

Title:

‘Greek national identity’ within the framework of the post-1990’s migration from the Balkans: A discursive social constructionist approach

2nd LSE PhD Symposium on Modern Greece:

Current Social Science Research on Greece

By
Maria Xenitidou

Ms Xenitidou Maria

BA (Hons) in Modern European Studies, (International Relations with Politics),
Nottingham Trent University

MA in International Relations, The University of Nottingham

M.Sc. in Research Methods, Nottingham Trent University

Ph.D Candidate – University of Sheffield

Contact details: mxenitidou@seerc.info

Abstract

The aim of the paper proposed is to explore the ways in which elements of Greek identity have taken on board the presence of ‘new’ migrant populations from the Balkans in Central Northern Greece. It will do so through the consideration of national identity as a social construct negotiated, produced and reproduced in interaction, as a form of life by appealing to spatiotemporally available discourses.

While the literature on Greek national identity reveals a long tradition of binary oppositions, cultural dualisms, or ideological dilemmas penetrating through culture and identifying polarizations of construction, statistical data on the post 1990’s migrant population influx from the Balkans attest to the emerging significance of the topic.

Using a discursive social constructionist approach, the key theoretical concepts employed are: *national identity as a social construct negotiated in (interactional) contexts*; the Foucaultian notion of discourses as being *productive* and *constitutive*, as having force and regulating practice; the *normalization/naturalization* of dominant discourses and their elevation into *common sense ideologies and forms of life*. These are explored in Greek people’s accounts in focus groups focusing on discourse analytic practices, strategies and resources. In terms of target population, this research focuses on two main parameters; namely *locality*, as defined by the distinction between *urban/rural* spaces, and *age*. The *urban/rural* distinction builds on and is expected to highlight issues occurring from both societal differences per se and from the differences in the percentage concentration of migrants, while the age groups identified are: i. *18-21 (as growing alongside ‘new’ migration)* and ii. *34-45 (as recipients of ‘new’ migration)*.

The paper’s discussion focuses on the ways in which Greeks perform their national identity within the framework of ‘new’ migration from the Balkans. Preliminary results are presented as occurring within the parameters of *locality* (urban,) and *age* (18-21, 35-45).

The period following the 1990's has been characterized for calling into question previous understandings of social, economic and political identity in Europe. Greek accounts of national identity seem to be informed by a number of recent forces, of which migration from the Balkans is one. The focus of this study is to explore these accounts in Northern Greece by identifying the dominant discourses in the literature and by analyzing accounts and descriptions of Greek people in the area.

Aim:

The aim of the research proposed is to explore the ways in which elements of Greek identity have taken on board the presence of 'new' migrant populations from the Balkans in Central Northern Greece. It will do so through the consideration of national identity as a social construct negotiated, produced and reproduced in interaction, as a form of life by appealing to spatiotemporally available discourses.

Research Questions:

1. What does it mean to be Greek?
2. What impressions of migration and migrants do Greeks express?
3. How does the concept/construct of Greek national identity (Greekness) evolve in talk-in-interaction within the framework of 'new' migration from the Balkans?
4. a. How do Greeks perceive their identity to have *changed*?
b. How do they *talk about/perform* this change in question?
5. How do accounts on the above might differ or vary according to age and locality?

Background:

Research Context

Modern Greek national identity

Writings on Greek national identity reveal a long tradition of binary oppositions (see Tziovas in Bozatzis, N., 1999), cultural dualisms (see Fermor in Bozatzis, N., 1999) or ideological dilemmas (see Billig, M. 1995, 2001) penetrating through culture (see Hertzfeld, M., 1986). When these were regarded as *essentialised* and not symbolic *resources* or ideological constructs, they were often criticized for stemming from a colonial mentality or orientalist approach. At the same time, they have also invariably been employed in the occidentally-oriented discourse of nationalism in the formation of the Greek nation-state.

Modern Greek national identity is seen to have drawn from multiple interpretations, embedded in Greek national history. National histories are written through narratives entailing ways of life and cultural stereotypes. In Greece as in many other cases, national history in the process of nation-state building was contingent upon political aims, stressing therefore a concrete continuity between past and present between Classical and Modern Greece which is also reflected in recurrent discursive and constitutive binaries to be addressed below.

At the same time, Bozatzis stresses that national histories reflect the dominant discourses and symbolic resources at the time, thus identifying polarizations of construction, such as Western hegemony by means of “large-scale institutional practices” (see Bozatzis, N., 1999, pp. 23-43). These inform the practices of social actors. This is the reason why Bozatzis considers Greek national identity an exemplary case study since Greece has symbolically been both included and excluded from the western context of identity formation. It should be noted, however, that modern Greece is not the sole case of symbolic inclusion and exclusion from the Western norm.

According to Greek national history and the *evaluatively charged* bipolar framework of East and West, key interpretations on which the concept of Greekness or Greek national identity draw are Hellenism an *atemporal ideal* tracing its origins to ancient Hellas, including elements of association with western/European attributes and paganism; and Romiossini associated with Byzantine cultural characteristics and folk culture filtering through the Ottoman Empire and supported by the Orthodox church.

The Hellenic-Romeic distinction has another role in Greek discourse, one less obtrusive but nevertheless fundamental to the ideological division in question: the difference between an outward-directed conformity to international expectations about the national image (Hellenism) and an inward-looking, self-critical collective appraisal (Romeic) (Herzfeld, 1986, p. 20).

This division is what Herzfeld (1987) terms the ‘everyday rhetoric of morality’ reflected in the oppositions of symbolic resources such as people and nation, collectivism and individualism, shame and honour, female and male. At the same time and beyond this analytic stance, Herzfeld also claims that Hellenism and Romiossini are performative European discourses whose function has been to symbolically and politically include and exclude Greece in and from European structures of power (in Bozatzis, 1999, p.39).

Modern Greek national identity reveals tensions and invariable combinations of the two sets of *discourses* as they are communicated and performed in everyday life social interactions. Most importantly, the stereotypes and binaries of the discourses of Hellenism and Romiossini are reiterated in various forms, meanings, ends, polarities and perspectives in their use by social actors.

Within these, there are, elements of xenophobia and racism as well as a disengagement of Greek social actors as regards discourses about the “the West” and “the Rest”, which

naturalises and reproduces within casual (Greek) habits of thought and talk not merely Greece as a nation in a world of nations, but also the “natural”

division of the world of nations between nations of “the West” and of “the Rest” and Greece’s ambivalent position within this hegemonic, imaginary and politically real world division (Bozatzis, 1999, p. 127).

Within this framework, Balkan identity is also viewed within this constructed bipolarity. When on Hellenism’s end of the binary described above, drawing on discourses polarised to Western/European identity constructs, the Balkans is associated with the ‘other’ within, the oriental and the exotic whereas in the inward-looking Romeic end, similarities are drawn between the constructs of Greek national identity and Balkan identity (especially as regards historical and religious continuities). However, this is not an exhaustive framework as further constructs exist for different regions and peoples in the Balkans.

This pertains to the notion of the ‘other’, which has a prominent role in considering the construction/formation of (national) identity. Othering is perceived differently by different schools in psychology and social psychology ranging from social identity theory¹ (comparison and categorization, see Tajfel and Turner in Gough. B. and McFadden, M. 2001) to discursive social constructionist stances focusing on interaction and positioning (to be discussed in a subsequent section).

To that end Triandafyllidou (1998) argues that “[I]dentity is always constituted in interaction. Thus, some of its features become salient because they distinguish the in-group from others, while other features remain latent” (Triandafyllidou, 1998, p. 600). Similarly to the hegemonic discourses mentioned above, which distinguish ‘others’ ranging from the ones to be admired to the ones to be dismissed, Triandafyllidou introduces the notion of ‘significant other’ in shaping national identity. Significant others refer to those groups which threaten the in-group, especially their identity. That may account for the fact that uniqueness is always sought through interaction between similarity and dissimilarity.

¹ In social identity theory, a social identity is a person’s knowledge that he or she belongs to a social category or group (Stets and Burke, 2000). Through a social comparison process, persons who are similar to the self are categorized with the self and are classified as the in-group. Similarly, persons who are different from the self are categorized as different and are classified as the out-group. Categorization, comparison and classification (identification) are recurrent processes of social identity.

Significant others may be internal or external to the in-group, ranging from minorities to foreigners. Nationalist reactions are then contingent upon the “type” of others. Triandafyllidou outlines different reactions to different groups, the most relevant here would be the type which refers to immigrant communities. She argues that differences in language, religion, customs may be perceived to threaten the purity of the nation. “The nation is likely then to engage in a process of reaffirmation of its identity and seek to re-define it so as to differentiate the in-group from the newcomers” (ibid, p.601). In addition, significant others also become salient in times of crises (often used as a scapegoat), against which the nation (re) unites.

Therefore, within this ambivalent relationship with Balkan identity, differences in language, religion, customs and the perceived threat to national unity inform the constructed distinction between ‘others’ and ‘significant others’ in the Balkans which is further reinforced by migration flows.

A final point to take into account is religion in Greece, which pervades accounts of otherness and ideological dilemmas. According to Chrysoloras, “religion and nationalism are so closely associated in Greece, to the extent that one can refer to Greek Orthodoxy as a ‘national religion’” (2004, p. 1). The ‘Helleno-Christian’ discourse, which constitutes a dominant element in the dilemmatic negotiation of Greek identity, as mentioned above, is embedded in everyday life through “the ritualization of certain social practices” and “the penetration of the aesthetics of the Orthodox culture in Greek public life” (ibid, p. 17). Orthodoxy is normalized in spatiotemporal traditions and as such it contributes to the current construct of Greekness as a ‘concrete unitary whole’.

Post 1990's migration

The previous identity constructs have also assumed that Greece has mainly been a relatively ethnically homogeneous society, which is debatable as to what this means and how it was constructed. For the purpose of this research, I present current migration levels. According to the 2001 census, 7% of the legal(ized) population of Greece are ‘foreigners’/immigrants (National Statistical Service of Greece, 2001), while it is estimated that another 2-3% appears not to have registered, amounting in

total to 10% of the whole population. This figure is quite high, taking into account that other Mediterranean countries, such as Spain, reported 4% of immigrants. A section of the same survey on ‘foreigners’ who declared that they have settled in Greece for employment purposes, shows that half come from Albania, followed by Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia, Pakistan, Ukraine, Poland, Russia. Twelve percent of this sample has settled in Central Macedonia (Central Northern Greece) and 47.5% in Attica. Nevertheless it should be stressed that, according to the same survey, the percentage contribution of immigrants from the Balkans to the total population of Central Macedonia is higher than in Attica, which is the main reason for focusing on this area in this research work.

In addition, Hatziprokopiou notes that the ‘capital’ of Northern Greece, and second biggest city in Greece, Thessaloniki and its regions, have thus far attracted scarce academic attention as regards to their social experience of ‘new’ migration (2003, p. 1033). The new social geography of these areas has recently been explored, mainly focusing on Albanian migrants. The findings of Hatziprokopiou himself on Albanian migrants’ incorporation into these areas provide an interesting case for the contact hypothesis, showing that interaction “may result in the eventual breakdown of cultural barriers and prejudices” (ibid, p. 1050). According to the same study, Albanian participants seem to consider the refugee tradition of Northern Greece– from Asia Minor - and the emigration experience – to Europe, the United States and Australia - as a positive social element, which is expressed in the form of sensitivity and understanding (of common experience) by the locals.

At the same time, Greece is variably accused of (institutionalized) racism by the international media, while the Greek media are seen to both condemn and feed on this image (see for example Smith, 2003; Koulouri, 2003; Lianos, 2003; Souliotis, 2003; Psicharis, 2003). This has been accelerated in recent years as the assimilation of immigrant populations enters the realm of everyday life exigencies. While reports focus on the limitations of civil society to address the issue effectively, citing examples in legalization procedures, the educational system, welfare policies and employment opportunities (see extensive analysis in Triandafyllidou, A. and Veikou, M., 2002; Baldwin-Edwards, M. and Fakiolas, R., 1998) the discourse of ethnic primacy is reflected in ethnic citizenship, which has direct implications on migration

laws concerning all of the above. Triandafyllidou and Veikou see this in the inconclusive opposition of ethnic and civic identity in Greece. They explicitly argue that “the continuing lack of a comprehensive policy framework even after 10 years (of migration), and the political and public debate on the issue suggest that there is a relationship between this reluctance and the ethnocultural definition of the Greek nationality and citizenship” (Triandafyllidou, A. and Veikou, M., 2002, p. 191).

This image is also recorded and further fostered in the 2004 European statistics and surveys, which portray a relative tendency of the Greek population to identify with their nationality more than with Europe (55%) or with a combination of both nationality and Europe (39%); only respondents in the UK, Finland and Spain record higher figures (Eurobarometer, 2004)². Greek respondents also figure the highest rates amongst other Western European countries in not accepting immigrants (19.4%), other races (24.4%) and especially muslims (31.1%) as their neighbours (European Values Study, 1980-90-2000).

Theories and Concepts

Banal Nationalism, imagination, construction and narration

For the purpose of this research, my starting point is to examine the effect of conceptual imagining in embedding social reality. According to Anderson (1991) interaction between capitalism, technology (print), and human linguistic diversity at the end of the 18th century made national communities imaginable in homogeneous empty time (p. 43). Space/territory seem to have played a functional role, as a basis for but also a construct of the imagined communities point of departure in a world fragmented and sustained by homogeneous empty times.

Apart from these, the centrality of myths and memories in perceptions of the nation is commonplace amongst theorists. A.D. Smith (1996) considers the renewal of nations

² “The feeling of being European is more likely to be felt by men, managers, students, white-collar workers and the self-employed. The longer respondents have spent in fulltime education and the younger they are, the more likely they are to feel European to some degree or another” (Eurobarometer 61, 2004, p. B.95).

and nationalism as a repository of resources, immersed with myths and memories, and activated through temporal trends to reproduce them.

Smith sees ethnic identity as a collective identity produced by “shared memories of collective experiences and activities of successive generations of a group claiming a common origin and ancestry” (1996, p.583). Common origin is imbued with myths permeating through memories and associated with a historic and sacred homeland, as a definition of ethnicity. Above all, shared or collective memories usually concentrate on specific events, being distinguished as golden epochs, including flourishing ages, or periods of extreme suffering terminated by revolutions featuring named heroes. These periods of success or successful movements constitute cases for national recognition, distinctiveness, prestige.

At the same time national consciousness is profoundly cultivated through characteristic amnesias. Insecurity crops up in a striving for continuity and a sense of personhood, hence, creating a need for constant reminders of who we are, where we came from and where we are going. From birth certificates to national anthems and artifacts identity is recorded in order to be remembered. “As with modern persons, so it is with nations. Awareness of being embedded in secular, serial time, with all its implications of continuity, yet of ‘forgetting’ the experience of this continuity engenders the need for a narrative identity” (Anderson, B., 1991, p. 205). In this line of thought, it seems that the better recorded history is, the more impact it exerts over successive generations of a community or nation, a case being ancient Greece (Smith, A. D., 1996, p. 583). The deeper the resources on which to draw, the greater the sustainability of a community.

Billig takes the discussion beyond imagination and narrated or recorded realities imbued with myths; from the moment of the establishment of imagined communities onwards nationalism and national identity reciprocally construct and reproduce each other in a banal way. For identity is not a thing, neither does it evolve in a state of vacuum. Rather, it is to be understood as a form of talking about self and community and as a form of life (1996, p. 60).

This theory and imagination of the nation among a world of nations as well as nationhood itself became a theory which, far from describing, dictated habits of thought and life in the form of discourses, narratives and their banal symbolic manifestation (see *ibid*, p. 63). In this sense, the labeling articulated in this theory reflects mainly western prevailing politically and socially constructed stances, revealing an elevation of dominant approaches and ways of talking into normative accounts. Thus, theory becomes normative and the absence of Anderson's community 'unimaginable'.

Naturalization is the most effective mechanism for creating awareness and for sustaining identities. Nations not only have to be imagined and narrated but they also need to be flagged in everyday life. National identity seems 'natural' to have in an essentialist sense of having 'a nose and two ears' (Gellner, E. cited in *ibid*, p. 37).

In addition, these processes are legitimized in universal codes. Established nation-states may have been imagined in different ways and have particular histories, but they are routinely flagged through constructions of the universal themes of nationalism. Thus, although national particularities are stressed in reference to attributes, in a western context, nationhood is asserted through universal codes such as particular national labels, flags, identities, anthems, histories (see Billig, 1996, pp. 72-73). "In this way, 'we' imagine 'ourselves' and 'foreigners' to be equally ruled by the sociology of nationhood" (*ibid*, p. 3).

What this means in essence is that nation-related terms, adjectives and spaces form the predominant image of social and political organization. We invoke, for instance, this label as we invoke other contextually available labels to define ourselves, such as our name, our gender, age, etc. In public documents ethnicity is still listed as an objective attribute to describe people (*almost in an essentialised, normative sense*).

The relevance of this conceptual framework to the study of national identity in Greece will be explored in Greek people's accounts in Northern Greece. Nevertheless, certain considerations - though not necessarily country-specific - are in order. The thesis of Banal Nationalism develops focusing on 'established nation-states' conventionally identified both politically and socially with the 'West'. Formally

speaking, modern Greece is considered within that framework. However, writings on modern Greece, current statistical reports, social and political issues such as migration policy and the ‘Macedonian question’ respectively have been the sources of recurrent contestation as regards the terms applicability of the terms ‘established’ and ‘Western’ (see Bozatzis, 1999).

Research Approaches

Social Constructionism and Identity – Theoretical Concepts

Using a discursive social constructionist approach, this research aims to combine concepts and tools primarily from *discourse and conversation analysis*, both from the *relativist* and the more *critical* approaches. Consequently, I focus on *patterns within language* and *patterns of activity*, on the *process* and *content* of talk-in-interaction, on the *micro* and *macro* levels of analysis respectively.

Firstly, I will draw upon *national identity as a social construct negotiated in (interactional)* contexts from which the person cannot be separated (see Wetherell, M. and Maybin, J. in Stevens, 1996, pp. 222-225). The person is immersed in the social world and draws upon discourses, which are historically, contextually, culturally and spatiotemporally available. Therefore, knowledge is situated (context specific) and relative and any account is local and value-laden.

Secondly, discourses have a functional character as social actors draw upon them in negotiating and performing their identity. However, I will extend this definition and draw upon the Foucaultian notion of discourses as being *productive* and *constitutive*, as having force and regulating practice (cited in Carabine, J. in Wetherell, M., Taylor, S., Yates, S.J., 2001, pp. 268-269). Discourses make claims to the ‘truth’ but are not all equally powerful. Dominant discourses are *normalized* and constitute *common sense ideologies and forms of life*. Discourses on national identity or stereotypes, for instance, establish the norm through a process of contradiction, comparison and differentiation with counter-discourses. The homogeneity or shared social understanding produced is daily lived in the world of nation-states, which resembles Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, internalized through national socialization (see De

Cillia, Reisigl & Wodak, 1999, p. 153). The process of *normalization/naturalization* is a central assumption of this research.

Finally, I will employ a critical element of discursive social constructionism, moving beyond the functional use of language in interactional contexts (Potter and Wetherell) to understanding the selection of discourses by the participants and the social role of discourse; in other words, what their mere existence achieves.

Research Tools

As stated above, the tools selected for this research draw on a combination of traditions in discursive social constructionism. Firstly, apart from the appeal to broad discourses, I will also focus on the process of talk-in-interaction in focus groups to explore the range of *interpretative repertoires* utilized by participants. In terms of identity, personhood/selfhood draw upon representations/repertoires contextually and culturally available ('interpretative repertoires') (Burr, V., 1995, p. 123). These are 'the building blocks of conversation, a range of linguistic resources that can be drawn upon and utilized in the course of everyday social interaction' (Edley, N. in Wetherell, M., Taylor, S., Yates, S.J., 2001, p. 198). This study will identify and analyze the interpretative repertoires – in terms of (familiar) grammar and syntax and of the broad discourses they adhere to - employed by participants in order to talk about national identity and the particular 'others' in question.

Secondly, this research also takes on board that participants make use of *rhetorical strategies* in order to gain legitimacy. Billig argues that all discourse is rhetorical, "it is argumentative and seeks to persuade; as such the activities of criticism and justification are central to rhetorical discourse" (in Wetherell, M., Taylor, S., Yates, S. J., 2001, p. 214). The rhetorical strategies (such as Humor, Mitigation strategies, Extreme Case Formulations, Appeal to Personal Experience, Comparison and Impersonal Structures) used by participants in focus groups will be studied in terms of their type, organization and function in undermining alternatives and persuading. This is also expected to constitute a resource as regards to the embeddedness of rhetorical strategies in (particular) ideological discourses of national identity as well as to the constant negotiation of *subject positions*.

Thirdly, words and utterances (Davies and Harré, 2001) acquire meaning within contexts or, to use Billig's term, carry an ideological history, in the sense that they are attached to broader discourses. Lived ideological discourses constitute the way things are commonly thought and believed to be, and therefore, practiced. To some extent, they constitute a society's or culture's common sense (see Edley, N., 2001, p. 203). At the same time, *ideological discourses* are not unitary and coherent. Rather, they contain tensions or contrary themes and are *dilemmatic*, which according to Billig provides for the premises for common sense to evolve in Western cultures, through discussion or counter-positioning. With effect from that, this research focuses on the kinds of ideological dilemmas participants in focus groups enter or reveal in their perceptions and performance of their national identity; in their perceptions of migrants; and in their perceptions and performance of their national identity within and since the framework of 'new' migration from the Balkans.

Fourthly, I also draw on Garfinkel's argument that actions are meaningful through shared understandings, and that social action requires an analysis of how social actors use shared common-sense understandings (sociology of nationhood) and shared methods of reasoning in interaction (Heritage in, Wetherell, M., Taylor, S., Yates, S. J., 2001, p. 50). Joint construction - *jointly produced storylines* and *joint remembering/forgetting* - becomes practical activity, to which social actors consent, position themselves and are positioned by others and by ideological discourses (Critical Discourse Analysis). In *interactive positioning* individuals' utterances position other interacting participants, while in *reflexive positioning* individuals position themselves. This is neither necessarily intentional, nor constrain-free, as subject positions are made available in interaction according to spatiotemporally available discourses. However, individuals have the possibility of choice.

In addition, linked to the concept of positioning and managing subject positions in talk-in interaction is the concept of footing. Footing as developed by Goffman (1981) refers to alignment in relation to what is occurring in interaction, while "a change in footing implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance" (p. 128).

The choices of discourses, their ideological dilemmas, the positions made available through them the positions taken up and the management of alignment and shifts in alignment will all be informed by the literature and analysed in talk-in-interaction, in the focus groups conducted in Thessaloniki, a first mapping of which follows in a subsequent section.

Methodology:

Participants

The target population for the purpose of this research can be defined in two ways:

- *In a quantitative manner*, the aim is to focus on the core of Greek people in Northern Greece (born by Greek parents, and raised in Greece), in urban and rural areas, as the data of migration concentration indicates.
- *In a qualitative manner*, the criterion for inclusion in my research would be that prospective participants represent themselves as Greeks (information obtained through filter questions).

However, it is possible that both ways correspond to the same group of people, since identity is perceived as a construct and a form of life, which renders the existence of objective traits as determinants of identification insufficient to account for contemporary complexities.

Sample

Although discourses are productive and constitutive, and, thus, have force and regulating practice, the present study takes into account that there are objective differences (between parameters, characteristics), which are expected to produce different accounts. Therefore, this research focuses on two main parameters; namely locality, as defined by the distinction between urban/rural spaces, and age. The primary focus on these parameters is based on the assumption that there are significant differences in accounts provided by participants who experienced

migration from the Balkans through different forms of life and in different stages of their lifetime.

Locality seems significant in this research for both theoretical and practical reasons. The *theoretical aspect of locality* draws on accounts of local identity and attachments, which may vary from one locality to the other. It also draws on the symbolic significance of space/territory (see Smith A.D., 1996), social practices and representations associated with it. Practical reasons refer to migration concentration in different localities as well as to the practicalities and connotations attached to forms of life in urban and rural areas in general. Therefore, the urban/rural distinction builds on and is expected to highlight issues occurring from both societal differences per se and from the differences in the percentage concentration of migrants. The locality identified as urban in Central Macedonia is Thessaloniki (including its outskirts); the rural distinction, as identified for the purpose of this research, refers to villages in Central Macedonia, which is currently being researched. This distinction has been made on the basis that they differentiate significantly in types of employment available, population (in absolute numbers) and overall living conditions. The allocation of participants in the villages and therefore the choice of villages itself is guided by snowball sampling and contingent upon issues of access.

Age has been included since the 'new' migration influx in Greece was new in the sense of not previously experience in such a form and extent from the particular area to Greece and also coincided (in an interactive way) with other 'new' geopolitical events emerging in the post 1990's. In the sense of time as we understand it, there was a period prior to and during this force, for Greek society. Hence, two age groups seem more interesting for the purpose of this research.

•**35-45** (as recipients on 'new' migration): this age group is selected because migration from the Balkans has been a 'new' experience for its members, especially within the previously prevailing discourse of ethnic/national homogeneity in Greece.

•**18-21** (as growing alongside 'new' migration): this age group is selected to see how accounts may vary when people grow up in an environment where their life memories

and experience have been constructed alongside migration and interaction with migrants.

It should be noted that while age and locality are focused on from the beginning, I control for gender, class and education in the sampling process by selecting allocated participants in a way to ensure a widespread representation of the above in the focus groups overall (see Sampling Strategy below). Most importantly, apart from acknowledging and controlling for objective differences, the primary focus is to explore gender, class, education and refugee origin background (for example second generation refugees from Asia Minor) in positioning, if these become relevant to the participants (in the case of systematic differences).

Data Collection Methods

The main stage of primary data collection is focus groups, estimated to amount to eight; two from the urban area of Thessaloniki including participants from the age group of 18-21; two of the same age group coming from rural areas within a 100 miles radius from Thessaloniki; two from the same area including participants from the age group of 35-25; and two from the same age group including participants from the urban area of Thessaloniki. It is estimated that the number of participants per focus group will be 4-6, amounting to 32-48 participants in total (according to social science standards).

Parameters	Urban	Rural
18-21	2: (4-6 participants)	2: (4-6 participants)
35-45	2: (4-6 participants)	2: (4-6 participants)

For the purposes of this paper the indicative/first results of the focus groups from the urban area of Thessaloniki corresponding to the two identified age groups will be presented below.

Further research could be conducted in the form of follow-up interviews. These could address issues arising from the focus groups and explore them further in one-to-one discussions.

Justification

Focus groups have been selected in order to obtain a variety of perspectives about the topic. The benefits of focus groups include gaining insights into people's shared views and perceptions of everyday life and the ways in which participants interact with each other in a group situation (positioning). Discussion in the focus groups is introduced by a paragraph with the intention to topicalize them and avoid getting off track.

Focus Group themes include:

- Perceptions of migrants from the Balkans
- Contact with migrants from the Balkans
- Greekness in everyday life
- Presence of migrants and the feeling of Greekness
- Presence of migrants and practices of everyday life
- Presence of migrants and the physical space (see schedule attached)

Sampling Strategy

The sampling method selected for the purposes of this research is snowball sampling. Snowball sampling “is based on the assumption that a ‘bond’ or ‘link’ exists between the initial sample and others in the same target population, allowing a series of referrals to be made within a circle of acquaintance” (Berg, 1988).

This has been selected since focus groups work better with participants who know one another. The main limitation of snowball sampling is that due to the ‘circle of acquaintance’ there may be too much similarity between participants. I control for this limitation by controlling for variables such as gender, class and education complementing it with quota sampling in composing the focus groups. In quota sampling data is gathered from individuals possessing identified characteristics (see

Blaxter, 2001). Therefore, snowball sampling is used to allocate prospective participants, while quota sampling is used to select participants on the basis that there is a widespread representation of the above variables in the focus groups overall.

Analytic Process

The analytic process evolves in the following stages: Focus group recordings are transcribed; transcriptions are read initially taking notes identifying broad themes and producing an index of codes, which is presented below. Subsequent reading and narrowing down will follow using the analytical tools compiled above. Extracts will be selected and translated; these will be further analysed and selected for inclusion in the thesis.

It should be noted that the language used in the data collection process (focus groups, interviews, transcriptions) is Greek. Analysis will be carried out on Greek transcripts; selected extracts will be translated into English after the first phase of analysis.

Positionality

The selection of a (discursive) social constructionist approach has a dual function as regards to this research. First, it expresses my overall philosophical perspective; second, it guides my reflective stance in the collection and analysis of information. My position as a researcher and a member of the in-group (Greek people in Northern Greece (who were born by Greek parents, were raised in Greece and represent themselves as Greek), in an urban area, with migration concentration), will be acknowledged for the subjectivity risks and opportunities it may have.

Preliminary Mapping of Themes & Strategies

The discussion of indicative results from a preliminary coding is centred around rhetorical strategies, their function in talk-in-interaction, and the broad themes which have commonly occurred in the focus groups conducted in Thessaloniki on the age groups 18-21 and 35-45.

The broad themes participants draw on in discussing their national identity and the post 1990s migration from the Balkans are the following: the media as 1. the medium of learning about migrants and 2. as the reason for negative stereotyping; language as an indication, definition and criterion of national identity; contact hypothesis as the idea that contact with immigrants fosters positive attitudes and understanding; acculturation, assimilation and integration as normative processes in relation to migrants and the host communities; the West, particularly Germany and the US due to being destination places for Greek emigrants. The West is considered 1. as a positive example of development and tolerance and 2. as a negative example of inconsumate globalization; the State 1. being challenged as regards migration policy (and legalization) and social policy and 2. being equated to its constituent parts – people; religion; the past and the present (and the future) penetrating discussions of change and different circumstances. The most used binaries identified thus far are: legal - illegal, good - bad, Ancient Greece - Modern Greece, Prejudice - Tolerance, theory - practice, past - present. The classification of these themes and binaries into discourses and their rhetorical uses will be complete upon completion of data collection and analysis.

The rhetorical strategies which occur from a first coding are the following: Appeal to personal experience, Extreme case formulation, Comparison, Impersonal Structures, Mitigation/Hedges and Humor. A discussion of the identified functions of these tools and an example of their dynamic interaction with broad themes/discourses seems appropriate in order to stir up further analysis.

Rhetorical Strategies: Functions (& Dynamics)

The first rhetorical strategy to be presented is participants' appeal to personal experience, which constitutes an example on how further coding will proceed in the following rhetorical strategies in the process of mapping strategies to themes and discourses. Therefore, the uses that participants put to personal experience are explored at two levels; namely function, in the sense of what is being achieved (or aimed to) and dynamics, in the sense of the discourses it most commonly combines with.

Appeal to Personal experience is a common form of argument legitimation. It refers to a narrative of active or passive experience of events which are offered by participants in support or evidence of an unfolding view or argument (see Tusting et al, 2002). Preliminary coding of the focus groups conducted in Thessaloniki indicates that appeal to personal experience is made to enable the legitimation of generalizations in a mitigated-cum-uncontested way. Generalisations occur at two levels; First, from one instance to the whole of a person/group. For example, personal experience is used to talk about single cases of Greek people who would not accept low-paid jobs to generalize about the ‘Greeks’ as a whole. Second, from one instance to the whole of a culture. For example, ‘not accepting low-paid jobs’ is discussed as a characteristic of ‘Greek culture’.

Contact hypothesis

At the level of discourse, appeal to personal experience seems combined with the discourse of contact hypothesis, which assumes that it is due to ignorance, indifference and lack of familiarity/contact that derogatory stereotypes, prejudice and racism are constructed. Therefore, it hypothesizes that knowledge and experience of ‘others’ would solve these problems (see for example Sigelman and Welch; Ahmed, Nicolson and Spencer, 1993). Participants site their experience of personal contact which has led them to think ‘otherwise’, or in other words positively about immigrants.

There is a discursive and a critical element here. First, “the implication of this discourse is that it allows for a strategy of doing nothing but waiting, until people get used to those they are unfamiliar with, by a process of increased and continued contact” (Ahmed et al, 2000, p. 39). This has appeared in the focus groups in statements such as “in 20-30 years from now things will be different” or “prejudice will be extinct” without articulating personal or societal input but rather seeing as natural evolution.

Secondly, contact hypothesis also classifies as a normative discourse as it implies the existence of a ‘norm’ against which everyone must be compared, thus, implicitly denying difference which means that “the conditions for successful intervention – the recognition of these differences and the analysis of their cause – cannot be achieved”

(Henriques, 1984, p. 89). For example, statements such as “they (migrants) will be like us”.

The second rhetorical strategy presented is **Impersonal Structures**. **Impersonal Structures** consist words, phrases, idioms, sayings, grammar, syntax and hedges which enable the expression of a view or argument in an objective manner. A commonly repeated example is the use of passive voice. This functions to blur agency and disavow accountability by using ‘out-there’ structures which are not immediately identifiable with the speaker or which exist independently of the speaker. Socially, impersonal structures as explicit mitigators “offer an almost transparent mask of ‘political correctness’” (Galasinska and Galasinski, 2003, p. 853). A common example in this first coding is the word ‘It’s logical’. It should be noted that logical in the Greek language and context translates to ‘normal’, ‘expected’, ‘common sense’. In the focus groups this functions to 1. be shared by the group and to 2. normatively reproduce discursive resources as normative, mitigating generalisations and stereotyping.

The fourth rhetorical strategy presented is **Extreme case formulations**. **Extreme case formulations** consists of referring to examples or making statements which are not mainstream and are stronger than normally expected because they are made in an extreme form. Extreme case formulations are encouraged in focus groups due to the preference for intersubjective agreement which is not as often the case in one-to-one interactions (see Tusting et al, 2002). Preliminary coding of the focus groups conducted in Thessaloniki indicates that extreme case formulations function to mitigate the legitimacy of stereotypes and generalizations. One such example could be claiming that traditions are withering away when “on Easter day MacDonald’s was packed”.

The fourth rhetorical strategy presented is **Comparison**. **Comparison** is a common discursive practice used to understand and classify others based on one’s own experience – that being personal and/or social. Beyond the notion of comparison of Social Identity theory afore-mentioned, it seems useful to note that comparison becomes analytically relevant in how and when it is being used. From a first coding, comparison appears - implicitly or explicitly - in the description of migrants and

migration experience as well as in the description of Greekness or Greek national identity. One such example could be “they (migrants) speak Greek better than us”. Comparison implies the existence of a ‘norm,’ which in the case of the focus groups analysed, is Greece and/or the West appearing interchangeably or in isolation depending on how one is positioned in discourse (ideological dilemmas).

Finally, **Humor** in the first coding of the transcripts appears to occur to 1. voice strong/extreme views, 2. avoid agreement when a counter position triumphs and 3. to lighten up previously loaded discussion(s).

Conclusion

In conclusion, literature and research thus far shows that there are dominant discourses which participants draw on in talking about their national identity. These discourses, though, comprise polarizations, stereotypes, binaries and ideological dilemmas and become analytically relevant in exploring the uses participants put to them, the strategies of these uses and the dynamic interaction between strategies and their function(s). Discursive social constructionism focusing on the interactional context as well as the providing a vigorous thesis for the analysis afore-mentioned is expected to highlight further participants’ perceptions and performance of their national identity; their perceptions of migrants; and in their perceptions and performance of their national identity within and since the framework of ‘new’ migration from the Balkans.

References

- Agelopoulos, G. (2003) Life among anthropologists in Greek Macedonia, *Social Anthropology*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp.249-263
- Ahmed, B., Nicolson, P., Spencer, C. (2000) The Social Construction of Racism: The Case of Second Generation Bangladeshis. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 10, pp. 33-48
- Anderson, B. (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso
- Antaki, C. and Widdicombe, S. (eds) (1998) *Identities in Talk*, London: Sage.
- Armbruster, H. Rollo, C. and Meinhof, U.H. (2003) Imagining Europe: everyday narratives in European border communities, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 5, pp. 885-899
- Baldwin-Edwards, M. and Fakiolas, R. (1998) Greece: The Contours of a Fragmented Policy Response, *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 3 No. 3, pp. 186-204
- Banister, P., Burman, E., Parker, I. Taylor, M and Tindall, C. (1994) *Qualitative Methods in Psychology: A research guide*, Buckingham: Open University Press
- Berg, S. (1988) Snowball sampling, in Kotz, S. and Johnson, N. L. (eds) *Encyclopaedia of Statistical Sciences* Vol. 8
- Billig, M. (1995) *Banal Nationalism*, London: Sage
- Billig, M. (2001) Discursive, Rhetorical and Ideological Messages. In Wetherell, M., Taylor, S., Yates, S. J. (eds) *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader*, London: Sage
- Bhabha, H. (1990) *Nation and Narration*, London: Routledge
- Blaxter, L. et al. (2001) *How to research*. 2nd edition. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Blinkhorn, M & Veremis, Th. (eds) (1990) *Modern Greece: Nationalism and nationality*, Athens: Sage-ELIAMEP
- Bonnett, A. (1996) Constructions of race, place and discipline: geographies of racial identity and racism, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 19, pp. 864-883
- Bozatzis, N. (1999) *Greek National Identity in Talk: The Rhetorical Articulation of an Ideological Dilemma*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. Lancaster: Lancaster University
- Burr, V. (1995) *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*, London: Sage.
- Callero, P.L. (2003) The sociology of the self, *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 29, pp. 115-133

Carabine, J. (2001) Unmarried Motherhood 1830-1990: A Genealogical Analysis In Margaret Wetherell, Stephanie Taylor, & Simeon Yates (eds), *Discourse as data. A guide for analysis*, London: Open University Press & Sage

Chrysoloras, N. (2004) *Orthodoxy and Greek National Identity: An analysis of Greek Nationalism in light of A. D. Smith's Theoretical Framework*, paper presented in the 6th Annual Kokkalis Graduate Student Workshop

Danopoulos, A.C. (2003) Albanian Migration into Greece: The Economic, Sociological and Political Implications, *New Balkan Politics*, Issue 7/8

Davies, B. and Harré, R. (2001) Positioning: The Discursive Production of Selves In Wetherell, M., Taylor, S., Yates, S. J. (eds), *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader*, London: Sage

De Cillia, R., Reisigl, M., and Wodak, R. (1999) The discursive construction of national identities, *Discourse and Society*, Vol. 10, pp. 149-173

Du Gay, P. and Redman, P. (eds) (2000) *Identity: A Reader*, London: Open University Press & Sage

Edley, N. (2001) Analysing masculinity: Interpretive repertoires, ideological dilemmas and subject positions. In Margaret Wetherell, Stephanie Taylor, & Simeon Yates (eds), *Discourse as data. A guide for analysis*, London: Open University Press & Sage

European Commission (2003) *Eurobarometer: Public Opinion in the European Union*. No.58 Brussels: European Commission

Fairclough, N. (2001) The discourse of new labour: Critical discourse analysis. In Margaret Wetherell, Stephanie Taylor, & Simeon Yates (eds), *Discourse as data. A guide for analysis*, London: Open University Press & Sage

Fakiolas, R. (1999) Socio-economic effects of immigration in Greece, *Journal of European Social Policy*, Vol. 9, p211-229

Fakiolas, R. (2003) *North to South Migration at the end of the 20th Century: The Greek experience of immigration from the North*, Institute of International Economic Relations, From the International Economy to the Global Economy Conference, Athens, September 19-21

Faubion, J. (1993) *Modern Greek Lessons: A Primer in Historical Constructivism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press

Foucault, M. (2000) *Domain*, in Du Gay, P. and Redman, P. (eds) *Identity: A Reader*, London: Open University Press & Sage

Galasinska, A. and Galasinski, D. (2003) Discursive strategies for coping with sensitive topics of the other, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 5, pp. 849-863

Gans, H.J. (1994) Symbolic ethnicity and symbolic religiosity: towards a comparison of ethnic and religious acculturation, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 17, pp. 577-592

Goffman, E. (1981) *Forms of Talk*. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press

Hatziprokopiou, P. (2003) Albanian immigrants in Thessaloniki, Greece: processes of economic and social incorporation, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 6, pp. 1033-1057

Henriques, J (1984) Social psychology and the politics of racism IN Henriques, J., Hollway, W., Urwin, C., Venn, C. and Walkerdine, V. *Changing the Subject*, London: Methuen

Heritage, J. (2001) Goffman, Garfinkel and Conversation Analysis IN Wetherell, M., Taylor, S., Yates, S. J. (eds) *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader*, London: Sage

Herzfeld, M. (1986) *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology and the Making of Modern Greece*. New York: Pella

King, A. (2000) Thinking with Bourdieu Against Bourdieu: A 'Practical' Critique of the Habitus, *Sociological Theory*, 18:3, pp. 417-433

Kogan, S.M. and Gale, J.E. (1997) Decentering Therapy: Textual Analysis of a Narrative Therapy Session, *Family Process*, Vol. 36, pp. 101-126

Koulouri, C. (2003) The nation celebrates without remembering, *To Vima*, November 2

Lianos, Th. P. (2003) Hair and bristle: it is unfair for Greek society to be accused of being racist, *To Vima*, November 2

Mitchell, K. (1997) Transnational Discourse: Bringing Geography back in, *Antipode*, Vol. 29, No. 2, pp 101-114

NSSG (National Statistical Service of Greece) *Statistical Yearbook 2001*, Athens

Potter, G. (2000) For Bourdieu, Against Alexander: Reality and Reduction, *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 30:2, pp. 235-246

Psicharis, S.P. (2003) Who are the Greeks, *To Vima*, October 26

Rovinsco, M. (2004) *Conceptualising Space and Identity in the debate on Cosmopolitanism: Collective Belonging and Boundaries in the EU*, Working Paper presented at the Cosmopolitanism and Europe Conference, London: Royal Holloway

Sigelman, L., Welch, S. (1993) The Contact Hypothesis Revisited: Black-White Interaction and Positive Racial Attitudes, *Social Forces*, Vol. 71, No. 3, pp. 781-795

Smith, A.D. (1996) The Resurgence of Nationalism? Myth and Memory in the Renewal of Nations, *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol.47, No.4, pp. 575-598

Smith, H. (2003) Greece tackles its image as a state of racists, *The Guardian*, November 11

Stevens, R. (eds) (1996) *Understanding the Self*, London: Open University Press & Sage.

Somers, M.R. (1994) The narrative constitution of identity: a relational and network approach, *Theory and Society*, Vol. 23, pp. 605-649

Souliotis, M. (2003) Hurt grandfathers, sensitive grandchildren, *To Vima*, November 2

Triadafyllidou, A. (1998) National identity and the “Other”, *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, Vol. 21, pp. 593-613

Triandafyllidou, A. and Veikou, M. (2002) The hierarchy of Greekness – ethnic and national identity consideration in Greek immigration policy, *Ethnicities*, Vol.2, No. 2, pp. 189-208

Tilburg University, European Social Value Survey 1980-1990-2000 [online] Available from: <http://spitswww.uvt.nl/web/fsw/evs/EVSN/frame.htm> [Accessed 5th July 2003].

Tusting, K., Crawshaw, R. and Callen, B. (2002) ‘I know, cos I was there’: how residence abroad students use personal experience to legitimate cultural generalisations, *Discourse & Society*, Vol. 13, No.5, pp. 651-672

Willig, C (2001) *Introducing qualitative research in Psychology: adventures in theory and method*, Buckingham: Open University Press