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'Europe' in Greece: Lay constructions of Europe in the context of Greek immigration debates

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Abstract

In this paper, we analyse discourses about Europe in Greek debates about immigration and citizenship and highlight the complexities of 'Europeanness' as a symbolic resource for argumentation in these debates. Our data consist of lay discourses from two rounds of online public deliberation (2009/2010 and 2015) about a controversial new citizenship law in Greece. Our analysis shows that Europe is an ambivalent category. On the one hand, Europe symbolises progress, but, on the other hand, it is also constructed in terms of decline and 'contamination' by multiculturalism. Further, our analysis shows that the category of Europe can be mobilised in contradictory ways, in order to support arguments for *and* against citizenship rights for migrants. The paper concludes with a discussion of the ways in which constructions of Europe are implicated in processes of othering and inclusion in the context of current immigration debates.

Key words: Greece; Europe; citizenship; immigration; East-West

GREEK CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Greek citizenship law has been based on the principle of origin (Christopoulos, 2013). Representations of Greek national identity are particularly ethnicised (Kadianaki & Andreouli, 2015; Andreouli, Kadianaki & Xenitidou, 2017). Also, migrants are represented as aggressive, criminal (Figgou et al., 2011; Sapountzis et al., 2006) and illegal (Figgou, 2015), with Muslim minorities being particularly othered, to a large extent, due to the significance of Orthodox Christianity for Greek identity (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2009).

Nevertheless, in 2010, just before the first Greek 'bailout' was agreed, the Greek government passed new law extending migrants' rights to Greek citizenship. The legislation targeted particularly second generation migrant children who could now become Greek citizens through birth in Greece or upon successful completion of six years of Greek schooling. The new law was heavily disputed both in public (Kadianaki & Andreouli, 2015) and in political (Figgou, 2015) debates. It was passed by parliament, but it was annulled in early 2013. Following an appeal, the State Council deemed that the law was unconstitutional on several grounds, including that it did not ensure naturalised citizens' strong bonds with the Greek nation. An amended draft legislation became law in 2015. The 2015 law was much less debated, possibly due to the fact that it was more conservative and aimed to address the grounds of the previous annulment and possibly also because, five years later, the time was more ripe for this political change.

Our study presents an analysis of both the 2009/2010 and 2015 online public deliberations about these laws, focusing particularly on the ways that the category of Europe is mobilised in arguments for and against immigration.

GREECE AND EUROPE

We consider the categories 'Europe' and 'European' as discursive constructions, which are ideologically loaded and rooted in the history and politics of the continent. The distinction between the 'East' and the 'West' has been central in constructions of Europe – with the West being represented as the core of Europe, while the East being historically othered. This has been famously observed by Said (1995) in his study of colonial European Orientalism, which constructed the Orient as the polar opposite of Europe: as backward, inferior and uncivilised. In more recent times, this hierarchical representation of Europe took the form of a distinction between 'communist Eastern Europe' and 'democratic Western Europe' – which is based on the more basic distinction between modernity and tradition and still persists in the post-Cold War era (Stenning & Horschelmann 2008).

While Greece has not been part of communist Eastern Europe, its geographical location in the east of Europe and its history of Ottoman occupation have positioned it at the margins of Europe. In her review of social psychological research on European identity, Chrysoschoou (2014) notes that European identity is not equally accessible to all Europeans and that being recognised as European depends on where one's nation stands in relation to Europe's 'power structure'. So, for example French nationals have been shown to construct the French nation as prototypical European, while Greeks see Greece as less prototypical. This suggests that while for the French and other Western Europeans, being part of Europe is a given, for Greeks it is a precarious identity, because Greece is not considered as sufficiently developed. This taken-for-granted superiority of the West can be described as an instance of 'banal Occidentalism', understood as a set of representational resources which reproduce a hegemonic distinction between the 'West' and the 'Rest' (Bozatzis, 2014).

In Greece, this Orientalist thinking takes the form of 'Oriental cultural pollution' (Bozatzis, 2009). Greece is represented as essentially or historically European (due the historical significance of classical Greece as the 'cradle of European civilisation'), but also as tainted by Oriental influences, namely the Ottoman Empire. This ambivalent positioning represents political projects that, in the

history of the Greek state, have favoured either strong ties to the West or to the East. Further, this ambivalence has become part and parcel of Greek national identity, entailing a double moral accountability dilemma: avoiding 'xenophobia' (i.e. expressing unfavourable views towards others without sufficient warrant), on the one hand, and avoiding 'xenomania' (i.e. expressing unwarranted favouritism towards countries and cultural practices of the West), on the other (Bozatzi, 2009).

The relationship of Greece to Europe has been particularly 'shaken' since late 2009. In the context of severe financial problems, several Greek governments over the past few years have negotiated 'bailout' deals with the 'troika' of European Commission, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund. The austere conditions attached to the bailouts and the continuing economic crisis in Greece have created the grounds for the contestation of the meanings of Europe and its relation with Greece. This recent problematisation of national and European identities has exerted immense influence on political developments in Greece. It is noteworthy that the leftist SYRIZA government that took power in 2015 did so on an anti-austerity and Eurosceptic platform that emphasised national pride and sovereignty. Taking under consideration this complex socio-historical context, in this paper, we explore representations of Europe in public debates about citizenship in Greece.

METHODOLOGY

The data used in this paper are drawn from two rounds of online public deliberation about new citizenship legislation in Greece: one in 2009/2010, when the law was initially introduced, and one in 2015, when the law was amended and passed by parliament. In the 2009/2010 deliberation, the public was invited to comment on the law between 29 December 2009 and 7 January 2010. A total of 3403 comments were posted online on the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (<http://www.opengov.gr/ypes/?p=327>). The 2015 data consisted of a total of 712 comments, which were posted on the same website (<http://www.opengov.gr/ypes/?p=2634>) between 14 and 25 May 2015¹.

From the 2015 deliberation, through a search with the terms 'Europe' and 'European' and their derivatives in the Greek language (words starting with 'Ευρώπ' or 'Ευρωπ'), we extracted a total of 40 comments, all of which were used in our analysis. We followed the same procedure with the 2009/2010 deliberation and extracted a total of 585 comments. To reduce the volume of 2009/2010 data and to make them manageable for qualitative analysis, we used an online random integer generator to select 30% of the comments, that is, 176 comments. This gave us a total of 216 comments (over 74,000 words for both 2009/10 and 2015) for analysis, ranging from a few lines to a few pages long.

The vast majority of comments were posted by Greek nationals, not migrants. Given this imbalance, we decided to include only comments by Greek nationals in our analysis. The nationality of the commentators was assessed by the way the comments were signed and/or by the way in which commentators presented themselves.

Regarding analysis, we treated the two sets of data as a single corpus. This was because the small size of the 2015 dataset meant that we would not have been able to draw substantial conclusions from a comparative analysis. More fundamentally, a comparative analysis was outside the scope of our study. Our aim was to unpack and examine cultural 'common-places' in constructions of Europe. Following a rhetorical psychology approach (Billig, 1987; Billig et al., 1988), we examined, in a bottom up inductive analysis: i) recurrent themes and ways of accounting; ii) argumentative lines (more specific ways of accounting with certain rhetorical organisation and argumentative ends); and

¹ Both sets of comments are freely accessible online and are protected by a Creative Commons license, which permits their use and distribution (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/gr/>). Following Holtz, Kronberger and Wagner (2012), we consider these online comments to be forms of public behaviour; however, in respect of the principles of confidentiality and privacy, we have omitted the names and pseudonyms of commentators.

iii) cultural common-places around which argumentative lines are developed. Common-places refer to the maxims, values and ideas of a particular community in a particular epoch that constitute symbolic resources for thinking and argumentation. In analytic terms, common-places constitute “abstractions” from situated argumentative lines and they illustrate the link of any particular piece of discourse with its historical ideological context (Billig, 1987).

ANALYSIS

Overview

Our analysis indicated two main themes across the data in both 2009/10 and 2015: i) Europe (meaning Western European approaches to immigration) as the measure for assessing Greek immigration and citizenship policy; ii) Europe (again, meaning West Europe) as an example to be avoided². Both themes involve a binary opposition between Europe and Greece and implicit or explicit comparisons between the two.

Europe as the measure of Greek immigration policy

Within this theme, comparisons were mostly used *in practice* (Potter & Litton, 1985) to account for the new immigration law and the possibility of granting citizenship to migrants. Commentators constructed Greece and Europe within an Occidentalism/Orientalism framework (Bozatzi, 2009), drawing oppositions between progress (attributed to Europe) and backwardness (attributed to Greece). The argumentative lines identified within this way of accounting were elaborated around two common-place notions of Europe: ‘Enlightened Europe’ and ‘Fortress Europe’. The argumentative lines elaborated by commentators illustrated a concern with claiming European (and, by extension, Occidental) ‘identity credentials’.

‘Enlightened Europe’: In these accounts, comparison with Europe was mobilized to support migrants’ rights to citizenship. Here, Europe’s progressiveness was constructed in terms of social and political values. Commentators aspired for Greece to ‘act more European’ by adopting a European humanitarian approach on immigration and citizenship, and viewed the introduction of the new citizenship law as a step towards this end.

Extract 1³

It is a humane measure, which suits a civilized European country, and there is no need for further argumentation. What it is needed though is [for this measure] to be part of an integrated immigration policy, which will combine human rights and needs, but also the capabilities of the country. There should be an effort to incorporate this policy within a wider European policy, since this problem relates to the whole Europe. As far as [public] reactions are concerned, acute ones are to be expected, since unfortunately in our country there is a lot of racism and xenophobia. (2009)

In the extract presented above Greece is presented as xenophobic in comparison to ‘civilised’ Europe. Greece is therefore positioned as inferior to Europe in terms of its political and moral

² For the most part, references were made to Europe as a general category or to other European countries. The European Union was rarely brought up and when it was, it was mostly treated as synonymous with the general category of Europe.

³ The format and style (e.g. paragraphing, use of capital letters) of the extracts have been kept in their original form as they are in the online comments. All comments were originally posted in Greek and analysed as such; only the extracts used in this paper have been translated in English by the authors.

development. In other comments, xenophobia was presented as incompatible with the essence of Greek culture and identity.

Extract 2

It is the duty of the polity and an undeniable right of economic migrants (who fulfil the criteria of the current draft legislation) to be integrated in the electorate. ONLY this way can they get the status of the citizen with obligations and rights and, why not, also LOVE for their second home country! Exclusion is for underdeveloped societies and not for a European country, where- let us not forget democracy was born! Xenophobes deny the essence of the Greek spirit which is humanitarian and universalistic (and not a land with fences and barbed wire! (2009)

The argumentative line above, and others like it, involve a temporal comparison, that is, a distinction between modern Greece, which is seen as diverting from this idealised Greek identity, and ancient Greece, which encapsulates the essence of Greekness but also Europeanness because it cultivated the humanistic values that are now considered as an inherent part of European political culture.

'Fortress Europe': Accounts drawing a 'fortress Europe' common-place, which was more salient than 'Enlightened Europe', presented a comparison between Europe and Greece in order to oppose the proposed legislation. In these comments, European identity was constructed in terms of efficiency and order, and Greece was represented as disorganised. The image of a 'fortress Europe' with strict criteria for migrants' admission and inclusion in citizenship was counter-posed to the image of Greece as 'disorderly'.

Extract 3

Finally, I have studied a lot in the last few days in relation to this issue so that I can be certain that I have a clear view and that I am fair and I saw that all the progressed European countries have very strict rules regarding the issue of immigration, the legalisation of immigrants, and citizenship. Are we or are we not in the end [part of] Europe. Or when it suits us we are [part of Europe] and when it doesn't we are not. (2010)

Extract 3 illustrates a different representation of Europe compared to the previous subtheme. While previously Europe was constructed as 'enlightened' on the basis of its humanitarian values, here it is represented as progressed on the basis of its orderly legislation and severe rules. The way that Greece handles immigration is considered key for how far it can claim a European identity: having strict immigration rules makes it European, while failing to efficiently manage migration makes it less European. The extract alludes to Greece's 'precarious' positioning towards Europe which is not taken for granted but appears to be unsettled.

Similar lines of argument drawing on the 'fortress Europe' common-place were structured around a distinction between *ypikootita* and *ithageneia*⁴ (see Kadianaki & Andreouli, 2015). Commentators argued that Greece should follow the example of stricter European policies which secure migrants' civic rights without granting them *ithageneia*. In this way, the argument of a somewhat 'functional everydayness' (see Xenitidou, 2013) is mobilised in this dilemma, which also shows a concern with keeping the status quo (of ethnic representations of Greek identity) intact (Andreouli, Kadianaki and Xenitidou, 2017). This line of argument also shows a concern with acquiring European (and Occidental) identity 'credentials' by adopting the same practices as "the whole of Europe":

⁴ In Greek, '*ypikootita*' refers to civic citizenship and '*ithageneia*' refers to ethnic citizenship. While this distinction makes sense in everyday language, there is no legal distinction between the two terms. *Ithageneia* (not *ypikootita*) is the official term for citizenship in Greece.

Extract 4

Regrettably, ypikootita [civic citizenship] has been equated with ithageneia [ethnic citizenship], you are playing with words. Ypikootita refers simply to the political bond between the citizen and the state, whereas ithageneia refers to the political bond between the citizen and the state in which he belongs!! Namely, his state, his home country. And why, while in the whole of Europe they grant citizenship...we are so generous and we give ithageneia? (2015)

The commentator in Extract 5 presents a seemingly balanced account arguing both for granting some political rights to migrants and excluding them on ethno-cultural grounds. In other words, this distinction is used as a resource for appealing to reasonableness and tolerance whilst, at the same time, maintaining a narrow ethnic understanding of Greekness. Appealing to Europe, as an ideal of progress and rationality in this context, is used to add further backing to this argument.

Another line of arguing was that Greece, following other democratic European countries, should hold a referendum about the new law.

Extract 5

WE FIRST HAVE TO DECIDE HOW MANY WE WANT SO THAT THEY AND US BOTH LIVE DECENTLY AND THEN DECIDE WHETHER WE SHOULD GIVE POLITICAL RIGHTS. I TOTALLY DISAGREE WITH THE ESSENCE OF THE LEGISLATION AND I DEMAND THAT THE PEOPLE DECIDE FOR SUCH AN IMPORTANT ISSUE. THIS WAY WE WILL OPEN THE BAG OF AEOLUS⁵. PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD WILL COME TO GREECE TO GET A EUROPEAN PASSPORT. I WONDER WHY WE DON'T DO WHAT OTHER EUROPEANS DO AND DECIDE AS OTHER EUROPEANS WITH A REFERENDUM. IT IS UNACCEPTABLE, IN THE COUNTRY THAT DEMOCRACY WAS BORN, THAT REFERENDA ARE NOT HELD FOR SO IMPORTANT ISSUES. (2009)

Appeals to holding a referendum about the new law, as an expression of direct democracy, were very common in our data. Extract 5 is a rather typical comment calling for a referendum whilst arguing against the new law. What is interesting about this comment, and others like it, is that there is an appeal to democratic institutions but, paradoxically, with exclusionary ends. In this extract, Europe is positioned as more democratic than Greece, because other European countries are said to hold referenda for such serious matters. That Greece, the birthplace of democracy, has not held a referendum is described as unacceptable and it is used to position Greece as 'different' from the European norm. Restricting migrants' citizenship is, indirectly, constructed as democratic and, hence, as morally right.

Europe as an example to be avoided

A second theme in our data was Europe as an example to be avoided. Here, we also identified two main lines of argument. According to the first, drawing on a 'Greek exceptionalism' common-place, European policies should not be implemented in Greece because it constitutes an exceptional case. According to the second line of argument, drawing on a 'failed (European) multiculturalism' common place, European immigration policies have failed and should not therefore be adopted in Greece.

Greek exceptionalism: A number of issues were identified here. Greece was differentiated from Europe due to its particular immigration history and location. Commentators referred to the colonial past of European countries, which were represented as having occupied and damaged their

⁵ In Greek mythology, Aeolus is the 'lord of the winds'. According to myth, Aeolus helped Odysseus find his way back home to Ithaca by putting the winds he controlled in a bag. In Greek, 'opening the bag of Aeolus' is used to describe a risky course of action that is bound to unleash a series of negative events.

former colonies. Hence, while Europeans were seen as having a moral obligation to compensate for this historical oppression by accepting migrants from these countries, Greeks were seen as having no such obligation to implement similar migrant-friendly policies.

Extract 6

I couldn't agree more with the previous speaker [name] who has lived abroad. The English for example, as well as the French, the Spanish, the Portuguese, the Dutch etc. were colonisers and they still retain economic and political ties of a "Commonwealth" type with countries of the developing world that swear allegiance to Queen Elizabeth. They also have played a dominant role in the wars that have impoverished Iraq and Afghanistan.

Why should we be equated with them and pay the bill for them, by following a PROVEN FAILED policy of alleged "integration" of non-Europeans and illegal immigrants? When hordes of pregnant women come and give birth here, will we naturalise their children, making them "Greeks" ... and then? Will we then send the whole family back? Or will we say to the baby you can stay (2010)

In the extract above, Greece's ambivalent position towards the West becomes evident (see Herzfeld, 1997). The commentator initially employs an anti-expansionist and anti-Western ideology of non-interference to criticise Western foreign policy. At the same time, the commentator employs an anti-immigration and anti-multiculturalism narrative that sees non-European migrants as numerous, culturally incompatible and illegal. Thus, Greece is subtly positioned as both non-Western and as European. There is also an interesting 'ideological patchwork' here: the former argument is usually employed within a social justice agenda to argue for the rights of less powerful countries; the latter is more evidently exclusionary. In this extract, both these ideological frameworks are combined to argue against extending citizenship rights to migrants. A similar ideological ambivalence is also found in anti-austerity discourses in Greece, which combine a critique of hegemonic neoliberalism with an ethnocentric historical narrative with xenophobic undertones (Theodossopoulos, 2014).

Another salient issue was Greece's geographical position as the most eastern part of Europe. It was argued that Greece's sea borders cannot be guarded efficiently, which results in increased numbers of (illegal) migrants compared to the rest of Europe. Greek exceptionalism was often attributed to the fact that Greece borders with non-European and/or Muslim countries (like Turkey and Albania), from or through which migrants come to Greece. Particularly Turkey was represented as posing a threat to Greece's sovereignty, as the following extract illustrates.

Extract 7

Firstly I would like to underline the fact that many people tend to make comparisons with other countries. This is wrong, because each country has its specific features that we must take into account and we shouldn't even up everything. No other European country borders with a Muslim country of 80 million people. (2010)

'Failed (European) multiculturalism': Another line of argument, within the theme of Europe as an example to be avoided, was based on a 'failed (European) multiculturalism' common-place, particularly on the idea that the European approach to immigration has been 'too soft'. Commentators argued that multiculturalism in (Western) Europe has failed and, therefore, Greece should not follow the European example, but it should try to preserve its national culture. Often alongside this argument, commentators referred to the threat posed to Europe and to Greece by Islamic fundamentalism and by Islamic lifestyle in general. Commentators did not aspire for Greece to follow the European example, but they argued for Greece to 'act less European'.

Extract 8

(...) If this massive invasion continues we will come to take about population replacement. I wouldn't even want to imagine that all these people would suddenly be entitled without any strict criteria to be considered with just a stamp, Greek citizens. Without a strict process about their quality, their beliefs (extreme Islamists), because let's not forget that the experiment of multiculturalism only succeeds in severely policed societies, like e.g. the American, not in counties with loose criteria like e.g. Sweden where they break the records of rapes every year with perpetrators mainly Muslim illegal immigrants. Let's not forget the mentality of many Muslims about Sharia and democracy. Let's not forget that in regions where they are more Muslims women are automatically tuned into animals. Which is awful for Greek society (...) The Muslim jihadists who decapitate children or prisoners, many of whom are European citizens (possibly with citizenship) with education perhaps better than the Greek. But they didn't have PROPER UPBRINGING and this is not the fault of the polity but of the FAMILY, the CULTURE, the MENTALITY, their NON INTEGRATION (...) (2015)

In the extract above, the argument against citizenship rights for migrants is based on a presumed threat coming from Muslims in Europe. Muslims are represented as extremists, terrorists, criminals, as oppressing women and generally as undemocratic, uncivilised and very dangerous. In this very damning portrayal of Muslims, Islam is constructed as completely incompatible with Greek and European identities, and efforts to integrate Muslims into European societies are considered as doomed to fail. In this account, multiculturalism is presented as an unsuccessful European experiment, one which Greece should not attempt. In this account, therefore, Greece is positioned in opposition to both Europe (and should reject European multiculturalism) and Islam (which is presented as culturally inferior and 'other').

Extract 9

I wasn't asked about the massive influx of foreigners in my country...

And you come retrospectively and coercively and grant the status of the Greek citizen to little children of foreigners with 5 years of residence in my country.

And I ask: The little Muslim child who applies Islamic law in its home, to what extent has it been integrated to our society? If you don't know, ask your colleagues in Britain, France, Sweden, and you'll find out. They form ghettos!! And the children that were born in a European country, to a large extent, say that they would like the Islamic law to be applied in the country. (2015)

In this comment, European multiculturalism, epitomised in British, French and Swedish policies is seen as failed due to an inherent incompatibility of European and Muslim cultures. Muslims are seen as the prototypical example of cultural otherness, forming ghettos and separating themselves from mainstream society. In this culturally essentialist understanding, the failure of European multiculturalism is solely and unquestionably attributed to Muslims' cultural practices and values. This was not the only way that migrants' agency was mobilised in arguments about the failure of multiculturalism. In our data, we also found instances of conspiracy theorising, which constructed Europe's 'Islamification' as an intentional well designed project – as is also hinted at the extract above ('they would like Islamic law to be applied in the country').

DISCUSSION

Greece has been at the forefront of discussions around the refugee 'crisis', as it has been the first point of entry for most refugees from the Middle East into Europe in 2015-16. At the same time, Greece's relations with Europe have been strained, due to the controversial 'bailouts' that the country has received by its partners in the European Union. Taking these recent developments under consideration, this paper has explored the ways in which discourses about immigration and discourses about Europe relate to each other in two online public deliberations (2009/2010 and 2015) about immigration and citizenship in Greece.

The scope of our analysis has some limitations. While our online data can be seen as a natural form of communication (Holtz, Kronberger & Wagner, 2012), our sample is not representative, as it includes only people who were presumably sufficiently motivated to post comments and who had access to the internet.

Nevertheless, several conclusions can be drawn from our findings. Firstly, as anticipated, 'Europe' was almost wholly represented in terms of Western Europe, with Greece occupying an ambivalent position as potentially European and non-European. Both identities could be drawn upon to argue for or against extending citizenship rights to migrants. For example, many commentators argued that Greece should be 'more European'. But this could mean being more open to migrant rights, or it could mean implementing stricter immigration policies. In both cases Europe was seen as epitomising an ideal of progress, either in terms of its humanitarian values, or in terms of its efficiency and discipline. In these accounts, Greece was positioned as 'lacking Europeanness'. In Said's (1995) terms, Greece was seen through Orientalist lenses, in a way that maintained a hegemonic ideological distinction between a superior West and an inferior East (Bozatzis, 2014). Interestingly, in some of these accounts, Europe was constructed as essentially Greek, because it was seen as based on the ancient Greek civilisation. By becoming more European in its handling of immigration, modern Greece would therefore also become more Greek.

Greece was not always seen as part of the category of Europe; it was also particularised as a special case (Billig, 1987). Most frequently, it was Greece's geographical position at the borders of Europe that was presented as distinguishing it from other European countries and making it more vulnerable to a 'Muslim threat', particularly from Turkey. At the same time, (Western) European multiculturalism policies were criticised for creating ghettoised societies under the threat of Islamic fundamentalism. In stark contrast with accounts which stressed European values of tolerance and humanitarianism, in these accounts, European multicultural societies were seen as failed societies. In these cases, commentators argued for Greece to act 'less European'. Therefore, while a general East-West bipolar narrative was evident in the data, this was not necessarily a simple distinction between a valued ideal of Western progress and Eastern backwardness. Europe was at the same time idealised and demystified.

Our study examined common-sensical cultural themes, which constitute the symbolic resources around which arguments are developed. These 'common-places' were recurrent in both 2009/10 and 2015. More research, however, is needed to explore the extent to which specific meanings in constructions of Europe may have changed over time, alongside changes in Greece's relation to the European Union. Some quantitative data suggest that changes in how Europe is represented may have taken place recently (particularly following the 'refugee crisis' and the controversial referendum on Greece's bailout terms, both of which took place a little after the 2015 deliberation that we analysed). For instance, Eurobarometer data from autumn 2009 show that 38% of Greeks did not trust the EU, compared to 81% in the end of 2015 (Eurobarometer 2009, 2015).

We conclude with a consideration of some broader implications that can be drawn from our study. Our analysis shows the connection between national and transnational European identities in the politics of immigration and citizenship. We have shown that inclusion or exclusion from the national community is not limited to discourses around the Greek nation and its identity. Rather, 'immigration management' appears to also be related to how Greece is positioned internationally, particularly in comparison to other European countries. As Billig (1995) has explained in his thesis of 'banal nationalism', national identities are simultaneously inward looking (attending to internal politics of identity construction) and outward looking (attending to the politics of international comparisons). This tension between particularism and universalism is at the core of ideological constructions of nationhood in modern nation-states. However, the balance between the two 'poles' is not a given. It can be argued that current political debates have rekindled this ideological dilemma between national independence and international association. Recent events in Western societies, for example the UK Brexit vote and the general rise of nation-centred and populist political discourse

may be indicators that, in current politics, the balance between the two is being redrawn and reconfigured with more emphasis on nationalism than internationalism.

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