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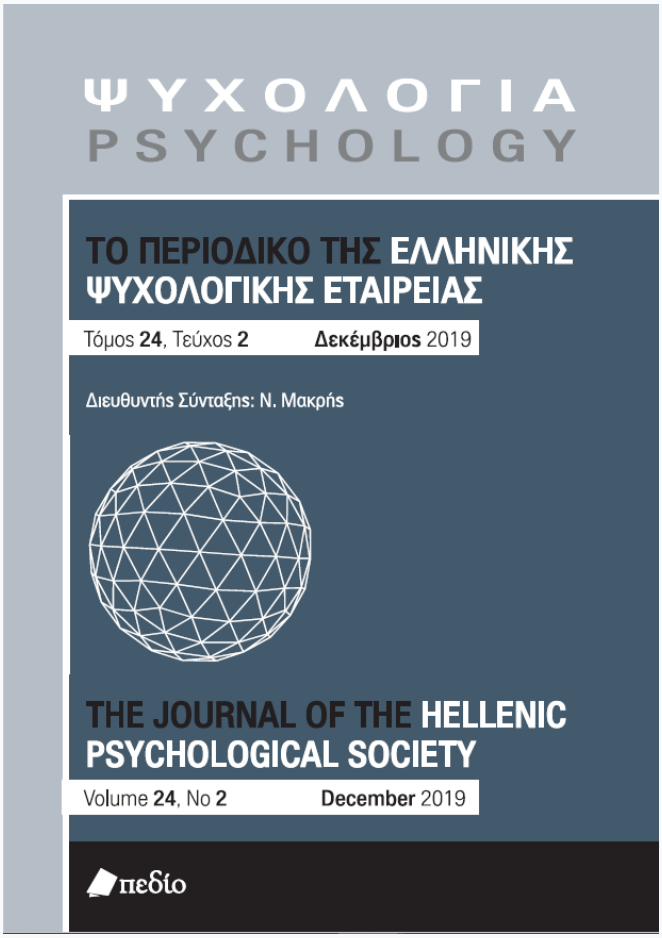

Space as a Resource and Implication of (Inter)group Relations and Rights: Analyzing Discourse on the Refugee Issue in Greece

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Space as a Resource and Implication of (Inter)group Relations and Rights: Analyzing Discourse on the Refugee Issue in Greece

Anastasia Zisakou[1] & Lia Figgou[1]

ABSTRACT

This study aims at exploring the way in which constructions of space and identity are mobilized in interviews on refugees' reception and entitlements in Greece. Our analytic material was derived from individual semi-structured interviews conducted with 19 people of Greek nationality in Thessaloniki, while the analysis has been based on the principles of critical discursive social psychology. Analysis indicated the multiple ways that participants have available to construct the intersection of place identity and intergroup relations. On the one hand, proximity and contact with refugees were represented as a potentially justified basis for reactions against their settlement and integration. Intergroup distance and separation (ghettoization), on the other hand, were treated as a sufficient condition of anomy on the part of the refugees, and, by implication, as a source of problematic intergroup relations. Furthermore, analysis showed that constructions of "insider" and "outsider" coincided with symbolic boundaries, while bio-political strategies, introduced through recourse to space limitation and scarcity of material resources, were employed to articulate arguments which supported the restriction of refugees' entitlements.

Keywords: Discourse analysis, intergroup relations, Place identity, Refugees, Entitlements

Since early 2015 about one million people (coming mainly from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq) entered the Greek territories with the intention of traveling through the adjacent Balkan countries towards Northern and Western Europe (UNHCR, 2015). A series of political developments in Europe, including the sealing of borders with Greece by key Balkan countries and the common statement between EU and Turkey[2] (18 March 2016) impaired the movement of people and converted Greece to a "host" country for a significant part of the refugee population. Although in the beginning EU approached the phenomenon as a "humanitarian crisis" and facilitated the relocation of (certain numbers of) refugees within member states, by the common statement with Turkey it clarified its will to refrain refu-

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2. Under the EU- Turkey agreement "[a]ll new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey into Greek islands as from 20 March 2016 will be returned to Turkey" and "[f]or every Syrian being returned to Turkey from Greek islands, another Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to the EU" (European Council, 18/03/2016).

gees from entering its borders. Preceding institutional practices that facilitated the entry to Europe gave way to increasingly strict policies of control which were predicated on already established discourses of security and risk (Figgou, Sapountzis, Bozatzis, Gardikiotis, & Pantazis, 2011; Figgou, Sourvinou, & Anagnostopoulou, 2018) and which differentiated between refugee and immigrant population or even between deserving and undeserving 'refugees' (see also Andreouli & Dashtipour, 2014; Crawley & Skleparis, 2017). Similarly, in Greece, where according to Amnesty International (2016), almost 60.000 refugees have been trapped, solidarity acts towards people who risked their life in the Aegean Sea, have been followed by concerns on the newcomers' integration. In particular, Greece's financial position has been used as an explanatory resource in the public debate regarding Greek society's potential to afford immigrants or refugees (see also Bossis & Lampas, 2018). In this context, many of the institutional or lay discourses portray Greece as unable to host or/and integrate the refugee population the number of which is represented as disproportionate to the spatial and the economic capacity of the country (Figgou, 2014).

This paper aims to explore the ways in which Greek people represent refugees' reception and entitlements in Greece. It focuses, in particular, on the use of spatial formulations in participants' discourse and on their implications on the construction of intergroup relations (Di Masso, Dixon, & Durrheim, 2014). Following previous studies on space identity and group contact (e.g., Di Masso, 2012, 2015; Dixon & Durrheim, 2000; Taylor & Wetherell, 1999), the study attempts to highlight the importance of the spatial dimension of identity and rights implemented through historically specific and culturally available resources (Low, 2001). It also investigates the ways in which people re-establish intergroup boundaries by discursively constituting certain official and unofficial 'plans of action' and by constructing their material environment (Di Masso et al., 2014). In other words, it explores the interplay between the constitution of symbolic group boundaries and constructions of space limitation and material resources' scarcity.

Immigration and Place Identity[3]

It is a truism to say that global population movements challenge established identities and territorial boundaries. The previously entrenched and homogeneous national spaces become places of residence or transition for migrant populations, inciting uncertainty about the opening of the confined territory (Tsoukalas, 2010). Currently, more and more people live in a precarious situation of (dis) installation in/from a place or as Malkki (1997, p. 71-72) put it, in a "*generalized condition of homelessness*". Postmodern subjectivities are marked by an increasingly globalized but at the same time increasingly unstable network

3. It should be noted that the terms 'space' and 'place' are used in the text interchangeably (following the way in which the construct is termed in the research that is cited) as the authors assume that the two constructs have complementary meanings. As Agnew (2011) suggested, discussion of location/space, as opposed to place, is a modern concern, since "in the seventeenth century place became subordinated to space (and both to time) and it has only become tentatively rehabilitated in the twentieth century" (p. 319). According to the same account in the 1970s and 1980s this conception of place underwent a significant revival in geography due to a rejection of the positivist (law-finding) pretensions of spatial analysis but more was due to the insight that the term place carries with it not only the meaning of spatial location but also those of social position and moral order. More recently, special effort in geography has gone into trying to theoretically overcome the historic gap between the two senses of place, bringing space and place together (op.cit, p. 324).

of humans, relationships, products, policies and discourses.

Within conditions of mobility and fluidity, though, people still develop a multiplicity of attachments to places through living in, remembering and imagining them. Displacement, deterritorialization of the global interconnectedness and territorial insecurity influence in different ways the identity of people (Kibreab, 1999) and activate processes of continuous redefinition. This ability of people to change the established spatial orders, either through mobility or through *"their own conceptual and political acts of reimagination"*, emphasizes, according to other authors, the need to approach space and place as sociopolitical constructions instead of simple physical entities (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Harvey, 2006; Soja, 1989). Nevertheless, place-identity remains a largely unexplored topic and both everyday and social scientific discourse, more often than not, tends to take for granted a 'natural' relationship between spatial and national divisions and reproduces them in a banal way (Billig, 1995). The distinctiveness of nations and societies (let alone cultures) is grounded on a seemingly unproblematic space discontinuity (see also Hannerz, 2009; Malkki, 1997).

In contrast to this tendency Gupta and Ferguson (1992) put forward that the fragmented space which is created by dividing the world into nations constitutes a system of hierarchically organized spaces and by focusing on "*the spatial distribution of hierarchical power relations"* we can understand the processes through which a space achieves a unique identity. Therefore, the notion of being a substantial part of a place defines locality and community. This means that the way that people talk about their particular place experiences constructs specific versions of spatiality (proximity, locality and so on), determines the imagery of participation to a society and has political and social effects. Place making processes are harmonized with and are integral part of identity processes, defining subject by means of a "self-within-place" (Hugh-Jones & Madill, 2009). Hence, place identity is constituted by the intersection of hierarchically organized spaces and cultural constructions of community and belonging.

This hierarchization of spaces comes from a differentiation process in which 'our community' is considered different from other communities. On the other hand, particular constructions of national space create compatible or incompatible identities, presenting places as mutable and capable to legitimize or delegitimize people's presence (Charteris-Black, 2006; Kirkwood, McKinlay, & McVittie, 2013; Rheindorf & Wodak, 2018). The construction of Greece in the public rhetoric on the recent refugee movement as a "transit" country, for example, has different connotations and potential implications in comparison to its constitution as a "reception" country. In circumstances in which national subjects are struggling for the imaginary preservation of the nation, incompatible identities are based on the establishment of the fear of 'the other', while the politics of fear construct non-national "others" as threatening entities for the ingroup (Zembylas, 2010).

Therefore, population movements seem to restore the request for closed and preserved territories (Tsoukalas, 2010), which are on the verge of constructing and deconstructing complementary inclusive/exclusive identities. More specifically, place identity constructions in the context of refugees' recent arrival regard refugees as an international problem and danger (e.g., Figgou et al., 2011; Kirkwood et al., 2013). This symbolic danger personifies the people who do not fit and who represent a *matter out of place* (Douglas, 1966 as cited in Malkki, 1997) and it usually induces state implementation of segregation politics, restricting refugees in *territorialized spaces* (Kibreab, 1999). These mechanisms of displacement and localization of "the other" produce and demarcate political communities (Athanasiou & Tsimouris, 2013). Hence, in this uncertain

condition, the need for the construction of a place identity shapes discursively a unity that cannot ontologically allow the presence of 'the other', who belongs to culturally and ethnically distinct territorial locations (Kibreab, 1999; Rheindorf & Wodak, 2018). Moreover, it legitimates exclusion, denial of rights and particular forms of sociospatial organization (Wallwork & Dixon, 2004). In this way, culture itself is considered to be a territorialized concept that gives the right to exclude others from the territory (Kibreab, 1999).

In this context of constant exclusion and inclusion processes, place identity has a double function; first it offers a sense of belonging to places and, second, it legitimizes discursively particular social practices and state policies (Di Masso, 2012, 2015; Dixon & Durrheim, 2000). Place identity is not only derived from the individual perception of the lived space -creating *"a phenomenological sense of one's place in the world"*-, but also stems from the process of self-determination in which belonging designates *"an ideological location"* from which it is possible to identify the *"in place"* and the *"out-of-place"* (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000). Consequently, both intergroup relations and social space are not neutral conceptions. Instead, they contribute to citizenship formulations and include the transformation of individuals to political subjects (Di Masso, 2012; Dixon, 2001). The politics of public space control, monitoring and restriction have intensified particular intergroup tensions and have created new forms of citizenship, based on spatial representations (see Stevenson, Dixon, Hopkins, & Luyt, 2015 for current approaches to citizenship, participation and exclusion within social psychology). The social construction and the intersubjective constitution of spaces (as familiar/unfamiliar, opened/confined/closed, hostile/friendly), where various social groups unfold their actions and develop dynamic interactions, constitute social norms and identities which in turn exert further influence on space formulations.

In the study of spatial constructions and immigration, spatial metaphors have a prominent role. According to Peace (2001), there are distinctive metaphors associated with social exclusion discourse some of which reflect the spatiality of exclusion. Previous studies have focused both on immigrants' metaphors and spatial metaphors of exclusion about immigration in public discourse. These studies analyze different kinds of spatial metaphors representing immigration as a tide (Cunningham-Parmeter, 2011; Hart, 2007; O'Brien, 2003; Santa Ana, 1999), invasion (Charteris-Black, 2006; Cunningham-Parmeter, 2011; O'Brien, 2003; Santa Ana, 1999) or flood (Cunningham-Parmeter, 2011; Dervinytė, 2009; Hart, 2007; O'Brien, 2003; Santa Ana, 1999;), and national/European space as a container (Bowskill, Lyons, & Coyle, 2007; Charteris-Black, 2006) or house (Hart, 2007). Finally, Çağlar (2001) in her study on the zoning regulations in Berlin superbly highlighted how spatial metaphors and ghettoization discourses stigmatize minorities and spatialize exclusion and belonging.

Hence, in the above cited research space is proved to be a particularly useful interpretative tool for studying belonging, rights and entitlements. Aspects of national identity and belonging are considered to be constituted rhetorically by *"putting ourselves in place"* and by *"affirming sociospatial ideals"* (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000; Wallwork & Dixon, 2004). This paper aims at contributing to the above literature by attempting to map the ways in which space identity, group rights and intergroup relations are constructed in a specific context. Specifically, it explores the ways in which place identity constitutes and is being constituted by rights and entitlements in discourse on the refugee issue in Greece. Our interest is to contribute to the social scientific dialogue on the constructions of "space identity" by investigating not only how are these constructions filtered by the historical representations of a specific nation as imagined

community but also how they are related to (inter)national (and more specifically European) policies on the refugee issue.

Background to the Study and Method

Participants and Interviews

In 2016, attempts to integrate refugee students in Greek schools raised various responses including some furious reactions on the part of people who were self-identified as parents' associations. These reactions took place in different cities all around the country and they were mostly expressed by organizing 'protests', keeping Greek children at home or threatening to occupy school buildings until the definite expulsion of refugees from schools. Our study was conducted within this context, with the reactions of a parent's association of a school in West Thessaloniki to be at the center of public discussion. It took place in different neighborhoods of West Thessaloniki in the period of November to December 2016. Participants were citizens of Greek nationality (7 men and 12 women, aged between 22-56 years), holding different professional and educational status. They were initially reached through personal contacts and then a snowball procedure was followed.

Interviews were conducted in the interviewees' home or place of work. They were semi- structured and organized around four main themes: a) solidarity movements and groups against refugees, b) refugee integration and integration of refugee children in school, c) European and national policies for refugees and immigrants and d) refugee/immigrant representations. Interviews lasted from 40 to 90 minutes approximately; they were recorded and fully transcribed.

Analytic Method

Analysis draws on discursive (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Edwards, 1999) and critical discursive psychology (McKinley & McVittie, 2008; Wetherell, 1998). Discursive psychology is an *"action-oriented"* analytic method and it examines the way in which the realities are constructed by people in interaction as stable and unique (Potter, 1996). At the same time, the discursive approach seeks to map how varying ways of *"discursively locating the self may fulfill varying social and rhetorical functions"* (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000, p. 33). Especially in our analysis we examined how our participants 'locate' the national subject, what consequences this location has to refugee and immigrant and how place constructions are *"discursively grounding particular versions of identity"* (Wallwork & Dixon, 2004, p. 26). Critical discursive social psychology, on the other hand, apart from exploring the orientation of discourse to the local interactional context, it also involves an emphasis on power and ideology in at least two ways. Firstly, it is interested to relate actual discourse to historically constituted social representations and secondly, it aims at exploring the potential macrosocial implications of discourse "*in action*" (McKinley & McVittie, 2008; Wetherell, 1998).

The first stage of the analysis involved coding of the interview transcripts and extracting from the corpus of data all of the relevant extracts in which place metaphors and spatial categories were used by the participants. The second stage involved both the identification of common ground (recurrent patterns) within the analytic material as well as the consideration of variability and mapping of specific argumentative lines. Finally, analysis proceeded to a focus on proximal/interactional as well as on the potential macrosocial implications of specific constructions and argumentative lines. For the purposes of the present paper, the original Greek extracts have been translated to English.

Analysis

Our analysis indicated two main recurrent patterns within which different lines of argu-

ment were mobilized. In the first one intergroup relations and identities were constituted through recourse to space proximity and co-existence or ghettoization. Minority spaces and identities were constructed through juxtaposition to those of the dominant group. In the second one, arguments about the protection of national space coincided with international practices of increasing border control and the exclusion of 'the other' by institutional boundaries. Within each of these patterns/themes the participants unfolded different argumentative lines which included different space metaphors and different ways of "*discursively locating the self"* (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000).

Minority spaces and space identity within the nation-state

Extract 1 (Space proximity to the refugees defined as a problem)

I: And why do you think these people are actually reacting?

C: Maybe they feel neglected from the state because it helps the foreigners more than the Greeks...perhaps that's the reason...I don't know...I...I::...I can provide no other explanation. Because I don't have anything [a refugee camp] close to me, so I don't have an opinion...I am not talking based on my own experience [...] I can't say what'd have happened if they were close to me ... I use third person, speaking theoretically, huh? I do not use first or second person formulations (.) I don't know how it could...what would I do (.) surely, I would never turn this down, I wouldn't be one of those people who would come out and... let's say...the so-called racists (.) no way, not this kind of thing. On the other hand, I don't know if I would be a hundred percent positive, if I would say ok, go on, go ahead. Because, I'm telling you, I'm not that close to that, I mean, I don't have someone settled down across from my own site, in the place across the street from my own house. (Chryssa, 48)

Extract 1 comes from an interview held with a 48-year old woman. Chryssa, invited by the interviewer's question, proceeds to figure out the motives behind the negative reactions. The argumentative line she unfolds includes a realistic conflict explanation, according to which unequal treatment between refugees and nationals is a potentially sufficient condition for the reactions. Unequal treatment, according to Chryssa's account, becomes salient to those people who live in neighborhoods close to the refugees and space proximity constitutes a legitimate basis to react. Space constitutes a resource that establishes two distinct groups with conflicting interests and as such, it has psychological effects, producing intergroup conflict (Wetherell, 1996, p. 204). The construction of space proximity as a condition for the reactions allows the speaker to adopt a distant footing. Living in a 'distance' from refugee spaces, makes it also possible for the speaker to keep a distance from the reactions towards them. Furthermore, it allows for the articulation of a balanced account which not only complies with the "*norm against prejudice"* but also, with the norm to avoid accusing others for being prejudiced (Augoustinos & Every 2010).

There is also a distinction between theory and practice that underlies this account ("*I use third person speaking theoretically*"). A favorable attitude towards the refugees is presented as being 'in theory'; it is trivialized, and it is implicitly contrasted to real 'in practice' reactions (Figgou & Condor, 2006). It is implicitly argued that people who do not live close to refugee camps embrace an idealized position of support which is not related to the lived experiences of people who live in neighbourhoods close to the refugees ("*I can't say what'd have happened if they were close to me*").

Proceeding to keep equidistant positions from 'the so called racist' and 'anti-racist' discourses on the refugee issue, Chryssa uses a well-known rhetorical formulation that prioritizes attitudes based on first-hand experience

in relation to those which are not based on the experience of proximity. In this way, she both allows room for the legitimation of reactions of those people who live close to the refugees and, by the same token, she distances herself from the reactions. Furthermore, she constructs attitudes towards the refugees as a continuum on which someone can take different positions. The extreme positions of the continuum are problematized, while the speaker claims her rationality by avoiding an unconditionally positive attitude towards the refugees (*"I don't know if I would be a hundred percent positive, if I would say ok, go on, go ahead."*).

To sum up, the speaker quoted in extract 1 creates a dichotomy between spaces 'near to' and 'far from' the refugees and constructs a one to one relation between space proximity and negative opinions. By constructing this space-opinion relation she turns down the ideological roots of racism and constructs racist opinions and practices as a by-product of the experience of proximity. Bringing the question of space to the fore and using the possessive pronoun 'my' ("*I don't have someone settled down across from my own site, in the place across the street from my own house.*") she indicates a strong notion of ownership which does not apply only to private space, but it also concerns the public space. The refugees in the line of arguing unfolded in extract 1 are not depicted as settled (or claim to be settled) in one's property or site. Their settlement in a (public) space close to one's property is constructed as an understandable threat. Public space is deemed to constitute an extension of the private space of local people and this notion of locality legitimizes protests against refugees.

The following extracts allow for further reflection on the relation between space and exclusion, making reference to an internal division of national space.

Extract 2 (Separate schools as an instrument to maintain the status quo of the dominant group)

C: This is absurd, I think... on the other side, all those tensions could never have occurred – this is just a thought of course – if they had made different schools, schools in which they [the refugee children] would be separate from the other children...that is, not to disrupt the life (.) of...of the children who are already going to school. They could come...ok...the... but there are many [refugee] children...it is not possible in a school with ninety students to bring one hundred or two hundred more (.) we will be the minority (.) it could be done something else in parallel, [they could also move students] in another place (...) I don't know (.) because eh those children are so many (.) all refugees have large families, Greeks have not. So, it will be, how shall I put it, a population difference? ... in school.

I: Hmm...

C: I think that the students who are already going to school will be the minority... (Christina, 54)

In extract 2- and in others similar to this one- the line of argument put forward by the participant advocates the creation of different structures in order to facilitate the educational integration of children in schools and to avoid tensions ("*all those tensions could never have occurred – this is just a thought of course – if they had made different schools*"). According to the participant, the majority (Greek students) should have priority, while refugees could remain separate in parallel spaces ("*it could be done something else in parallel*."). Greek students incarnate "our" interests and rights and "we" must guarantee for them the best quality education, while refugee children are an obstacle to achieve such goals, so they have to remain to "*another place"*, far away from the Greek students.

The role of the separate structures is to deposit the "excess" in a different space and their function is analogous with that of the national borders, since they contribute to a dif-

ferent kind of internal exclusion (Bergo, 2008). The fact of producing discursively places of discrimination is reflected in the ongoing demand of the modern societies about securitization (Turner, 2007) and nationally homogenous communities. The spatial restrictions, that are also obvious in the next extract, advocate the modern 'enclavement' that seeks to regulate spaces (ibid) establishing an 'enclave society' a term that refers to the building of multiple kinds of physical -external or internal- barriers against immigration and the creation of gated communities to defend citizens against urban incivility (Isin & Turner, 2007).

The participant in extract 3 mentions another type of a 'parallel' space, the detention camps. Detention camps are depicted as 'spaces of anomy', alienation and criminality.

Extract 3 (The future ghettos as a source of danger)

Y: [...] because unfortunately, in those camps there is not only one race, like Syrians...there are Afghans...e::h... how do you call them... Pakistanis...the whole world... e::h I think we're going to experience here in Greece what already happens in Europe (.) we will have ghettos next to the cities (.) ghettos of people who will live in wretched conditions (.) who will feel all of the time (.) alienated (.) from the country (.) and who, sooner or later, will react...when someone doesn't have anything to eat, when they can't have (.) they can't see no future, they will somehow try to find a way to react (.) there will be local conflicts, for sure, there will be a high rate of criminality...

I: Hmm...

Y: These phenomena will be increased (.) because there are also tremendous cultural differences (.) see what's happening in Germany, where women are disturbed and raped by foreigners... soon, such phenomena will take place here, too. (Yiorgos, 50)

Yiorgos argues that refugee and migration camps create ghettoized environments which are composed by different ethnic groups. The coexistence of members of different ethnicities is treated as 'unfortunate' and as a source of inevitable tension. Furthermore those features interlaced with the economic condition of the refugees/migrants ("*when someone doesn't have anything to eat, when they can't have (.) they can't see no future*") lead to criminality and decadence, which are again constituted as a natural/logical consequence ("*they will somehow try to find a way to react (.) there will be local conflicts, for sure, there will be a high rate of criminality...*") and as a potential reaction of any person who lives under certain conditions (Figgou, et al., 2011).

The participant uses the stereotypical cultural representation ("*see what's happening in Germany, where women are disturbed and raped by foreigners...*") of immigrants as culturally different or deviant (Reijerse, Van Acker, Vanbeselaere, Phalet, & Duriez, 2013) and he predicates his argument on 'real' events happening in other countries, instead of constituting it a personal point of view. He refers to other contexts and specifically to Germany where there are ghettoized regions outside the cities, normalizing a relation between migration and criminality (Ehrkamp, 2006; Figgou et al., 2011). By equalizing human geographies and by depicting 'ghettos' as a common European problem, the speaker constructs the out-there-ness of his arguments (Edwards & Potter, 1992).

This reference to two distinct spaces (the urban space of the city and the ghetto) gives the impression of a fragmented national space and creates a clear hierarchy between the valorized urban space and revalorized immigrant spaces (Çağlar, 2001). At the same time, it also reflects the demand to eliminate this distinct space through assimilation, normalization and 'civilization'- or destruction- of the 'uncivilized others' homogenizing the national space (Reijerse et al., 2013). The separation of Greeks and immigrants / refugees is defined according to the limitations and exclusions created by the borders and their protection. This security policy is approved due

to the 'weaknesses' of the Greek state or the 'incompatibility' of the refugees / immigrants (Kirkwood et al., 2013).

In the following extract, the concept of limited / 'small' and sufficient / 'large' space is added as a key element for Greece's ability to integrate refugees.

Protection of the national space and expulsion of 'the other'

Extract 4 ('There is not enough room for everyone')

S: Surely, they have to be dispersed to Europe, 'cause Europe is huge, our country is a small one and we can't afford all these people... but, also, Europe can put some rules and accept, let's say, those who are truly refugees, the Syrians, for example (.) or, let's say, those who come from countries where there is a state of war (.) since there is no place for everyone... for me, the ideal...the ideal would be to have enough space so everyone could come here to work, to prosper and so on...but (.) I think that (.) there is no so much space to open the borders altogether so that all the people could come here. (Stathis, 54)

This extract starts with the contrast between Greece and Europe, representing Europe as an enormous place and Greece as a small country with limited space and limited potential to afford the entrance and settlement of refugees. This contrast makes urgent the dispersion of refugees to other European countries and at the same time it contributes to the establishment of facticity of Greece's incapacity (Figgou, 2014). The boundaries of the country shape a closed space with limited opportunities the people who live in it. The construction of the space as a 'closed container' (Charteris-Black, 2006) is the basic argumentative line which makes refugees' deportation appearing fair and inevitable (Every & Augoustinos, 2008).

In accordance with the argument of space scarcity, the participant points out the necessity to restrict 'illegal migration' ("*Europe can put some rules and accept, let's say, those who are truly refugees, the Syrians, for example*") so economic migrants would not be allowed to exploit the refugee system (Andreouli, 2010; Louis, Duck, Terry, Schuller, & Lalonde, 2007). The rash of restrictive social policies in industrial nations has been associated with arguments that refugee programs are being unfairly abused by 'bogus' asylum seekers who constitute a danger to the cohesion of European societies (Louis et al., 2007; Karolewski, 2010; Kirkwood et al., 2013). Therefore, the social management of the population, which constitutes predominantly a bio-politic strategy[4] (see also Ong, 2006), is grounded on the space identity.

The extract above describes the need of control due to the size and 'objective' capacity of the country. In extract 5 a nation state is also depicted as a gated community. The argumentative line elaborated, though, emphasizes the entitlement of this community to distinguish between desirable and non-desirable refugees and compares emigration from Greece to immigration to the Country.

Extract 5 ('Nation state as a gated community and illegal immigration')

4. Bio-politics, according to Agamben (1995), lies in the central binary constructed in the sphere of the political between the (bare) life (zoe) and political existence (bios) that is, the distinction between natural being and the legal existence of a person. When political life enters in a state of exception (eg, "refegee crisis"), the political rights get suspended and (the remaining) natural life gradually gets included in the mechanisms and calculations of State power (Agamben, 1995, p. 4). These mechanisms serve to expel bodies that have been stayed out of the political community, converting politics to biopolitics by constantly "redefining the threshold in life that distinguishes and separates what is inside from what is outside". (ibid, p. 64)

Y: […] you will surely need new people to come here and get integrated. Of course, other countries have the same problem too, huh? Because, let's face it, Europe is a continent the population of which is ageing (.) huh? So... the next question is, who are the people who are going to get integrated...or rather...which people you are going to choose to integrate, it must be your right (...) huh? They can't impose you to do such a thing (.) this is what I don't like. Many people make the comparison and say that once the Greeks left their country and emigrated; they were also immigrants and things like that. But, it didn't happen like that (...) it did not happen like that. I have relatives who have emigrated...no one entered another country illegally. Everyone left the country following a certain process, and everyone has gone through a selection procedure. That's my opinion. (Yiannis, 45)

According to the account included in extract 5, immigration can often constitute a necessity for the reception country, due to demographic changes such as the ageing of the population. In that case displaced people can be welcome to settle and get integrated. However, even in this case, there must first be a "selection process" among those interested in entering the country. Immigrants and refugees do not have the 'right' to decide; nation states have both the power and the 'right' to make this decision ("*it must be your right (...) huh? They can't impose you to do such a thing*"). Immigrants and asylum seekers have to prove that they deserve to get integrated (see also Andreouli, 2010), and as long as they cannot contribute to country's needs, they do not have the right to remain in the country. This politics of exclusion establish a binary categorization between 'us' and 'them', or between legitimate citizens and illegal immigrants, un-qualified refugees or bogus asylum seekers, where the former deserve to live, while the latter are expendable (Zembylas, 2010).

In order to corroborate his arguments, the participant states that the commonly held comparison with Greek economic immigrants is not valid as it is argued that Greeks have not "*entered another country illegally*". The speaker even recalls his personal experience ("*I have relatives who have emigrated...no one entered to another country illegally*") to give force to his argument by the use of extreme case formulations (Pomerantz, 1986) maintaining that all Greek emigrants "*left the country following a certain process, and everyone has gone through a selection procedure*". This construction of Greek emigration as legal and immigration to Greece as illegal puts a hard and fast line between legal and illegal immigrants and reifies the categories by disconnecting them from social processes and institutional decisions (Figgou, 2014). People who do not have this legal status are dehumanized and denied rights, whereas illegality is treated as an essential category and a moral quality which supports the exclusion and removes the possibility of claiming protection or better living conditions (see also Figgou, 2015).

As part of an account on actions that need to be taken on the refugee issue by state institutions the speaker, in extract 6 refers to the need to develop migration policies, safeguard the interests of the Greek state and protect it from external enemies which threaten national unity.

Extract 6 ("Monitoring of internal population composition in order to prevent 'external threat'")

Y: It depends on whether it can... e::h (...) there must be a...a...a...a plan […] either you have an immigration policy or you have to acquire an immigration policy that will arise from a detailed study (.) then you can tell that we as a society can accept only that number of people of other religion, or of different nationalities...or this is the number of people that our economy can afford, huh? But, there is no such a thing. I think that in some countries...I think that all countries must have such quo-

tas...the truth is that Greece is a small country of ten million people and it faces the possibility to receive one million immigrants, which is one tenth of its population, it's a huge number (.) and in some cases it can alter – in some regions –it can affect the ethnic composition and the national identity[5] *(.) and this is a damage (.) for the country. Of course, If we speak about Switzerland this may not be a problem, but in the case of Greece, which has a history of tension with Turkey and Bulgaria, it's a severe damage.* (Yiorgos, 50)

According to the participant quoted in extract 6, the appropriate state policy on immigration should firstly formulate the quantitative and qualitative criteria, so as to select and allow entrance only to immigrants who would fulfil these criteria. 'Objective' indicators ("*the number of people that our economy can afford*"), and "qualitative" requirements ("*we as a society can accept only that number of people of other religion, or of different nationalities...*"), are bound together, defining the detailed profile of the acceptable immigrant/refugee (e.g. educational status, nationality, religion). In common with extract 4, in the exchange quoted in extract 6 a specific representation of the nation-state's spatiality is constructed, which regulates objectively and rationally its ability to integrate or exclude (socially, economically, politically) non-national others (Figgou & Sourvinou, 2013). Although this space delimitation is represented as being primarily objective, based on quantitative data of official studies, 'qualitative' criteria are also present (ibid).

The speaker justifies the necessity of immigration restriction policy (which every country must have) by making reference to the danger of the alienation of the national composition and identity as a result of refugees' settlement ("*it can affect the ethnic composition and the national identity (.) and this is a damage (.) for the country*") and by depicting national identity as a buffer to external threats. The need of ethnic homogeneity and strong identification with the nation is represented both as universal and as exceptionally important for Greece. Greece is differentiated from Europe due to its particular immigration history and location (Andreouli, Figgou, Kadianaki, Sapountzis, & Xenitidou, 2017). Greece is also differentiated from other European countries on the grounds of its 'size' and the potential of its economy. Ways of accounting like the one unfolded in extract 6 reflect the essential elements of modern biopolitics with its constant need to redefine the threshold that separates *"what is inside from what is outside"* (Agamben, 1995, p. 64). The restricted space organizes and defines homogeneous group identities and creates environments which determine otherness and construct the other as a potential risk (Dixon, 2001).

Conclusions

In the present study we attempted to show how place-identity becomes a discursive resource in lay people's constructions on of immigrant/refugee rights and entitlements and to highlight the ways in which spatial formulations intersect with accounts of intergroup relations. Common place in the discourse of participants was the construction of a closed national space which inevitably provides na-

5. The contrasts and the antagonism between a variety of populations residing in the nation states create separate ethnic groups and contribute to the construction of national identity (Agelopoulos, 1997). The modern state-building makes that difference socially and politically important (ibid). In the discourse of the Greeks, 'national' (εθνικό) and 'ethnic' (εθνοτικό) coincide, prevailing 'national', because there is the historically constructed hegemonic representation of Greek state's national and cultural homogeneity. We interpreted this part of participant's discourse as 'ethnic composition' and not 'national' to fully convey the meaning of participant's discourse.

tional citizens with a privileged place identity in relation to the refugee population. This privileged position justifies mechanisms of refugees' territorial detention and control and represents proximity between them and national citizens as a source of conflict. At the same time though, the settlement of newcomers in confined places, away from the urban fabric, is also represented as a cause of tension.

Specifically, analysis, in line with other studies, indicated that place identity as bipolar system ('we' and 'others') preserves hierarchies that determine what types of people and in which place are allowed to be (Reicher, Hopkins, & Harrison, 2006; see also Di Masso, 2012, 2015). Constructions of "insider" and "outsider" do not coincide only with institutional (external) borders, but also with internal boundaries creating confined territories within the national space and constituting specific notions of 'public space' and entitlement to use it. In one commonly identified sort of accounting, the dominant group (Greek nationals) was represented to hold certain entitlements and privileges in the management of public space, while the settlement of refugees in public urban locations was depicted as a source of (legitimate and understandable) tension. Therefore, proximity and contact with refugees were represented as a potentially justified basis for reactions against their settlement and integration. In other lines of argument however, even in the same interviews, intergroup distance and separation (and in particular refugees' ghettoization) was represented as a source of anomy, on the part of the minority group, which also ended up in problematic intergroup relations (see also Çağlar, 2001; Figgou, 2015). Therefore, respondents' constructions of space proximity, although they involved diverse and contradictory formulations and performed multiple functions, ended up naturalizing exclusion and constructing conflict (or even racism) as inevitable.

Of course, it is worth noting that the prima facie contradictory constructions of intergroup (space) proximity articulated in our interviewees' accounts are neither idiosyncratic nor restricted to common sense alone. They constitute fragments of historical dilemmas of the liberal ideology (Billig et al., 1988) which are also reflected in the writings of the social psychologists of intergroup relations. As Billig and his colleagues (1988) maintained, the ideology of enlightenment has provided everyday and institutional ideologies with contradictory principles regarding the constitution of identity and otherness. Tolerance of ethnic and cultural difference, as well as the demand for intercultural contact, is predicated on enlightenement's emphasis on a common human nature. However, in the writings of enlightenment philosophers, this emphasis coexisted with the consideration of ethnocentrism as natural. The usually cited as the originator of the contact hypothesis, Gordon Allport, also considered ethnocentric reactions to be anticipated and suggested that familiarity may bring contempt (Allport, 1954). The idea that space may constitute a resource which can potentially enact intergroup tension and conflict is an assumption that underlies the social psychology of realistic group conflict (Sherif, 2010). On the other hand, the role of contact in the eradication of prejudice (e.g., Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008) has constituted a long-standing concern in social psychology (see also Dixon, Durrrheim & Tredoux, 2005 for critical accounts of contact theory). Of course, from the beginning it was clear that, in order to be effective, inter-group contact should fulfill a long list of prerequisites. Amongst those, the status of the groups in contact was deemed to be of major importance. Adopting a critical discursive social psychological perspective this study reveals that place/space identity treated (more or less explicitly) as a marker of status and as a source of entitlements, reflects and at the same time constitutes unequal power relations.

Our analysis also mapped those arguments in which place/space identity was used to support bio-political practices of increasing border control and the exclusion of "the other" by institutional boundaries (Alsayyad & Roy, 2006). In these accounts the construction of space as a closed and confined territory which entails special capacities and boundaries was used to depict refugees as numerous, incompatible and illegal and to portray their settlement as impossible (Andreouli et al., 2017). This kind of discourse contributes to the justification of practices that separate between lives that matter and lives the loss of which is beyond our responsibility. Spatial metaphors and representations of divided and clearly demarcated spaces served to construct national space as limited and constrained and to rhetorically legitimate tighter boundary controls (Bowskill et al., 2007; Charteris-Black, 2006). By the same token, refugees/immigrants were identified as an "excess" (Bergo, 2008) that is not possible to remain and make a new life in Greece because of its economy situation. The rhetoric of Greece's recent economic 'crisis' was mobilized, in order to support the spatial construction of the country as small, powerless, dependent and capable to address the needs of the local people only.

Finally, we would like to note that, although the patterns we have identified may be generally reliable across the available interview data, a number of factors clearly militate against attempting to formulate general conclusions. Our study has certain limitations concerned both with its small scale, as well as, with the fact that it has been focused on a concrete historical and cultural context at a specific time. These certainly impose limitations on the constructions of space and identity identified. Another critical concern may be related to our analytic material and method which does not involve a detailed focus on spatial located practices -together with the imagined constructions of space, something that according to other commentators constitutes a certain advantage of research on place-identity relations (Di Masso et al., 2014; Dixon & Durrheim, 2000).

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Ο Χώρος ως Ρητορικό Απόθεμα και Συνέπεια (Δι)ομαδικών Σχέσεων και Δικαιωμάτων: Ανάλυση Λόγου για το Προσφυγικό Ζήτημα στην Ελλάδα

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ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Η μελέτη αυτή στοχεύει στην διερεύνηση του τρόπου με τον οποίο χρησιμοποιούνται ρητορικές κατασκευές του χώρου και της ταυτότητας σε συνεντεύξεις σχετικά με την υποδοχή και τα δικαιώματα των προσφύγων στην Ελλάδα. Το αναλυτικό μας υλικό προήλθε από 19 ατομικές ημιδομημένες συνεντεύξεις που πραγματοποιήθηκαν στη Θεσσαλονίκη, ενώ η ανάλυση βασίστηκε στην κριτική κοινωνική λογοψυχολογία. Η ανάλυση έδειξε τους πολλαπλούς τρόπους με τους οποίους οι συμμετέχοντες κατασκευάζουν τη διασταύρωση της ταυτότητας του χώρου και των σχέσεων μεταξύ ομάδων. Από τη μια πλευρά, η εγγύτητα και η επαφή με τους πρόσφυγες αναπαραστήθηκε ως μια δυνητική συνθήκη που δικαιολογεί αντιδράσεις κατά της εγκατάστασης και της ένταξής τους. Η απόσταση και η γκετοποίηση ομάδων από την άλλη πλευρά, αναπραστήθηκε ως επαρκής προϋπόθεση ανομίας εκ μέρους των προσφύγων και, ως εκ τούτου, ως βασική πηγή προβλημάτων στις σχέσεις μεταξύ των ομάδων. Επιπλέον, η ανάλυση έδειξε ότι οι διακρίσεις με βάση χωρικά όρια σε αυτούς που είναι «εντός» και αυτούς που παραμένουν «εκτός» συμπίπτουν και με συμβολικά όρια, ενώ βιοπολιτικές στρατηγικές, που εισάγονται με την προσφυγή σε περιορισμένο χώρο και την έλλειψη υλικών πόρων, χρησιμοποιούνται κατά τη συνάρθρωση επιχειρημάτων για τον περιορισμό των δικαιωμάτων των προσφύγων.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: Ανάλυση Λόγου, Διομαδικές Σχέσεις, Ταυτότητα χώρου, Πρόσφυγες, Δικαιώματα

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