that shows Greeks suffering at the mercy of bankers, EU and the IMF, i.e. not their own fault (Plantu for *Le Monde* on June 23rd 2011). Tomas Wizany of the *Salzburger Nachrichten* gives a similar impression. Greeks in his cartoons only rarely hold the fate in their own hands and are put into impossible situations (June 30th 2011).

My conclusion is that indeed there is a discernible Europe-wide discontent with the current situation in Europe and Greece, and that the discourse follows a pattern, at least across the selected countries. Very clearly, we can see that quite suddenly with the onset of the financial crisis (at the turn of 2008/09) a discourse on Greeks appeared in a space where it was not before (Figure 3.). The discourse is clearly relational as it constructs besides the national/European Self a Greek Other, depicted as fat, lazy lounger or just as a poor sod suffering at the hands of fate. Political dimension to these illustrations is obvious and so is the social nature cartoons – tapping into pools of common knowledge recognizable even across the national borders.

What does this all say about Greece and European identity? Greece has always been considered European, from the cradle of democracy, culture and politics (Davies 1997, Duroselle 2002) to its integration into the European Communities in 1981. The situation is different today. If in periods of crises "perceptions and definitions of political objects of reference […] are contested, negotiated, reformulated and reorganized" (Triandafyllidou 2009: 5), this is precisely what is happening to the Greeks and consequently to Europeans today.

The Greeks are emerging as a new Other from within. What consequences this might have for the Greek identity is hard to say. Certainly, the blame game does not do them much good and the Greek identity would need to reinvent itself after the worst is over. For a case in point of identities in transformation in the wake of a crisis, we can look to post World War II Germany and the way German identity was transformed from a nationalistically superior

community to a nation that became tied to the European project and became the motor of European integration. At this point, it is hard to say if the change – the emergence of Greece as the European Other - is temporary or if the Greeks would have to live with this for some time, and 'suffer' the behavioural consequences of such identity renegotiation that could include degradation of Greeks as second class EU citizens by populists.

How is this blame-game changing the relations of the member states to the European Union? And what consequences the crisis, and the emergence of a new Greek Other, can have for European identity? First of all, even though the Greeks have emerged as an Other, European identity still suffers from a split personality. European identity is fragmented in between the national and the European level: official European representatives do not appear in any of the examined cartoons, on the other hand, national representatives substitute for them and act on behalf of the community themselves (Merkel and Sarkozy are seen throughout all of the newspapers across the countries[xix]).

Secondly, shared meanings do emerge, albeit more subtly: Greek mythology makes for a commonly shared interpretative framework, Greeks are differentiated from based on their old-fashioned clothing (with the exception of United Kingdom) and throughout the sample, they are put through all kinds of nasty or humiliating exercises: drowning, suffocation, dismemberment, nudity, circus tricks, begging, death or public singing contest.

Based on the analysis of political cartoons, a common position towards Greece can be identified. Whether this is enough for European identity to form is, however, questionable: although structures of collectively shared meanings about the Other do become manifest in discourse, ideas about the Self are neither as clear nor as consistent. The European Self is not formed clearly, but has to compete with national Selves. Thus it seems that construction of a Greek Other has not (yet) led to strengthening of European identity.

However, as of today, the crisis is not over yet, and it is difficult to predict its end and the time it would take to get there. Based on the result of the crisis, the emergence of a Greek Other may be only temporary, but should the crisis drag on or result in Greece leaving the Eurozone (or the EU), the othering will become more permanent and Europe would have to use this moment to redefine itself as well.

Thus, future research should continue to follow the crisis discourse and focus on practices of exclusion and discrimination in textual as well as in visual forms. To further confirm (or debunk) the results of this paper, a comparative study of newspapers (2008-2011), by means of textual discourse analysis, could be useful. Furthermore, it could be interesting to complement the studies of European newspapers with data from Greece itself and assess whether the EU too is being differentiated from, in other words whether the change in relationship is mutual. Last but not least, more countries should be included into the study, to be confirm whether this is a whole-European trend or just some deviation.

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Endnotes:

[i] This article develops the theoretico-methodological framework for a PhD dissertation thesis on European identity discourse contained in political cartoons. All comments are welcome!
[ii] Although the terms 'European sovereign-debt crisis', 'Euro crisis' and 'Eurozone crisis' differ from an economic-analytic point of view, this text is not based in economic theory and the nuances in categorization are not of significance for the researched data and topic, thus these terms will be used interchangeably.
[iii] As the economic crisis ensnares mostly southern economies – the so-of called PIIGS (Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece and Spain) – ideas of a two-speed Europe, of a core and periphery, or of Euro-currency countries and the rest gained prominence (e.g. Economist 2011: 31–32).
[iv] Several newspapers reported in early March that German tourists are afraid to go to Greece for summer holidays in fear of a negative response of the Greeks to the EU-mandated austerity measures (The Local.de 2012)
[v] We can summarize these practices under the term 'othering'.
[vi] Reference to the notorious blog *Charlemagne* of *The Economist* focused on the European Union.
[vii] Division between essentialist and constructivist approaches to community formation. (Cederman 2001b, Findor 2011, Brubaker and Cooper 2000, Anderson 1983[1991]) * the two sentences above illustrate the two most common approaches to the problematique of identity, ethnicity or nationalism: essentialism and constructivism respectively (for more see Cederman 2001, for their analytic usage Brubaker and Cooper.
[viii] Authority could stem from an institutional location (elected politicians), supreme knowledge (advisors and the academe) or presumed objectivity and reputation of the opinion media, with renown commentators (as opposed to the tabloids).
[ix] Regression analysis of newspapers with *news* and *symbols* being the two experimental independent variables.
[x] Checkel and Katzenstein (2009) similarly analytically differentiate between identity as a project and a process.
[xi] The mirror image follows the real world logic of what's right in front of the mirror is seen as the opposite – left – in the mirror.
[xii] According to Fligstein's impressive survey and analysis a typical European is an educated Western European male holding a white-collar job (Fligstein 2008). Adrian Favell speaks of an even more exclusive group of "Eurostars" – "professional, skilled, and educated people who circulate in the European knowledge economy" (2008, 2009 quoted in Risse 2010: 48).
[xiii] National heroes are almost always archetypal figures romanticized and glorified, mythical and real persons alike. For the British such figures include for example King Arthur, Ivanhoe, Britannia, admiral Nelson or Winston Churchill; for the French Jeanne d'Arc, Marianne or general Charles de Gaulle are associated and appropriated as national heroes; for every nation the list could go on and on (Hedetoft 1995: 193).
[xiv] For more on EU – US relations see Kagan 2002, 2003, Kumar 2008, Rifkin 2005.
[xv] 'The how' – identity as a process.
[xvi] The other two nation-wide newspapers have a very comparable circulation: *Der Standard* with 75, 000 (2010) and *Die Presse* with 77,000 (2010) readers (Eurotopics 2012).
[xvii] An acronym referring to countries in economic distress: Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain.
[xviii] Greeks as pigs (works on multiple levels, a pun on PIIGS, but also on national budgets deficits as piggybanks, but lastly it presents Greeks as less human – in an extreme sense could be understood as slaughter animals we breed for food)
[xix] This trend is the same in external aspects of European identity. Although official representatives van Rompuy and Ashton do make an appearance, the association is primarily with national politicians acting on behalf of the Union (Chalániová 2011b).

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