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Charlotte Galpin

Euro Crisis…Identity Crisis? The Single Currency and the Discursive Construction of European Identities in Germany, Poland and Ireland

Supervisors: **Dr Tim Haughton (/staff/profiles/government-society/haughton-tim.aspx)** and **Dr Isabelle Hertner (/staff/profiles/government-society/hertner-isabelle.aspx)**

My PhD examines the impact of the "Eurozone crisis" on the discursive construction of European identities in the European public sphere, using Germany, Ireland and Poland as case studies. It takes a discursive institutionalist approach to highlight the contested nature of European political identities and the options for discursive change in the communicative discourse between elites, media and citizens, and engages with the question of whether the crisis may have acted as a 'crisis' or 'critical juncture' in European identity discourses, or, alternatively, may be serving to promote the development of European identity through the increased salience of EU politics. I conduct extensive frame analysis of political and media discourse, including political speeches and press releases alongside news articles from both broadsheet and tabloid newspapers in the three case study countries at important moments of the crisis. This allows me to investigate variations the way in which European identity is constructed through the crisis across EU member states, across time and between levels of discourse.

My initial findings suggest that, while there are some changes and new meanings given to the idea of 'Europe', the Eurozone crisis can primarily be used as a lens through which to view existing national discourses. I am particularly interested in how the key concepts of solidarity and sovereignty shed light on the meaning of Europe, finding that these notions are understood within the framework of existing discourses on Europe, the economy and the state. The concept of 'solidarity' illuminates the new dividing line between Northern and Southern Europe in particular, especially in the cases of Germany and Poland, while concept of sovereignty serves to reinforce older dividing lines between core and periphery – particularly through anti-German sentiment in Poland and Ireland.

In the German case, for example, I argue that the crisis has not resulted in Germany 'falling out of love' with Europe as has been often suggested, but rather led to a redefinition of what it means to be European, where Germany's long-standing commitment to European integration has been linked to its economic model of ordoliberalism. This has led to moral judgements about the 'good Europeans' who contribute to the stability of the Eurozone through economic discipline and competitiveness, vs. the profligate and undisciplined 'bad' Europeans. This results in the exclusion of Greece and other 'southern' European countries from a new Northern European community.

Profile

I came to the University of Birmingham in 2009 when I began my MA in European Integration with a dissertation topic entitled "How Far Can the European Union's So-Called "Democratic Deficit" Be Understood as an Identity Deficit? A Critical Assessment of Democracy in the European Parliament". This won me the Joseph Beeby Prize for the highest dissertation mark in the Graduate School. I began my PhD in October 2010 at the Institute for German Studies (IGS) in POLSIS as the IGS/DAAD project scholarship holder and project assistant on the Institute's major interdisciplinary research project "Zeitgeist: What does it mean to be German in the 21st century?". I have also been the Co-Chair (Events) of the Graduate Centre for Europe, an interdisciplinary initiative for postgraduate students of Europe.

Since starting my PhD, I have been a visiting student at the Willy Brandt Centre for German and European Studies at the University of Wroclaw, Poland (April – September 2013) and the Otto Suhr Institute at the Free University Berlin (June-July 2012). I am currently back at the Free University Berlin for the academic year 2013-2014 where I am a scholarship holder with the Studienstiftung des Abgeordnetenhauses von Berlin (Academic Foundation of the Berlin House of Representatives).

Prior to starting at Birmingham, I graduated with a BA in French and German Studies from the University of Warwick in 2008, having spent a year at the Technische Üniversität Dresden. After graduating I completed a six-month internship at a translation company in Hamburg, after which I continued to work as a freelance translator of French and German.

Qualifications

- BA (Hons) (Warwick), French and German Studies, First Class
- MA (Birmingham) International Studies (European Integration) with Distinction

Research interests

- European Union
- European integration theory
- National and European identities
- German politics and society
- Central and Eastern Europe
- British politics and democracy

Professional memberships

- University Association for Contemporary European Studies (UACES)
- German Studies Association

Teaching responsibilities

- Introduction to the European Union: History, Politics and Institutions (2012-2013)
- Research Skills and Literacy: Philosophy and Methods (2011-2012)

Conference papers

'Euro Crisis, Identity Crisis? Mapping the Construction of European Identities in German Media Discourse at a Time of Turmoil', presented at the conference 'Political cultures/cultural politics of Germany in the 21st century', Institute for German Studies, University of Birmingham, 7th-9th December 2012

'The Eurozone –Crisis, or Opportunity? Identity and the European Union in German Media Discourse', presented at the UACES Conference 'Exchanging Ideas on Europe 2012', Passau, Germany, 3rd-5th September 2012

'Unity or Disunity? Conceptualising Change in European Identity Discourses During the Eurozone Crisis', Workshop – European Identity in Times of Crisis: Sociological Perspectives on Identification with Europe in Turbulent Times', European University Institute, Florence, Italy, 11th-12th June 2012

Critical Europeans? The Impact of the Eurozone Crisis on "Normalised" Expressions of European Identity in Germany, German Studies Association Conference, Louisville,

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