Based on an ethnography of the relationship between Greek immigrants from the former Soviet Union and native Greeks in a neighbourhood in Thessaloniki, Greece, this book enquires into the practical deployment of ideologies of national belonging in immigrant-native figurations. Breaking with those theoretical perspectives that either assume the nationalistic standpoint or ignore it as if it did not matter, it aims to uncover, analyse and problematize the hegemonic power of ideologies of national belonging in structuring immigrant-native relations.

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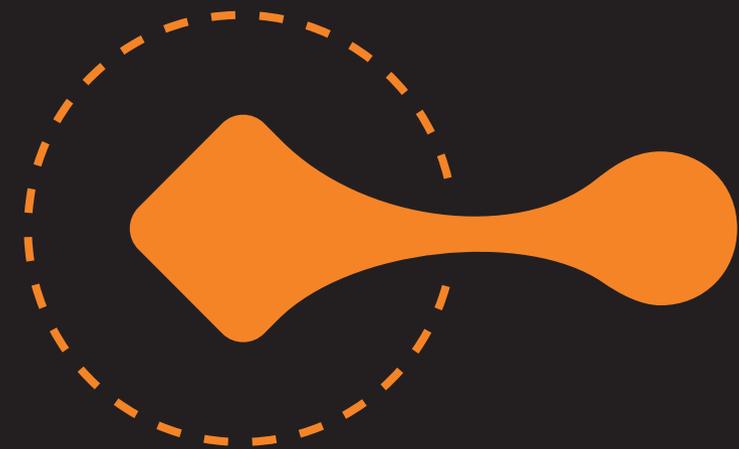
Manolis Pratsinakis Contesting National Belonging

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Conclusion

Immigrants and natives are thought of as opposing categories in relation to their belongingness to the nation-state in which they cohabit. Although the centrality of ideologies of national belonging in structuring immigrant–native relations is generally acknowledged in the literature (see Favel, 2003), limited research has been done on how those ideologies are experienced and negotiated in everyday life. My study set out to enquire into this issue by focusing on a rather exceptional case of migration, namely that of people who have always lived outside the borders of the nation, but who are nonetheless regarded as co-nationals. It is an ethnography of the relationship between two categories of residents in Nikopoli, a neighbourhood in Thessaloniki, Greece – one comprising Greeks born and raised in the country, the other also being of Greek descent, but having immigrated from countries formerly belonging to the Soviet Union and lacking any roots within the borders of the Greek state.

In sharp contrast with the presentation of FSU Greek migrants by politicians and the media as fellow nationals coming home, my findings in Nikopoli indicated that most native residents entertained a prejudicial image about their FSU Greek neighbours, whose Greekness they doubted. This contrast points to the complexity of the role played by ideologies of national belonging in everyday life. To account for this complexity, I developed a theoretical framework that draws from Elias and Scotson's established and outsider model (1994/1965), Hage's notion of practical nationality (2000), and Blumer's (1958) theory on race prejudice. In view of this theory I formulated two questions which structured the analysis presented in the previous chapters, and which I will answer here: How do FSU and native Greeks, both considered to be groups that belong to the nation, experience national belonging in everyday life in Nikopoli? How can we explain the fact that native Greeks doubt the Greekness of the FSU Greeks, and what would one expect the reaction of the latter to be?

8.1 Outlining and explaining the figuration of Nikopoli

The historical background

Successive Greek governments have treated Greeks abroad, the *homogénia,* as a resource with which to pursue the goals of the Greek state ('the national centre'). Greece and the h*omogénia* are bound together in a mutually recognized solidaristic relationship. The *homogenís* are expected to act for the benefit of the 'national centre', while the Greek state is perceived as having a moral obligation towards them (see chapter 2). Within this larger scheme, the case of the Greeks in the Soviet Union is an intriguing and rather exceptional case. Soviet Greeks remained enclosed within the sealed borders of the Soviet Union,[217] with very limited contact with 'the historic homeland' and largely forgotten by it. The East–West divide separated Greece from this segment of the *homogénia.*

However, the situation changed drastically in the late 1980s when FSU Greeks started migrating to Greece from the disintegrating Soviet Union (chapter 3). In that period, voices about the moral duty of 'the fatherland' towards a forgotten and much afflicted twig of the Greek family tree, originally expressed by Pontic associations, gradually became stronger in Greece. Governmental officials conceptualized this migration as an asset for the state (chapter 4). They addressed an official invitation to FSU Greeks to take up permanent residence 'in the fatherland' and organized a repatriation policy plan. This plan aimed at their settlement in the rural areas of the north-eastern geographical department of Thrace, home to the Greek Muslim minority. It was expected that the presence of the FSU Greeks in rural Thrace would economically revitalize the area, as well as alter its religious and ethnic composition. The policy was inspired by the 1923 rural refugee settlement, which is collectively perceived as a success (Voutira, 2003b). It was also designed with a particular image of the newcomers in mind. FSU Greeks were expected to accept difficult living conditions in the border regions.

The expectations of the policy makers were not met. The settlement plan failed, due to a lack of employment opportunities in the area, the inability of the Greek state to carry out the plan efficiently, and most importantly because the newcomers did not consider rural Thrace an appealing destination. They preferred to settle in the big cities. They were also not willing to tolerate difficult and makeshift conditions before they were provided with what they were promised. Although the Greek governments gradually reconsidered the policy goal of inviting FSU Greeks, the right of the latter to settle in Greece was not

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[217] With the exception of the small-scale migrations in the 1930s and 1960s.

questioned. Nor was the obligation of the state to offer them what was, in comparison to non-Greek immigrants, a privileged reception. FSU Greeks remained officially welcome in 'the fatherland' should they aspire to 'return' to it. According to ideologies of Greekness that conceive the nation as a trans-territorial community defined by descent and the Greek state as a refuge of this community, FSU Greeks belong to Greece as much as its native population does. However, the experiences of their day-to-day interactions with native Greeks in Nikopoli seem to challenge this presumption.

FSU and native Greeks in Nikopoli

Native Greeks developed negative attitudes towards their FSU Greek neighbours in Nikopoli against a background of limited interpersonal interaction between the members of the two communities. Their attitudes were mostly inferred from stories heard from others, usually concerning the FSU Greek's alleged aggressiveness and delinquent behaviour, or were supported with reference to how they saw them use the neighbourhood's public spaces. The urban space of Nikopoli partly accounts for the limited interaction between FSU and native Greeks (chapter 6, pp. 108-9). Interaction was further constrained by diverging attitudes towards leisure and out-of-house activities. FSU Greeks made extensive use of the public space of the neighbourhood while the natives preferred to frequent local cafeterias and *tavérna*s or spent their leisure time outside the neighbourhood altogether.

Many native Greeks criticized the FSU Greeks' extensive use of public space, and especially their habit of drinking in the street. They viewed this practice as an indication of alcohol problems rather than a social practice, and related it to their views of people from Russia as heavy drinkers. Moreover, they passed negative comments on the leisure shacks built by FSU Greeks in different places in the neighbourhood. From the perspective of the natives, these shacks aggravated the already degraded built environment of Nikopoli and were an indication of what they perceived as the refusal of their FSU Greek neighbours to adapt. Native Greeks felt that they were separated from FSU Greeks by a cultural gap. In their view it was this gap, and what they claimed to be the FSU Greeks' sullen attitude and lack of manners, that prevented their intermingling. Such views were expressed by the majority of older native residents but also by a considerable segment of those who had settled in the neighbourhood at the same time as, or even after, the majority of the local FSU Greek population.

Native residents were also critical about FSU Greeks speaking Russian and other non-Greek languages. It made them doubt their Greekness. Their mistrust was further fed by the satellite discs on the balconies of the apartments and the rooftops of houses of FSU Greeks, the Russian newspapers in local convenience

stores and kiosks, and the posts and banners in Russian on a few of the shop fronts. In their opinion, most of the immigrants in the neighbourhood claiming Greek descent aren't Greeks at all.

The native residents mostly called FSU Greeks 'Russo-Pontics', 'Russo-phones', or simply 'Russians'. The words 'Russians' and 'Russo-phones' were used synonymously as generic labels to refer to people of various FSU nationalities rather than Russians per se. 'The Russo-Pontic' is a rather dubious label. As opposed to 'the Russian', it was occasionally evoked (in a positive manner) to discern the Greek from the non-Greek FSU immigrants. However, most commonly it was used as an all-inclusive label for the whole Russian-speaking community in the neighbourhood in expressing doubt about their Greekness.

The Russo-Pontic label is also widely used by native Greeks outside the neighbourhood. It was originally employed as a term to distinguish the Pontics who immigrated from the former Soviet Union from the 'native-Pontics' who settled in the country with the 1920s forced population exchange. However, the label gradually acquired a pejorative meaning. Depending on the context in which it is used, it may signify a low class standing and indicate doubt about the Greekness of the categorized. Furthermore, in its more common usage, it embodies the stereotypes of the FSU immigrants' alleged aggressiveness and criminality.

The assessment of native Greeks of their FSU Greek neighbours was mediated by this negative public opinion of the Russo-Pontics. For instance, the image of the FSU Greeks in Nikopoli as aggressive people was strong, sustained, and augmented through gossip and the spread of rumours. This image impeded contact between the two communities, since native Greeks expected FSU Greeks to react aggressively for minimal reasons. Native Greeks also believed that some FSU Greeks engaged in criminal activities such as drug trafficking and that many keep guns in their houses. Several of my native contacts told me that they feel insecure in the neighbourhood.

Nikopoli had not attracted much media attention and was not represented as a notorious district by local and national media (chapter 5, pp. 85). However, several native residents characterized their neighbourhood as an unsafe area because of the many FSU Greeks living there. In my talks with people living in adjacent areas, I noted that such ideas were widespread there too. Natives of Nikopoli and its adjacent neighbourhoods connected information about 'a Russian mafia' in the city, widely circulated in the press, with the category of 'the Russian' or 'the Russo-Pontic', and projected this onto the local FSU Greeks. Such ideas were particularly widespread during my second fieldtrip, which took place a short while after two murders had happened in Nikopoli.

Contrary to the rather strong views that most of the native residents held of their FSU Greek neighbours, the latter hardly expressed any opinion about the native Greeks living in Nikopoli. When explicitly asked, they would either

mention that they do not know any natives from Nikopoli or that they only have formal relations (τυπικές σχέσεις) with a limited number of people. They generally described those relations as friendly. From my conversations with FSU Greeks I concluded that they were not aware of the negative views expressed by a considerable segment of the native residents in Nikopoli. Nevertheless, their rather neutral attitude towards their native neighbours did not reflect their opinions about Greece and native Greeks in general. They were very aware of, and vexed about, the negative way native Greeks talk about the Russians or the Russo-Pontics in Thessaloniki. It was just that they did not connect such a negative discourse to the locals in Nikopoli.

Moreover, they were very outspoken and critical about their reception by the Greek state. Migration to the fatherland did not provide FSU Greeks with the easy and socio-economically secure living conditions they expected to find in Greece. On the contrary, the majority of FSU Greeks found themselves working in insecure and poorly rewarded jobs that did not match their skills and educational backgrounds. FSU Greeks expressed feelings of bitterness towards their historic homeland for their precarious socio-economic situation. Their disillusionment was particularly acute due to their earlier idealised perceptions of a 'return to the fatherland'.

Concerning their attitudes about native Greeks, at the time of my research FSU Greeks could be roughly divided in two groups: those who were also critical towards their own community, claiming that 'their people' are partly or mostly responsible for the unfavourable image native Greeks attributed to them, and those who put all the blame on native Greeks, accusing them collectively of arrogant and disrespectful behaviour. The division reflected a polarization within the FSU Greek immigrant population over what should be their strategies in Greece and over different reactions to native accusations about the supposed extended criminality within their community and their alleged aggressive attitude. For instance, concerning their being stereotyped as aggressive, several FSU Greeks turn it on its head by claiming instead that native Greeks are weak. Some would even use their negative reputation to put native Greeks at a disadvantage in their interaction. They boasted that several native Greeks feared them. However, others were critical of such behaviour and seemed to some extent to have internalized the native accusations of FSU Greeks as being aggressive and more commonly involved in criminal activities.

The more negative group of FSU Greeks claimed that natives are soft, lazy, and ignorant and criticized extended relationships with them as signs of assimilation. Negative experiences of interaction with native Greeks and most importantly in-group discussions reproducing such experiences re-activated their strong minority culture in Greece and mobilized attitudes of resistance 'to become like them'. They also mobilized a deep belief in the potentials of their community and feelings that 'we will make it based on our own resources and

soon we will be better off than them '. Most of my FSU Greek respondents were critical of such attitudes. They claimed that these lock them in an unprofitable contestation with the natives and do not help their community progress in Greece.

Yet despite their differences, all FSU Greeks fiercely opposed the Russo-Pontic label; they favoured being called 'Pontic' or 'Greek', and indeed demanded this. This was because the label directly questioned the privileges conferred on their repatriate status, and also because it set them apart and assigned them once more a subordinated minority status. Underlying the decision of virtually all FSU Greeks to migrate to the fatherland was the expectation that there they would eventually be able 'to live among co-ethnics and be accepted by their own people'. Although they soon downscaled the initial high hopes for economic betterment 'in the West', that did not mean that they were also willing to tolerate disrespectful attitudes from the native society that put them in an inferior social position. Being called Russo-Pontics or simply Russians was completely unacceptable to them and they did not leave slurs on their origin unchallenged.

Without underplaying their Greekness, FSU Greeks selectively referred to their experience as subjects under the former Soviet Union as a source of pride and a means to challenge the degrading attitudes of native Greeks towards them. Rather than positing themselves as candidate members of the nation and seeking acceptance by renouncing their Soviet past, FSU Greeks asserted their difference in order to underline their superiority. In that context they claimed they are more Greek than the natives, since they had kept their nationality despite the persecutions endured in the former Soviet Union.

From 'culture' to 'perceptions of culture'

FSU Greeks in Nikopoli did not hide the influence of their upbringing in the former Soviet Union, and nor were they willing to change their habits if those appeared foreign to native Greeks. They saw no reason to do so, despite the fact that native Greeks expected them to act in that way. Drinking beers on the street with friends, watching Russian television, speaking in Russian, and building leisure shacks were not meant to be public statements but were practices aimed at rebuilding the past in the present. It was the natives who viewed those practices as provocative and disrespectful, as evidence of a lack of willingness 'to integrate' and of the FSU Greeks' supposedly false Greek descent.

To fully grasp the dynamics of their relation in Nikopoli we need to shift our attention from *culture*, as the embodied social knowledge and habitual dispositions of people, *to perceptions of culture*, as a signifier of belongingness

(Sewell, 1999).[218] The relationship between FSU and native Greeks, as with any immigrant–native relationship, is not a matter of cultural adaptation per se but one that is embedded in a power configuration. This configuration unfolds through a contest over defining the nation and who belongs to it. In this context natives attribute symbolic significance to certain cultural practices which they view as preconditions for the acceptance of immigrants as part of the national community.

As described in chapter one, native populations ascribe a dominant position to themselves due to their ability to present themselves as standing for what immigrants have to become in order to gain national recognition. They view immigrants as candidate members of the nation, and they ask them to prove their belongingness by attesting the *practical nationality* they have accumulated (chapter 1 p.14). Native Greeks placed FSU Greeks, like other immigrants, in the category of the national outsiders. So categorized, they expected them to show their willingness to fit in and demonstrate their practical nationality. A comparison between the views of the natives in Nikopoli regarding the local FSU Greeks and their views regarding the local Albanians is illuminating of their expectations.

Generally, native residents in Nikopoli told me they had good relationships with their Albanians neighbours, whom they described as peaceful, hard working, and 'causing no problems' in the neighbourhood. Taking into account that the undocumented Albanian migration was framed in media and policy discourse as a threat and that 'the Albanian' had nationally emerged as a heavily stigmatized category, the contrast between their perceptions of their FSU Greek and their Albanian neighbours appears paradoxical. This paradox is solved once one considers the behaviour of the two groups in Nikopoli. The Albanian immigrants appeared willing to adopt 'native' social behaviours in Nikopoli. Keeping a low profile and having developed personal relations with some native residents, they managed to build a favourable image for their group at the neighbourhood level despite the prejudiced views of native Greeks about their ethnicity.

Their attitude was in stark contrast to that of the FSU Greeks who did not feel that to be accepted they have to abide by the native rules of conduct. FSU Greeks came to Greece as equal members of the nation and felt they had nothing to prove. Being assigned different positions from the outset, FSU Greek and Albanians immigrants were striving for different goals. Albanian immigrants were trying to lead a peaceful life against the background of their stigmatized ethnic

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[218] That is not to deny the existence of actual differences in behaviour between them, nor to deny the significance of such differences in their encounters (see chapter 6.1). What I mean to suggest is that the relation between the two groups was not solely mediated by such observable cultural differences.

identity while the FSU Greeks were aiming at equality with the rest of the Greeks (Pratsinakis forthcoming).

Established or outsider nationals? The local and the overarching figuration

It is hard to tell which group is the dominant one in Nikopoli. Natives claimed such a status by questioning the behaviour of the immigrants. They held that their ways are the norm by which others have to abide. However, the FSU Greeks did not act accordingly. The negative attitude of the native Greeks towards the FSU Greeks may be partly understood as a spin-off from their disappointment at their inability to discipline them according to the dominant norms of conduct.

Native Greeks in Nikopoli suspected the local FSU Greek population of consisting in large measure of 'false Greeks'. Cultural difference was thought of as expressing the supposedly 'non-Greek consciousness' of FSU Greeks and was taken as proof of their lack of actual Greek descent. The 'false Greeks' formed an imagined category that accommodated the negative attitudes of the natives about the local FSU Greeks without challenging either the official criteria of national belongingness or the dominant perceptions about the qualities of Greekness. These were important for the self-image of the native residents. Their claimed collective charisma (Elias 1998; Elias & Scotson 1994) depended on it.

Native residents used the alleged false Greekness of FSU Greeks in Nikopoli to justify their negative attitudes about them, and adduced their perceived aggressive, associable behaviour as evidence of them not being Greeks. Simplistically, the dominant idea can be articulated as follows: they are not nice neighbours so they can't be Greek/they are not Greek, that's why they are not nice neighbours. Through a selective attribution of 'good characteristics' to 'true Greek' immigrants and bad characteristics to 'false Greeks', the evocation of the 'false Greek' category not only secured the ideologies of Greekness and native Greeks' collective charismatic beliefs but even helped reinforce them.

On their part, FSU Greeks did not claim a dominant position in the neighbourhood by questioning the behaviour of others. Yet they did act as an established group; they appeared to be leading a life in Nikopoli according to their own norms, completely unaffected by how local native Greeks expected them to behave. Aided by their numerical dominance in the neighbourhood, FSU Greeks were capable of developing their own institutions. As Lieberson (1961) has illustrated, immigrant–native relations critically depend on each population's ability to maintain or to develop a social order that is compatible with its ways of life prior to contact.

However, Nikopoli is a special case due to the concentration of the FSU Greeks there. It is an FSU Greek island within a native Greek sea. Outside the neighbourhood, many FSU Greeks had different experiences. Several of my

informants described situations in which they felt the need to defend or legitimate their deviance from native norms and felt embarrassed about their origin in the Soviet Union or their inability to speak proper Greek. Although to a lesser degree than other immigrant categories, FSU Greeks are affected by native judgments in the different fields of social life. The mere existence of the prejudicial category of the Russo-Pontic and the fact that FSU Greeks feel the need to react to it proves that despite their official inclusion by the state and their favourable depiction in the media, they are not yet part of the established group.

That said it should be noted that there is a crucial difference between them and the rest of the immigrants. Although FSU Greeks are asked, just like other immigrants, to attest their practical nationality, it is not for the same reasons. For other immigrants, attesting their practical nationality entails them showing their willingness to fit in. For FSU Greeks, attesting their practical nationality is a necessary step to dissociate from the category of the Russo-Pontic and the 'false Greek' and come to live according to the dominant expectations of them *being* Greeks. When this is done successfully it has a different effect. It results in them demonstrating the national essence they are supposed to embody. By proving their Greekness they immediately become respected Greeks, equals among others. Possibly the most common way to achieve this status is by displaying their Pontic-ness.

Practical nationality and the Pontic identity

After immigration to Greece, FSU Greeks altered their sense of belonging. Although they departed from Russia as Greeks, after settlement in the historic homeland they discovered their cultural difference from native Greeks who relabelled them Russo-Pontics, Russians, *homogenís*, new refugees, returnees, Pontics, etc. FSU Greeks had to make sense of their selves and reframe their affiliations in relation to those labels. The content of such labels may be continuously reconstructed and renegotiated, yet at a given point in time they carry particular meanings and legacies. They are not empty vessels to which one can freely attribute any content at all (see Jenkins, 2008). It is those embedded meanings that make them appealing or foreign.

Most FSU Greeks commonly introduce themselves to native Greeks as 'Pontic'. They do this as a response to and a rejection of the stigmatizing categorization of 'the Russo-Pontic'. It is also a way to distinguish themselves from native Greeks. Presenting one's Pontic identity indicates a felt experience of otherness in opposition to native Greeks but at the same time allows one's inclusion in the Greek nation and native society. In the discourse of FSU Greeks, the Pontic identity is contrasted to the category of *Ellin* (Э́ллин) or *Éllinas* (Έλληνας): 'Greek', or more precisely 'Hellene', in Russian and Greek

respectively. They use the latter terms for native Greeks and reserve the word 'Pontic' as a label to designate membership of the FSU Greek community in Greece. The Pontic identity is used without much reference to the native Pontic population.[219]

Interestingly, not everybody endorsed the Pontic identity to an equal degree. Indeed, a minority of FSU Greeks flatly rejected it. They preferred the overarching Greek identity. FSU Greeks of Pontic descent who had distanced themselves from the social norms and traditions practiced by FSU Pontic communities appeared less connected to the Pontic identity in Greece. Ponticness is practised through different types of cultural manifestations, such as Pontic music and dance, the Pontic dialect, and Pontic culinary tastes. Bearing an identity, one is expected to perform it. Not possessing those 'ethnic competences' made them feel less comfortable with their Pontic identity. Most importantly, FSU Greeks who also had a high socio-economic status and/or were knowledgeable of contemporary Greek culture and history and were proficient in Modern Greek language could directly claim a Greek identity. They did not have to highlight their Pontic descent to prove their Greekness.

At the other end of the spectrum, the subgroup of FSU Greeks who found it most difficult to prove their Greekness and gain national recognition were the Turkophone FSU Greeks, especially those of low class standing. The existence of negative images about 'the Russo-Pontic' and false Greeks in the city of Thessaloniki constrained the acceptance of FSU Greeks in native society and put them at risk of facing discriminatory and prejudiced behaviour. However, in their interpersonal relations with natives, most were able to prove their Greekness and dissociate themselves from those negative images. For the lower-class Turkophone FSU Greeks, however, gaining acceptance was difficult even in their interpersonal relations with Greeks. Their effort was impeded by their mother tongue, which according to the ideologies of Greekness is incompatible with their nationality.

It was further constrained by the dominant native perception of all 'real FSU Greeks' as being of Pontic origin (chapter 7, pp. 178-9). The existence of non-Pontic Greeks in the former Soviet Union is ignored and the Greek diaspora there is commonly referred to as the 'Pontic diaspora'. The prevalence of this discourse had repercussions for the collective perception/imaginary in Greece. The vast majority of Greeks think of 'real' FSU Greeks as Pontics. Such ideas were also strengthened by the widespread endorsement of the Pontic identity by the FSU Greeks themselves. The idiosyncratic culture of the Turkophone FSU Greeks, which differs from purified constructions of 'the Pontic culture', and the

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[219] Moreover, despite the cooperation between native Pontics and FSU Greeks at the level of associations, in Nikopoli the relations between members of the two communities were not found to be substantially more positive than relations between non-Pontics and FSU Greeks (see chapter 7, pp. 189-194).

fact that neither they nor their ancestors speak Pontic, appears suspicious to natives. As a result many experience their Greekness as a burden in their interaction with natives. Rather than facilitating their acceptance in Greek society it poses problems.

Identification, performativity, and the intersections of class and ethnicity

Three points need to be highlighted from the above analysis of the FSU Greeks' endorsement (or rejection) of the Pontic identity. The first is that identifications are always produced through the interaction of ongoing processes of internal and external definition (Jenkins, 2008). That is, they are determined through a dialectic interplay between the self-definitions by the people who claim an identity and the external categorizations imposed on them by reference groups. Internal and external definitions cannot be understood in isolation; each is implicated in the other.

The second point builds theoretically on the previous one; it sets out from the basic premise that self-identifications presuppose an audience and a shared framework of meaning between those who claim the identity and those to whom they address their claim (Jenkins 2008, pp. 55). People claim identities to position themselves in relation to others. Yet claiming an identity is not enough; one has also to perform it (Goffman, 2002). People need to be convincing in their claims of belongingness. The validation of their performance by others is crucial in their gaining recognition as bearers of the claimed identity.

However, not all validations are of equal significance. Powerful individuals are able to make their judgments count and thus to affect the legitimacy of other persons' claims to an identity. Immigrants do judge the performance of natives in terms of their national identity and whether it complies with the qualities attributed to it. Nonetheless, their judgment commonly has limited effect. It is constrained by their power deficit in comparison to natives. In my case study, FSU Greeks questioned the Greekness of certain native Greeks in relation to how they assessed them perform a Greek identity; however they were not able to *challenge* their Greekness.

The third point, which is largely implicit in my analysis above and thus in need of further explication, concerns the significance of class in immigrant–native relations. Immigrant–native relations are not only mediated by ethnicity but by class as well. The demands by natives that immigrants comply with the native rules of conduct and demonstrate *practical nationality* is expressed in a much more pressing way for lower-class immigrants. It is those immigrants who appear more threatening to natives.[220] Moreover, even if questioned regarding their

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[220] Building on Blumer's work on prejudice as a sense of group position, one may frame a

belongingness, higher-class immigrants are more powerful in countering the accusations expressed by native citizens. Their higher-class background to a certain extent provides them with protection against native judgement. This protection, however, cannot be assessed in isolation but only in relation to how their ethnic background is valued by native society in the first place.

National narratives and histories commonly contain information about particular 'others' as well as stereotypical views about different countries from which immigrants come from. Moreover, migration policies, which are designed with the aim of pursuing the interests of the state, differentiate between immigrant categories. They confer labels, construct statuses, and create expectations. National media circulate information about immigrants who are evaluated according to the perceived interests of the state. These flows of information impact on people's perceptions of immigrant groups.

Flows of information and experiences of actual interaction shape the public images of immigrant and ethnic categories. The severity with which native judgment is addressed towards an immigrant category is a direct function of the public image of that immigrant category at a given time. The stock of practical nationality of immigrants, together with their socio-economic status, determines their vulnerability to such judgment and their symbolic capacity to challenge it.

It has been mentioned that the more well-to-do Russian immigrants appeared to be better received by native Greeks in their everyday interactions, as compared to a sub-segment of FSU Greeks who are of lower class standing and who found it difficult to prove their Greekness. The higher socio-economic status of the former seems to protect them from native judgement. FSU Greeks of higher socio-economic status, however, were in a more powerful position. Being of actual Greek descent and able to prove it, they not only enjoyed the recognition of native Greeks but they could make them adopt an apologetic and defensive stance for not being respectful towards other Greeks (chapter 7, p.169).

At the other end of the spectrum, Albanian immigrants had to actively attest their practical nationality in an attempt to show – against native perceptions – that they do not differ from native Greeks. They renegotiated their identity as individuals, in some cases contrasting themselves to 'the bad Albanians'. The

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hypothesis as to the reasons why lower-class immigrants appear more threatening to native populations. As described in the introduction to this book, Blumer treated prejudice as an emotional recoiling in the face of perceived threats to the established group's perceived entitlement to either exclusive or prior rights in important areas of life. Thinking along those lines, we may propose that native populations think of poorer people as more likely to challenge their prerogatives, due to their more precarious situation. Such views may be accompanied by perceptions about the supposed inclination of poorer people towards crime. Further research is needed in that direction to test this hypothesis and/or the development of alternative explanations.

devaluation of their national background and the stigmatization of their collective identity were experienced as a burden in their everyday life.

Equally constraining were negative images of 'the Russo-Pontic' for lower class standing Turkophone FSU Greeks. Their difference from Albanian immigrants, however, is that Turkophone FSU Greeks came to Greece as Greeks with high expectations of a life in homeland. They were not willing to adopt social behaviours that would be better accepted by native Greeks; they thought of such an attitude as submissive. Their reaction to denigrating attitudes by native Greeks was to engage in confrontation with them[221].

8.2 Contesting national belonging: Immigrant–native relations as an established–outsider figuration

Elias treated the Winston Parva case as an 'empirical paradigm' to be tested, enlarged, and if necessary revised by enquiries into more complex figurations. He claimed that such an exercise would help 'understand better the structural characteristics they [the figurations] have in common and the reasons why, under different conditions, they function and develop upon different lines' (Elias & Scotson 1994: xvii). Focusing on a local established–outsider figuration, yet one that resulted from *international* rather than internal migration, my study presents a step in that direction by turning our attention to the function and significance of ideologies of national belonging.

According to Elias and Scotson, the conditions of the power imbalance in Winston Parva were rooted in the established group's social cohesion, which in turn resulted from its oldness. The ability of the established to control flows of communication permitted them to construct and maintain a positive collective identity and to stigmatize the newcomers. Upon their settlement in Winston Parva, the newcomers were strangers to each other. Moreover, they did not form a social category for the older residents. The newcomers were constructed as an 'out-group' in the neighbourhood by the older residents who in turn defined their own collective identity to a large extent in opposition to them. Focusing on these characteristics, Elias and Scotson presented the structure of the Winston Parva figuration as if it could be sufficiently studied within the confines of the neighbourhood. Their explanation is weakened by their failing to note that the Winston Parva figuration is part of an overarching figuration (chapter 1, pp. 11-14).

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[221] According to Tajfel and Turner's (1986) categorization on group reactions to a threatened identity, the Albanians appear to be endorsing the individual mobility path whereas the Turkophone Soviet Greeks that of the social competition.

The United Kingdom was and still is a hierarchical society in which ideas about respectful and disrespectful behaviour shape people's perceptions of each other. The established in Winston Parva cultivated their 'group-charisma' through identification with the more well-off older residents in the neighbourhood, , aiming to reduce the distance between themselves and middle and upper class people living in, or in the immediate surroundings of Winston Parva. Elias and Scotson rightly pointed to the fact that the ability of the dominant group to maintain an established position in the neighbourhood was not due to (actual) class differences from the outsiders. However, the established were able to legitimize their presumed superiority – in their own eyes and in the eyes of the outsiders – by successfully claiming their belonging to a superior class. Similarly, in my study native Greeks were able to ascribe to themselves an established status through a self-proclaimed privileged connection to 'the nation'. The conditions of the power imbalance in established–outsider figurations are not only rooted in differences in social cohesion. They are also constructed and maintained by the ability of the established group to present itself as standing for what the others have to become in order to gain recognition.

Stressing the need to look beyond the local setting and aiming to highlight the significance of ideologies of belongingness in established–outsider figurations, this study proposed a theoretical framework that explores how immigrant–native relations unfold through a contestation over defining the nation and who belongs to it. According to this theoretical framework, immigrants are turned into outsiders as soon as they cross national borders and start building their life abroad, away from their previous 'national home'. In most cases they lack citizenship, which formally attests their outsider position and blocks them from equal participation in the 'host' society. Their outsider's status is also experienced in their everyday interactions with members of the native society. Even if citizenship rights are acquired this does not necessarily bring about their acknowledgment as equal members of the national community by the established – those citizens who consider themselves as representing the national core group (Hage 2000). As the present study has illustrated, being acknowledged as equal nationals in their daily lives is troublesome even for those who migrate as de facto and de jure co-nationals.

The established natives assume a managerial role in relation to what they imagine as 'their nation'. They feel they have the right to decide 'how things work here' and 'who should get what'. The arrival of immigrants is perceived as ruining their cultural intimacy (Herzfeld, 2005) and challenging their exclusive control over 'their' place (see Blumer, 1958). Newcomers are seen to be entering what they conceive as their collective private space and they feel they have to discipline them according to the 'rules of the house'. They ask them to prove their belongingness by attesting the *practical nationality* they have accumulated.

Disciplining or excluding them is necessary in keeping their status as the masters 'in their own nation'.

Natives ascribe an established position to themselves, due to their ability to present themselves as the norm by which immigrants have to abide. Rather than attesting their practical nationality to valorise their nationhood, they present it as the manifestation of 'the national essence' they embody. Claiming legitimacy from national ideologies that conceive of a 'national people' with common origins and a distinct culture and history, they present their national belongingness as something that is rightfully conferred to them by birth.

This idea of a 'national people' is a historical construct and as such its content is an object of struggle. In time, through processes of boundary shifts, groups of people who would earlier be considered as outsiders enter the erstwhile exclusive national club and are bequeathed the privilege of automatic national membership. However, those are long-term processes that span more than one generation. In the short run, immigrants usually have limited abilities to alter the ideologies of national belonging to their advantage. As a result, their behaviour is judged by the degree of their compliance with the native norms and their frame of reference commonly comprises other groups with which they compete for national recognition.

Immigrants are endowed with different material and symbolical resources that help them resist the pressure exerted by the native society. The findings of my ethnographic research indicate that those resources are dependent on their economic and occupational situation and their cultural traits, as well as how their national and ethnic background is valued by native society. The case of Nikopoli also highlights that the level of power of immigrants further depends on their collective ability to reconstruct or bring their institutions with them. However, this ability is limited. In many social settings, most immigrants, even those who are officially defined as members of the nation, are put in a disadvantaged position, having to defend or legitimate their perceived deviance from native norms.

Assimilation theory has been rightly criticized for assuming the stand-point of the nation state (Wimmer & Schiler 2002; Favel 2003; Waldinger, 2002). It presents immigrants as embodying 'incompatible cultures' posing challenges to the alleged cultural homogeneity and the social cohesion of 'native societies'. Transnationalism was represented as a superior alternative (Schiller et al. 1992; Faist, 2000), a step towards overcoming the 'container model' of society that methodological nationalism has imposed on the sociology of migration (Wimmer & Schiller, 2002). However, in their attempt to go beyond the nation state, scholars of transnationalism have tended to overemphasize immigrants' capacity for self-determination. Immigrants are not picking and choosing from among multiple cultures and identities in a voluntaristic manner, free of external forces.

The degree to which nations comprise societies and cultures needs to be problematized and assessed empirically. Yet what can be hardly contested is the fact that national societies exist in the mindsets of people. Nations and ideologies of national belonging comprise what Douglas has named a *thought world* (1986) and what Foucault has termed *regimes of truth* (1980).[222] They constitute authoritatively interlocked ideas which shape people's thinking and model their interactions. Thus, rather than assuming the nationalistic standpoint (see assimilation), or ignoring it as if it did not matter (see transnationalism), we should reflect on its hegemonic power in our analyses. It is only in this way that we can uncover and problematize the power dynamics structuring immigrant–native relations.

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[222] Compare also with Bourdieu's conceptualization of doxa (1977).

A general view of Efxinoupoli

Children building their house in Efxinoupoli

A garden in communal land in Efxinoupoli

Houses in Efxinoupoli

The monument of the Pontic people in Efxinoupoli

The boxing club in Efxinoupoli

The high voltage pylons next to houses in Efxinoupoli

New Nikopoli

A Typical road in New Nikopoli   *The open market*

Cars parked in unused space in New Nikopoli   *The shack of the grannies before its destruction by the Municipality*

After its destruction: 'saving the property'

Reclaiming space back

*Another leisure shac
k*

A street gathering in Nikopoli

A FSU restaurant in New Nikopoli

*A romantic Roma couple passing through New
Nikopoli*

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