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Greek Politics and Passion(s): Reconstituting National Identity in the Midst of Financial Crisis

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Abstract

The broader aim of this research paper is to examine the significance of emotions, and their role in (re)constituting national identity in the wake of the recent Greek socio-economic crisis. Furthermore, through this research paper I intend to shed light on how it is possible that emotions can foster new identity commonalities, and hence, new identity antagonisms (since with every hegemonic discourse, there is always a marginalised one, and an impact on the one will inevitable have an impact on the other as well) in the face of financial crises. Greece is the country of focus here, and methodologically, I will attempt to analyse public discourses communicated through the media, old and new, written and visual, as well as through ethnographic research.

Keywords: *Crisis, Discourse Analysis, Emotions, Ethnography, Fear, National Identity, Pride*

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The research is divided into two parts, the theoretical part, and the empirical part. Through the lens of social constructivism, and borrowing from the theoretical insights of psychoanalysis, this research attempts to move towards a theoretical framework (Part A) that can highlight the role of collective emotions, or ‘emotional discourses’ (Lutz and Abu-Lughod, 1990) in disrupting national identity formations, during crises, and in particular financial crises. Recognising the impact of the economic crisis on what it means to be

'Greek' through horizontal emotional phenomena will highlight the constitutive and productive power of emotions and illustrate the 'emotional contagion' (Izard and Tomkins, 1966; Gibbs, 2001) of the crisis across the socio-political spectrum of Greek society.

The second section (Part B) forms the empirical part of the research whereby through a combined methodology of discourse analysis and ethnographic research I explore the role of emotions in Greek public discourses, as these have emerged post- December 2009.¹ To adequately capture issues and answer questions of social change and crises' effects, a longitudinal research design would have perhaps been more appropriate; it would enable a better identification of a change in attitudes, by assessing these before and after the onset of the crisis. However, as this research was conducted after the crisis began (and hence, it did not cover attitudes as they existed in the immediate period before the crisis), and due to the limited nature of this research², a cross-sectional research design has been adopted. Rather than gathering my data at different points in time I have collected information at one point in time (although one that spans over a period of 18 months), hence building up to an academic "snapshot" of socio-political life (Neuman, 2011, p.44). With this research project I hope to raise some questions and try and encourage further academic thinking on the emotional implications of financial crises on national identity.

My preliminary findings show that indeed the presence of 'emotional discourses' of 'shame', 'fear' and 'discontent' in public articulations of issues related to the financial crisis have affected interpretations and meanings associated with Greek national identity. Although there are no fixed discourses, I argue that the (dominant) hegemonic discourse reflects a disrupted national identity- i.e. that intense domestic criticism and 'national' self-reflection spurred by the crisis conditions have caused a disintegration and disorientation of Greek national identity. Whether this disruption is a short-term one, and whether the previous notorious Greek pride, so characteristic of Greek nationalism will 'return' to restore both self- and national- confidence, is something that remains to be seen.

Introduction

When news of the 'Greek Financial Crisis' broke out in 2009, the Greek people had never expected the situation to be so severe. Part of the reason was because financial problems had become somewhat of a second nature to Greek politicians, economists and ordinary citizens alike. Greece's chronic government deficit, since before the *Drachma* was replaced by the Euro in January 2002, combined with high inflation rates and excessive public sector borrowing, meant the country had failed to meet the Maastricht criteria and hence, join the Eurozone when the first wave of member countries did three years earlier. Even then, the public debt was more than 100% of the country's GDP, and there were early sceptics of how this 'chronic budgetary mismanagement' could have harmed the Euro (*The Economist*, February 6th, 2010). Unfortunately, the *extent* of the crisis was a surprise shock that many Greek people are still struggling to digest and comprehend, let alone accept. Greece has been on the brink of total collapse over an extended period of time and, from all the European countries, seems to be facing the most serious consequences. Even the Prime Minister, George Papandreou, had to publicly admit that his country was "the Eurozone's weakest link", and that he had to stop the country from "falling over a cliff" (Television

¹ This month marked the official revelation to the public of the severity of the financial crisis as well as the announcement, by the Greek Prime Minister Papandreou, of the programme of tough public spending cuts.

² This research project was conducted under the framework of the Political Studies Association, Greek Politics Specialist Group Fieldwork Competition, that formed part of the 'Greece Beyond the Crisis' series. I would like to thank the panel members of the GPSG for selecting me, as well as two anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions. Any remaining errors are of course, my own.

address, ERT, February 2nd, 2010) The 'crisis' has become discursively embedded in the cultural, political and social milieu of the Greeks, whether they are living in Greece or belong to the ever-increasing Greek diaspora.

A wealth of academic and journalistic articles have surged since the Greek crisis surfaced two years ago, mostly looking at how the domestic crisis can be dealt with, placing it in context of the general crisis in the Eurozone (with Spain, Ireland and Portugal being the other crisis candidates), and trying to assess the future impact this will have for Europe's citizens. Beyond the fierce financial debate on what the causes were, and more importantly, whether austerity measures will solve or exacerbate the crisis, little academic research has been conducted on the emotional impacts of the crisis on national identity. Perhaps, given the proximity of the event it is still too early to speak of a lack of existing research, but nevertheless, this is not something unique to the Greek crisis. As we shall see there is a more general gap evident in existing research on national identity and financial crises, with a marked absence of literature that tries to investigate the emotions-identity nexus in the context of financial crises- let alone the current Greek financial crisis.

Although there are studies that have touched upon the relationship between emotion and national identity in Greece, such work remains very scarce and even then, the role of emotion is indirect and implicit. For example, in 2006, Stavrakakis and Chrysoloras adopted the Lacanian concept of enjoyment as an affective collective investment, to explain the sustained reproduction and durability of national identity, offering casual examples from Greece. A slightly better trend can be observed if we take the relationship between emotion and the Greek financial crisis as the research focus. In 2011, there were two whole panels in the Political Studies Association annual conference devoted to the role of emotions in the Greek crisis. Demertzis (2011), presented a paper which attempted to explore the crisis through emotion-driven interpretations: he argued that we need to move away from a "passionless political analysis" and that affective weight needs to be taken into account in analysis of political phenomena and behaviours. But even here, we see either an emotion-national identity nexus (former paper), or an emotion-financial crisis nexus (latter paper), with absolutely no research study looking at the relationship between all three. Such an approach is attempted in this paper, although this work is an initial endeavour, and not a completed long-term project.

Delving deeper than an analysis of the origins and prospects of the crisis, this research paper, then, explores the *role and importance of emotional phenomena present in discursive representations, as they relate to national identity, in the context of the particular financial crisis of Greece*. In order to deal with this complex issue, it is analytically useful to keep in mind three interrelated threads of analysis: the relationship between emotion and national identity; the link between national identity and financial crisis; the interplay between emotion and financial crisis. The focus of analysis however is the second link: 'national identity and financial crisis'- with emotions being the over-arching lens.

PART A – Moving towards a theoretical framework

Therefore, and to make things simpler, the theoretical part of the research paper can be divided into two limbs of argument. One leg of the argument is concerned with the theoretical reconstitution of Greek national identity in the dynamic and temporal context of the financial crisis. The other leg of the argument looks at how this occurs within the

framework of emotions/passions³. Here I discuss my concept of 'emotional contingency' and its role in politics, and synthesising this with the concept of 'emotional resonance', in order to offer an analytical angle which can maximise the horizontal potential of emotions from a macro-perspective. These two limb-arguments *combined* offer the driving, or better, the 'walking', force of the theoretical basis on which the empirical torso of this research is grounded.

Re-constituting national identity

National identity in Greece has enjoyed a gluing status, acting as a social cohesive force, a 'social bond' (Demertzis, 1996, cited in Stavrakakis and Chrysoloras, 2006, p.146).⁴ It is, one may dare to say, enjoying the status, of what religion would have enjoyed in the nineteenth century. Indeed, Karl Marx's famous quote from the *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*, relating to the role of religion as a 'universal source of consolation and justification' (p.175) can be adapted to national identity. Hence, one can 'elevate' national identity and describe it as a domestic or national source of emotional 'consolation' in times of crisis, and rational 'justification' in occurrences of critique. It confers meaning to their actions, their situation, their potential, their historical roots and their current existence. It is in fact, almost impossible to speak of Greek national identity without reference to religion. The Greek Orthodox Church is a passionate and fervent proponent of Greek nationalism, securitising it against the globalisation threat of the West. It can be seen, as a result, to be reasserting its role as protector and caretaker of that national identity (Payne, 2003, p.269).⁵

National identities are important as they act as a tool with which one can construct and interpret the world around them. Ted Hopf, a leading social constructivist scholar, whose study of Soviet and Russian foreign policy focuses on the domestic formation of identity, reminds us that any study of national identity *cannot* be purely domestic, and that any study of a country's foreign policy cannot bear to ignore the *internal* definition of national interests (2002). Hopf, whose work is rooted in cognitive psychology, argues that a social cognitive structure makes up society, within which 'individuals...and their daily social practices constitute both themselves and others, and the identities and discursive formations that constitute the cognitive structure in which they live' (Hopf, 2002, pp. 3–4). National identities, then, can be seen to have a significant impact on both domestic and foreign policies, but also on the socio-emotional state of the people of that nation.

Although my work has a strong domestic focus, Hopf's seminal study shows the importance of domestic projects for a foreign-policy understanding, but most importantly, is a critical reminder that national identities cannot be studied in vacuum, and that even they are produced in interactions with other states. What defines the particular subject, and in our case, 'the Greek', is largely 'the relationships that subject is positioned in relative to other kinds of subjects' (Doty, 1996, p.11), i.e. the non-Greek. With regards to the internal-external nexus, this research paper wants to highlight, in particular, the importance of

³ I use these two as synonymous although the Greek word '*pathi*' would not have been used in the same capacity as it has different connotations to it than the English word 'passions'. Passion is defined as a strong, intense emotion.

⁴ If, national identity, is beyond a social construction, but also a 'psychic investment' (Stavrakakis and Chrysoloras, 2006, p.147), then the contextual force of the crisis brings to the fore psychological effects as well. Indeed, pre- and post-crisis emotions helps to highlight their subtle relationships and how these relate to articulations of national identity. This arguably has a potential impact on actions, not just articulations, that are associated with national identity, but this non-discursive realm is not one that the current article will deal with.

⁵ To be a Greek citizen is often tied to being 'a Greek-speaking member of the Orthodox Church of Greece' (Papadakis, 1988, 51; Xydīs, 1994, cited in Payne, 2003, p.266).

domestic perceptions of how foreigners view and think of the locals after a particular crisis, have an impact on how they [nationals] then re-negotiate and re-construct their national identity within their country, i.e. in interaction with their own society. Following this, one can witness the opening up of a discursive terrain, whereby antagonistic discourses and narratives regarding the financial crisis and its actors trigger a new discursive struggle, regarding the crisis (the 'empty signifier' in this case) on the bed of national identity. National identities are being produced in interaction with 'the many identities and discourses that constitute that society' (Hopf, 2002, p. 294). The same can happen during particular crises, where an opportunity for re-constituting identities is created. Emotions have a polarizing effect, which in conjunction with the temporal, social and discursive space offered by the crisis period, works as a fermentation bed.

The core ontological assumption of my work is that social meaning is not fixed, but fluid- it is involved in an ongoing process of creation and recreation, either to maintain or change it. Social constructivists, both conventional (see Wendt, 1999; Adler and Barnett, 1998;) and those who belong to the more critical strand (Campbell, 1998; Doty, 1993) all agree on the socially and politically constructed character of national identity. Hence, its contingency is also a reflection of its ability to change. The persistence of national identity does not render invalid this ontology, that it is socially constructed- it merely adds to the importance of hegemonic structures and power dynamics that ensure this consistency is kept intact at its roots. It does not invalidate the fact that we are not born different to each other; a German girl who is born, immersed in, and raised with the political, social and cultural context of Greece, will not be inherently or inevitably different to a similarly raised Greek girl. The characteristics, will be socially produced, and hence have the ability to be changed, by ceasing their re-production. This is not necessarily a reversal- just a cessation, a discontinuity of the particular 'productive' process.⁶ What is different, is the content of this social construction- the contents pack of national identity, and this is undeniably culturally and historically specific. Therefore, where as we are not born ontologically different, our national baggage is constituted in context-specific ways, which impacts our ideas, values and actions, and makes us differ from the 'other', as well as, from other past images of our national identity.

One may well argue that the essence of national identity cannot ever be completely changed by crisis conditions. Indeed, such a project would be impossible and incomplete (see Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). But what we do witness, is a heightened fluidity, a tendency for identity 'bounces', that although may potentially soon 'bounce back' to their original position, their *form* will nevertheless, never be the same as the one prior to the crisis. The impact of this crisis, sometimes reaching the extent of a *trauma*, can never be completely erased. The Greek identity will always carry the 'stamp of the past' to use Krishan Kumar's phrase (2000, p.577) even when that past (the current present) is gone. One can even go as far as describing these effects as 'identity scars', (I expand on this later on).

Social construction of identity and a social construction of the crisis, are two parallel events but ones that influence each other. National identity in times of crisis, is literally, *in crisis*. Such critical events put into question established ideas about the feelings of pride, or even superiority, of a Greek person. These ideas surely cannot be erased, nor can past traditions, or cultural inheritance be denied. But, as we shall see from the empirical findings, this rich burden of the past makes it even harder for the average Greek to come to terms with the existing situation.

⁶ For a discussion of the productivity of representational practices see Roxanne Doty, 1996.

A macro-perspective of emotional discourses

I have discussed how social construction of national identity and social construction of the crisis have the ability to influence each other. But to complete my theoretical contribution, which looks at the link between national identity and financial crisis through the overarching lens of emotion (see p.3), requires a zoom on the potential of emotions from a macro-perspective. In this section I offer a short review of the role of emotions in current political analysis, before moving on to discuss the horizontal and constitutive dimension of emotions.

Although this has recently been changing, emotion has not yet enjoyed sufficient recognition in socio-political research.⁷ Emotion has been successfully but not adequately installed in the lexicon of socio-political study. Over ten years ago, Neta Crawford argued that the subject of emotions and passions tended to be ignored by International Relations (IR) theorists, and that it deserved 'more systematic attention by scholars of world politics (2000, p.155). The past decade has indeed seen a move towards more emotional-centred analyses in political research. Half a decade after Crawford, Andrew Ross (2006, p. 197) spoke of 'promising signs', regarding the improved and important status that emotion was gaining in the study of IR. It is also, only very recently that particular modules whose main focus is addressing the role of emotion in politics have come up in university courses. Emotional dimensions of national identity have been studied, by social constructivists and post-structuralists (Fierke 2004; Ahmed, 2004; Bleiker 2006). It was somewhat of a too sensitive issue to be dealt with by the hard realists (see Ross, 2006, p. 198). Emotions, therefore, one can argue, were not taken seriously in political research, before the 1990s. Fortunately, however, the previous trend of academics that somehow 'managed to ignore the swirl of passions all around them' (Goodwin et al 2001, p.1), is now being replaced by scholars who are more sensitive and appreciative of the presence of emotion in political research. When it has been examined, however, it is usually in relation to another concept, or as an angle with which to explain one of the other main foci, such as nationalism or religion (Mestrovic, 1995; Carrette, 2004).

This research, perhaps counter-intuitively, does not claim to be an exception to the rule. In fact, arguably, it is this particular innate characteristic of emotion, which is highly contextual and exogenous, that makes its use in relation/in context of other foci not only useful, but *pertinent* if one is to maximise its conceptual potential. Indeed, most of the criticisms of emotion have, and continue to stem, from the empirical level, and the argument that with emotion-related research you cannot 'prove' the internal validity of data and results, at its best, or that you cannot conduct empirical research at all, at its worst. However, this incorporation or combination and contextualisation that is characteristic of such research, should not be seen as a way out of the methodological accusations, but instead, as a necessary research mode or research paradigm, which can ensure that the findings or conclusions correspond to reality and can aptly explain the phenomena the research is dealing with. Social Scientists, need to come to terms with the fact that

"research can be insightful and valid even if it engages unobservable phenomena, and even if the results of such inquiries can neither be measured nor validated empirically" (Bleiker and Hutchinson, 2008, p.115).

Contrary to Ross, I argue that social constructivism can help us 'take emotions seriously'. It is my contention that emotions can and do in fact *mediate* our accessibility to national

⁷ Political psychology was an exception to this, as it appreciated the role of emotion, especially in conflict and conflict-resolution (see Volkman, 1979; Druckman 1994; Aureli and Smucni 2000, Long and Brecke, 2003)

identity formations, just as national identity has the structural potential to constrain, restrain, influence the type of emotions that are felt. My specific focus here is on the former process, on how collective emotions can *affect* national identity constructions. Like Fierke (2004), I emphasise the social context of emotions. I do not wish to draw an artificial boundary between individual or collective emotions, as I believe the relationship to be constitutive, but I focus on collective representations on this research, which shows that change is not only taking place on an individual level. Discussions with individuals are included in the empirical section, as they were deemed to be representative of the collective standpoint.

Although I do not deny that emotions are partly biological impulses, my focus here is on the constructions of emotions. National identity representations are meaning-laden, and discursive-representations of emotion are enclosed with meaning as well. But national identity is not just *mediated* through emotion, it is a phenomenon that *contains* emotional aspects as well. If it did not have this emotional terrain, then it would have been impossible for emotion to reach it in the first place, and hence for any sort of crisis to affect national identity, through emotion.

Crises are *emotion-laden* situations, and a national crisis, will invariably have an impact on national identities- which are also emotion-laden. I concur with Ross, when he argues that there is nothing individual about affect (2006, p.216). This is not to say that there are no individual subjective feelings, but merely that trying to distinguish between individual and collective feelings is pointless and useless as, no individual can 'feel' in a vacuum, entirely outside of any socially contextual influences. Feelings can be both individual and collective, but cannot be one and not the other. What I do in this research, is to focus on public representations of emotion. Hence, I place emphasis, not on how emotions affect particular individuals vertically, but on the *horizontal dimension* of emotions, which is also appropriate, and corresponds ontologically to the collective phenomenon that national identity constitutes.

Like we saw earlier, the conceptualization of national identity is 'not fixed by nature, given by God' but is 'performatively' constituted (Campbell, 1998, p.9) National identities are not pre-existing, closed, or external to the reality we are experiencing. They are instead, produced, and re-produced through discursive representations, and it is these perspectives that this research argues are important. These repeated performances that are mutually constituted (Campbell, 1998), have the ability to change in nature, and hence transformed repetition will re-produce national identity, but one of a different composition.

Diverging from Campbell's differentiation of the Other -perceived as a human security risk and danger- in the case of examining domestic financial crises as critical junctures, those elements which comprise the foreign, the Other, are no longer the imminent cause of the trauma and pain, (although of course they still compose a threat). Instead, these dynamics change, and it is part of the Self that is responsible for the financial debt that the country is in. The Self that existed up until now, in this way, becomes an internal Other whom we blame for the existing misfortunes (e.g. corrupt politicians, tax evaders), that we wish to differentiate our identity from, but at the same time we constitute a new identity which reflects this exact embarrassment and shame for being included in the same collective group as these individuals.

Experiences of trauma, can induce new dispositions that interrupt and disrupt otherwise stable national identities (Edkins, 2003). Certain financial crises have ramifications that are deep and wide enough to allow us to speak of a traumatic experience. Although the effect of this traumatic experience, and the extent of the remaining 'identity scar' can be better

seen after the event, the current experiences of this trauma can still be discursively represented, and located, through articulated interruptions/'bounces' of identity.

The traumatic crisis experience does not induce new emotions, but new waves of emotions; novel in their extent, form and constellation. The crisis has meant a particular assemblage of negative emotions that although draw from both past experiences, and past habits and social memories, they nevertheless, do it in a different context. Ross points to 'the synthetic quality of affect- its capacity to combine already-existing affect with contemporary experience' (2006, p.214). Long-term memories of previous financial crises in Greece, and previous emotions of betrayal, shame, discontent and fear, become folded into current responses, producing a new amalgamation. It helps to clarify this new wave of emotions if we view the emotion-identity nexus in the context of some kind of 'crisis' threshold, which has been exceeded. Beyond this limit, emotions are no longer recycled but are disruptive-powerful enough to allow one to speak of *a trauma to Greek identity as a whole*. Finally, this holistic element makes it possible to identify emotional systems, even if they are not stable or permanent.

On the same path as Catherine Lutz and Lila Abu-Lughod's work *Language and the Politics of Emotion* (1990), my work focuses on the social dimensions of emotion. I focus on the discursive descriptions and representations of emotion and how these discourses are not only shaped by social norms (Averill, 1980), but more importantly, how social and identity norms can be shaped by critical junctures that induce unprecedented waves of emotion. Everyday representations of emotion through demonstrations, speeches, new and old media, theatre and music, are all involved in forging new dispositions towards perceptions of the national Self, and hence, of national identity. Of course these affects also induce changes in attitudes towards not only national identity, but also political movements, parties, politicians. Borrowing Deleuze's (1988) concept of 'resonance' (and adjusting it to a different context), I propose viewing these collective expressions of emotion as emotional 'resonances' that are enhanced oscillations or amplified vibrations, but at the same time their common wavelength acts as the emotional thread that keeps individuals together as a collective group able of being studied. These emotional 'resonances' are capable of going beyond national borders, reaching diaspora communities, not least through the increased use of social networking facilities. This concept is similar to the concept of 'emotional contagion' (Izard and Tomkins, 1966; Gibbs, 2001) but the latter focuses on the non-cognitive transmission of feelings, where as I want to emphasise the conscious 'movement' of feelings within the public domain.

With regards to the discursive terrain, I focus, not on discourses *on* emotion, but discourses *of* emotion- or rather as Lutz and Abu-Lughod have aptly put it, '*emotional discourses*' i.e. 'discourses that seem to have some affective content or effect' (emphasis mine, 1990, p.10).

Constructivists have been accused of ignoring the physiological dimensions of emotion, which it has been argued, does not allow research to capture the 'depth and intensity' of emotion (Ross, 2006, p.201). My contention is that a physiological dimension exists, but is not one that matters as such, for socio-political research- it neither helps explain, nor conduct it. Those who argue for this biological dimension have told us little about its relation to cognitive responses, and how this impacts on the way human subjects think or behave in the everyday politics of life. Unlike Joseph Le Doux, who offers a neuroscientific explanation of the role of emotion (1996, p.302), I do not perceive 'conscious feelings' as only part of the 'icing', but as the 'emotional cake' itself. Although I would not go as far as to argue that 'emotions can exist only in the reciprocal exchanges of a social encounter' (Harré, cited in Ross, 2006, p.201), it is through the social encounters and social

representations that social and political research can maximise the potential of the study of emotions. Rather than getting tied up in a fruitless debate on whether it is physiological or cognitive machinery that give rise to emotions, I accept that emotions have both these dimensions, and consciously chose to focus on the latter. Hence, the importance of structure, but also agency becomes evident in such an analysis. Agency is important if we are to focus on emotions that the self is aware of and able to control to a considerable degree, i.e. they chose whether and how to express them- it is not an involuntary action. This is why I also reject Ross's criticism of social constructivism as an inadequate theory with which one can study emotion, due to the alleged lack of emphasis on human agency (2006, p.198). It is particularly with these reflections of thinking agents that social constructivism allows us to deal with, but from a macro perspective: societal emotional discourses.

Of course, manifold individual emotions have different expressions and intensities, but social cohesion and social dynamics make it possible to ascertain a pattern, a wave of emotion, that allows one to discern a more generalised, collective form of emotion (notwithstanding the antagonistic discourses). We can thus speak of nations that experience trauma, for example, nations that feel shame, and not just individuals. These 'emotional resonances' modify collective national identities and add this feeling of shame, but also it can inspire them into feelings of victimhood- they feel they are suffering together, although the traitors and perpetrators are not foreign-they still feel unfairly treated. This does not render the feeling of shame as invalid, as exactly because of this collective affect, the public still can feel ashamed even if they think someone else is to blame. In the case of Greece, for example, it is because they feel that they also belong under this label of being 'Greek'; they are all on the same boat and they cannot escape unaffected.

Psychoanalysis, national identity and 'emotional contingency'

Approaches to national identity often highlight the continuity, persistence and durability of nationalism (discussed in the next paragraph). Contrary to these positions, this research paper wants to emphasise the forms of nationalist discourses that actually have as their main characteristic the element of contingency. I introduce the element of 'emotional contingency' as a conceptual term that can offer a lens through which we can better elucidate the changing, but conflicting and unpredictable nature of national identity amidst financial crisis. As the empirical data will show, national identity has a remarkable inherent characteristic for flexibility and an almost selective elasticity, with individuals choosing to stretch it either one way or the other, according to the phenomenon they are trying to explain, or the argument they are trying to put forward. For example, when attempting to understand how the national deficit has reached such extremes, Greeks refer to their nature, this quality of being 'Greek' having negative connotations of laziness, inefficiency and some kind of inferiority syndrome.⁸ Conversely, when situations demand for a more defensive attitude –usually as a reaction to foreign criticism or perceived attacks by non-Greeks- we witness a knee-jerk response which refers back to the again perceived as inherent qualities that a Greek person has. These are qualities that non-Greeks are envious of, and which constitute the main demarcating line between the Greek and the other, the non-Greek- who of course wishes they could be Greek. On social media sites one can find quotations like 'O Ellhনারas' a sarcastic augmentative expression that literally translates to

⁸ Throughout my fieldwork observations, and from the large majority of blogs and websites I researched, there was an overwhelming common tendency of Greek people to refer to the 'Greeks' as lazy, corrupted, inefficient, and belonging to a backward-looking society whose mentality lacked communal feelings of public good.

the Big Greek (man)⁹ This strategic affiliation, a kind of 'pick and choose' characteristic is one that allows for the existing contradictions, emotional and ideological, to co-exist. In particular, this allows for rays of optimism amidst the pessimistic cloud that has dominated the country's psyche since 2009.

My argument also reflects a concern with the aforementioned approaches that emphasise the salience and durability of national identity, and in particular, arguments posed by recent literature on the affective enjoyment of identity. The following paragraphs offer an in-depth discussion of the counter-arguments.

Although, Stavrakakis and Chrysolora's article is extraordinarily erudite and intellectually fascinating, the paired argument that national identity 'resists the "laws of fluidity" and that it has shown 'remarkable resistance to various attempts to "reconstruct" or "deconstruct" it' (Stavrakakis and Chrysoloras, 2006, p.127) seems slightly problematic. To begin with, I agree with the latter argument, and this can be seen in regions of ethno-national conflict (e.g. Cyprus) where peace education has failed to be successful because those attitudes it is trying to change, are exactly those attitudes that refuse to accept it in the first place. Why would these peoples want, or allow, such perceived external attempts to have any effect on their precious national identity? However, this cannot be said for instances where these attempts are actually consciously or subconsciously, self-induced, self-created, and self-directed. Such an instance is one that is taking place with the reconstitution of national identity that, I propose here, is occurring currently in Greece. And- as such- one that goes against the former argument regarding the "laws of fluidity".

So if from this proposition one could identify two conditions that can make possible (not desirable) such change in national identity-albeit small and incomplete- the first one would be, that this needs to be from within the nation itself, and not seen as imposed from 'outside/above'. The second is the timing and negative nature of the event. Such bounces and reconstructions of national identity, occur within the temporal context of a crisis, with all the characteristics of such a phenomenon (the fact that it is signified as a crisis entails a difference, a change from before, therefore the time factor becomes important) as are also the difficulties and dangers (and the associated reverberations this has) for the people who experience it. Therefore, they could be called "self"-dependent and crisis-dependent. Within this context these conditions are necessary, but not sufficient or exhaustive.

Stavrakakis and Chrysoloras speak of 'remarkable stability' when referring to national identifications and use Lacanian psychoanalysis (and the concept of enjoyment) as an analytical framework to explain the salience and duration of these nationalist discourses. Anderson has argued that 'social change or transformed consciousness' do not 'do much to explain the attachment' (2006, p.145) to national identity. Marcussen et al have argued that 'social psychology theory tells us that social identities are *unlikely to change frequently*' (1999, p.616, emphasis in original). But, what happens when during period of crisis, this remarkable stability, becomes notorious for its failure to live up to its salience or longevity? Relative durability makes way for unresilience, even if this is short-term , it still shows that national identity may not be so perdurable after all. Even if it is elastic, i.e. it is bound to bounce back, and this is where I agree with the aforementioned research, this bouncing back is never to the same position. As has already been argued earlier, these nationalistic diversions, act as national traumas, which can be overcome, but cannot be erased from social or national memory. What we end up with is in fact, a reconstitution of national identity.

⁹ This by itself presents an interesting gendered articulation, but one that is outside the possible scope of this article.

The form of the national identity changes, because of the crisis forces, but in this case psychoanalysis is useful only in explaining the withdrawal symptom a crisis can have, and how this can act as the driving force for change, the 'why' of change, rather than the 'how' (form). Laclau has been criticised for not offering the conditions under which the 'logic of difference' can prevail. A concluding argument of my paper is that crisis conditions offer such opportunities, if one may call them as such.

Arguably, Greece is facing a type of 'de-securitisation' of national identity, and this is possible, only because the cause of fear and risk is predominantly seen as internal.¹⁰ Hence, the feelings of shame and the action of self-blame through emotions become possible. These passions have shaken up the bedrock of Greek national identity. The self becomes for a short time, the barbarian. What Marcussen et al have called 'a sense of distinctiveness' in relation to other communities or social groups (1999, p.616) becomes negative and therefore the Self is part of the enemy. This opens up possibilities for weakening although not invalidating the Self/Other binary as us/them. Even Stavrakakis and Chrysoloras argue that 'when encountering a dislocatory event, entering a state of crisis or a "critical juncture" ', those identity formations that seem relatively steady can lose this appearance (2006, p.150).

But even this disappointment, this dissatisfaction fuels the desire to re-taste the enjoyment or satisfaction that was experienced in the past (in times of national pride, for example when Greece hosted the Olympic Games, when it won the Euro, even when it won the Eurovision song contest!). Hence Lacan (1998) argues that this enjoyment, or *jouissance*, helps partially explain support for particular identifications- in this case national identifications. He argues that what drives our identification acts is our past tasters of pleasure, which help sustain our future desire, but at the same time one that is never capable of complete satisfaction. It is exactly this inability, this unsatisfied need, that acts as the driving force. It 'reproduces the fantasmatic promise of its recapturing' (Stavrakakis and Chrysoloras, 2006, p.151). Hence, this cycle goes on, and our desire is sustained.

More importantly for this paper, what happens in situations when not only is this type of enjoyment not fulfilled, but in fact, in its place there is, instead, the exact opposite- a feeling of intense pain, symbolic or/and real? How do people deal with this? And what impact does this have on the future form of national identities post-crises? An evident limitation of psychoanalysis is that it fails to take into account financial crises and the associated impacts. If 'enjoyment operates as the foundation of national solidarity' (Stavrakakis and Chrysoloras, 2006 p. 154), then does pain operate as the shaking up of this foundation? I answer affirmatively to this question, but what still remains to be seen is how can we empirically recognise this negative emotional presence and national disruption in a way that is epistemologically and ontologically compatible. The next empirical section investigates 'how nationalist logics and frames of references are formulated and deployed' (Jenkins and Sofos, 1996, p. 11) in discursive representations of emotion through new and old media, and through data collected during ethnographic research.

¹⁰ Of course the alternative discourse is one which securitises the crisis, and the national identity, as the crisis- real or imagined (artefact)- is perceived as a result of external strategic interests. In this case the usual tendency to blame external agents for the dislocatory situation prevails in the discourse-see Part B.

PART B - Empirical Findings

Adopting a cross-sectional research design, and a qualitative methodology, I researched a variety of data and tried to indulge into the cultural settings and communication tools dominant in Greece. For a period of 18 months, starting from November 2010, I systematically searched for data that could inform my understanding of the implications of the crisis on national identity, and in particular focusing on emotional constructs of this identity. This data, which included newspapers, TV shows, blogs and social networking sites (predominantly Facebook), then helped to (in)form my conceptual argument that has been discussed in Part A.

Moreover, ethnographic results were collected during a short visit in November 2010 (5 days), followed by a second visit in April 2011 (14 days) to the two largest cities of Greece, Athens and Thessaloniki; the capital city in the south, and the so-called 'co-capital' in the north. Ethnography, which builds on the social constructivist ontology, helps us understand a nation's culture, feelings and meanings, that exist behind externally expressed behaviour (Neuman, 2011, pp.423-424). Participant observation and interviewing were the two research methods used. Due to the qualitative nature of the research, and the short time span of the fieldwork, a snow-balling sample was used, which had a turn-out of 12 interviewees. Most interviews were unstructured and of a very informal nature, so as to prevent as far as possible the addition of an artificial layer to the research data collected. Using both research methods, the main objective of my ethnography was to investigate and assess the impact of the financial crisis on the way Greeks perceived what it means to be Greek, whether there was a change at all, the nature and commonality of this change, and in particular how they *felt* about the situation they were in. More specifically, I tried to understand how these emotions functioned in a societal context.

All individuals that participated in this research, remain anonymous in order to protect their identity; confidentiality has been maintained through the use of pseudonyms, instead of the real names of participants. Everything else has remained true to the characteristics of the participants, and no other method (e.g. changing age, gender, occupation) has been used to ensure further anonymity. This has been done in order to avoid large amounts of distortion that would otherwise affect the internal validity and reliability of the data collected. As Lee argues, balancing 'disguise and distortion' can be tricky and problematic (1993: 187; see also Becker & Bryman, 2004: 345). The discussions took place in Greek, and therefore all the translations are mine.

Because of the nature of the research topic, which links emotions with national identity, it is all the more important to conduct country-specific case studies, rather than speak generally of the international political context. This association (national→country) might seem obvious, but it is nonetheless, crucial if one is to reach the depths of the particular culture-specific discourses, and try and understand its people. Media depictions vary, and so do their accuracy when compared to the social reality that the locals construct and constitute. Only then is it possible to somehow grasp for a moment, the shifting, context-dependent meanings that characterize everyday life.

A final reason I believe emotions are so important for Greece, (and hence, the phrase 'Greek Passions' emerges somewhat as a very natural one!) has to do with what it means to be Greek, and how these peoples have historically been very 'passionate' when compared to other countries (e.g. the Finnish). Greeks are not ontologically different to the rest, but the particular characteristics of the Greek way of life, which one can loosely embrace under the umbrella of 'culture' render certain characteristics more prominent than

others. My contention is that Greek culture (and with it the media) have a more passionate way of dealing with social and political crises. This can be seen for example in the ways of mourning. Of course this is not an absolute generalization, but the way a Greek mother would mourn for a loss of a soldier son and express her pain is different to the (a Greek funeral is usually accompanied with loud cries and so-called 'moirologia' with a more conspicuous clearer expression of pain) way a mother would express her pain in an English funeral. It is not a difference in the degree of pain, but in how this emotion is expressed – again what is acceptable, expected – the social norm.

To start with, the random people I would approach on the street, would sometimes be quite suspicious and unfriendly, fearing I wanted to sell them something, or that I may represent an organisation and hence ask for donations. Unsurprisingly, the crisis has made the Greek people very money conscious. A man in his mid 50s blurted out the following, before I even had time to say who I was and what I was doing there: "No! I do not have money...and I did not 'eat' the money!" Again, the context is important here, as for the past decade or so, a huge influx of immigrants who employ themselves by selling illegal copies of music, movies and designer replica bags, have meant that people are quite reluctant to even speak to a stranger. While I was sitting at a central café in Aristotelous Square in Thessaloniki, I was approached by five different sellers, in the period of just over an hour. Of course, the situation proved much more fruitful when I followed a Greek adoption of a snow-balling sample, which in practice meant speaking to contacts, and to the friends of these contacts, and so on.¹¹

There is no space to review in detail all the different types of crisis narratives that have emerged since the onset of the Greek crisis, but it is through them that we are able to discern *emotional paradigms that have had an impact on national identity*. Emotions cannot be seen as external elements of narratives, but embedded in them. Narratives are infused with emotions; their parameters are set by emotional dynamics. Emotions have (to use an adaptation of Barnett and Duvall's taxonomy) both structural and productive powers. They have both causal links and constitutive relations with narratives, as they have the ability to enhance, reduce, exaggerate, formulate. Admittedly, there is no fixed strategy to determine the traces and nor is this possible, but this anyway is not the desired goal here.

Earlier on in this paper (pp. 4-5), I mentioned the importance of foreign perceptions of the Greeks, to both the Greeks themselves, but also to the research. Again, the way they think they are perceived by the non-Greeks influences the nature of the social debates that take place, and how the Greeks then re-negotiate and re-construct their national identity within their country. I argue that the negative foreign attitudes, arguments and views that were portrayed regarding the 'Greeks' and their role and responsibility for the domestic financial crisis, had an impact on how they re-constituted their identity.

Foreign commentaries were neither fixed, nor absolute. They were both fluid, and varied, with either people changing their minds as they heard personal stories, or re-affirming existing stereotypical perceptions. Some commentators and journalists were quite keen to discursively 'cane' the Greeks (arguably *The Economist* was one of these magazines, but the worst was the infamous German *Focus's* front pages) while others were being more empathetic with the suffering of the ordinary workforce (often referring to Greece as a 'beautiful country, with lovely people')¹². My research findings point towards an emergent

¹¹ The data presented here is only a small fraction of the data collected throughout the duration of this project, but hopefully this can be extended into a wider project in the near future.

¹² *Focus Magazine* published a collage of the statue of Aphrodite de Milo showing a middle finger while the article's headline read: "Deceivers in the European family". This spurred a bitter dispute that spread beyond the Greek and German media, to politicians, and even saw the uploading of hostile youtube videos. The

bi-polarisation of domestic attitudes, with one dominant strand being even more ashamed by the international dimensions of these accusations, and discursively communicating feelings of shame, disappointment and discontent with both the state and society. This was for me the most interesting emotional impact, as it represented a rupture, a discontinuity on prior articulations of what it means to be Greek. Indeed, the counter-discourse represented an even more polarized attitude, a continuity in one sense, but ironically a change too- as this time the nationalistic discourse was a re-actionary one, a kind of defensive mechanism to what they saw as attacks by the foreigners who they claimed envied and hated the Greeks, and were responsible for the situation the Greeks were in. They dealt with criticism by putting forward arguments which proved- according to them- why the world is jealous of them (new media included multiple references to Ancient Greeks and their achievements), and why 'it is to the world's interest to hit and damage Greece'.

The particular Greek and German printed media tangle had wider repercussions that spread to social networking sites, television and radio shows, and Youtube videos. Lakis Lazopoulos, a very popular Greek television comedian also dressed as a Nazi soldier in front of the Greek parliament during his prime-time show and produced videos which mocked the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel. The German stance reportedly added weight to the arguments of those Greeks, who believe that Greece is not to blame, and whose nationalism has actually been strengthened through all these perceived attacks, or so I was told. According to some people I spoke to, this was evidence of the validity of the conspiracy theories, which varied from a strategic German plan to downgrade Greece because of its natural resources, to a huge conspiracy by the Americans. Contrary to my initial expectations, the level of education did not affect the existence of these theories. Amongst those who believed in this were a 23 year-old politics undergraduate student, a 31 year-old army officer whose highest qualification was a Masters degree, and a 63 year-old woman with a doctorate. Therefore, education did not necessarily reflect less nationalistic (or narrow-minded?) ideas.

The dominant discourse however, communicated feelings of shame, disappointment and discontent with both the state and society. The social space is infused with misery and feelings of inferiority. The image of the Greek that is being re-constructed has nothing in common with the image of the Ancient Greek- the latter referred to with nostalgia and sadness, as a lost ideal. The Greek of today is seen as a disappointing figure, who has lost his social and political morals, who has succumbed to the individualistic pleasures at the expense of others. The Greek is comfortable staying with his/her parents until they are 30, and do not mind living on the dole. When Greeks complain to each other, then their reaction is a phrase very common in everyday Greek language: 'You live in Greece, nothing changes'. A 64 year old retired man's comments to me were characteristic:

"Everything is down in this country. Everything is going down-nothing is going up (laughter). You are in Greece, dear. Every yesterday was a better day. Look around you, everyone is stressed, angry, and miserable. No money, but the 'big Greek' [Ellinaras] cannot cut back on his coffee or his night life- bouzoukia are bouzoukia!"

Greek newspapers responded by digging up sensitive issues of the past, and speaking of 'Financial Nazism' by the Germans. They referred to World War II reparations, and the damage that Greece had experienced during the Nazi occupation. PASOK's parliamentary representative Petros Evthimiou noted that "instead of Germany showing the finger of Aphrodite de Milo, it must realize that it is sitting on it." Foreign discourses of the Greek crisis are both useful and interesting, but they go beyond the scope of this article, and therefore will not be explored further here.

An interesting comment that illustrates the nostalgic reference to what it meant to be a Greek in the distant past was made by a 25 year-old female doctoral researcher. She told me:

“I admire the Germans. And I agree with all that is being said (by the German media). We always talk about Sparta and Alexander the Great, which happened a billion years ago. But what did we achieve today? Nothing! We are being used by the foreign media only as a benchmark for negative comparisons, a yardstick with which one can gauge how better off they are than we are. The Germans of today are looked upon by the world in the same way as the Greeks were admired many years ago, once upon a time”.

The majority of blogs I have read have been reinforcing the stereotype that modern Greeks are politically unsophisticated (for an anthropological discussion see Herzfeld, 1987), and that the failure of the financial and political system reflects a failure of society, as a moral and civil institution. Many of these blogs are infused with feelings of shame, and intense self- sarcasm, where the self represents not the individual but the nation, the social collective. I have been reading Greek blogs and sites, varying from lifestyle ones to academic ones systematically for over 12 months, and not once did I see an individual refer to feelings of shame, by speaking in the singular tense, or by referring to habits they personally do. The reference is usually to ‘us, the Greeks’.

‘Cultural intimacy’, is a term coined by Herzfeld which highlights:

“the centrality of those aspects of a cultural and national identity that are considered as a source of external embarrassment but that nevertheless provide insiders with their assurance of common sociality- familiarity”.
(2005, p.3)

The dominant discourses, which relate to contemporary Greece reflect feelings of shame, of embarrassment towards Europe. Shame exists in the first place because it actually bothers one that the other person thinks and depicts them and their country in a negative way. If this issue did not matter to them, they would not be so passionate about it. So, again it reaffirms that what ‘others’ think of Greece, the outsiders’ view matters a lot to the Greeks. The latter part of Herzfeld’s quote also points towards the fostering of a ‘new’, a transformed commonality. What keeps the Greeks united now is that there is to a certain degree a consensus regarding this negative connotation associated with the contemporary status of Greek national identity. Again, conceptualizing such change can be difficult and it is not final, or total, but this should not mean that we cannot speak of change. Change occurs even if it is not long-term, even if its impact will fade way.

Not all news is bad news

What, then, one may ask, is the future importance of these ‘identity scars’? For one, they can serve as reminders of past mistakes. Moving beyond the crisis itself, they can still act as strong warnings of the dangers of complacency or extreme pride, which will, as a consequence, make them more cautious both in how Greeks discursively frame their national position and strength in the future, and how this national affiliation impacts upon and guides their actions. These actions can be at an individual, social, or foreign policy level. Hence, the second aspect is its importance as a lesson. Whether they choose to learn, or ignore, this lesson is entirely up to them. It would be interesting to see in a few years time, if we can speak of a process of ‘social learning’ in the aftermath of the crisis.

How exactly these 'identity scars' will affect the nature of Greek national identity in the long-term is again something that remains to be seen.

Crises are situations of difficulty that are capable of latching chaos but also both during and after these periods of time, they offer opportunities for self-criticism and self-reflection. We witness people trying to make sense of what is going on around them, trying to comprehend, to offer some explanation, some logic for what is happening, and as such it opens up new windows for change, the kind of remoulding that takes place after breaking down. After an initial period of negativity and fall, the empirical work has shown that some Greek people have started thinking about the crisis more constructively, not only in terms of self-reflection followed by efforts of improvement, but also in the way that everyday politics are represented- for example, the peaceful demonstrations of the 'indignant' Greeks in May 2011 were unprecedented. So crises *can* inspire people to be creative, to seek noble ideas that will allow them to not only deal with the current crisis, but ensure that some of the mistakes of the past will be avoided.

Speaking of their common embarrassment, paradoxically, became a new social norm that provided that sort of gluey gel that kept the Greeks afloat and together- it didn't smell good, but it kept them united. These emotions of shame, disappointment and discontent, were not felt by all, nor did those who feel them do so in the same degree. They did, nevertheless, become embedded into their constructions of national identity, and which has been for sometime a central theme of discussion- and Greeks talk, they talk a lot, and they are often good at it!

Out of public debate and discussions came the mass realization that the main causes of the Greek crisis are to be found in the specific characteristics of the Greek political system (and political culture). Takis S Pappas, a well-known Associate Professor of Comparative Politics at the University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki, wrote an insightful article entitled 'The causes of the Greek crisis are in Greek politics', where he argued that populism, patronage and ethnocentrism lie at the heart of Greece's political culture, and hence, financial problems. He also blamed the failure of Greeks to successfully become embedded in the European culture:

"Incomplete Europeanization is responsible for the failure of redefining Greek national identity towards a common European norm, as is shown by countless examples ranging from the visible lack of interest by the Greek national parliament in the EU policy-making process to Greece's providing the EU with false statistics."
(Pappas, November 29th, 2010)

The crisis is conceptualized as an instance of discontinuity in terms of the national values that are adhered to one's national identity- both in terms of an internal identity (within Greece, national context) and of an external identity (the image of the Greeks outside Greece, how they are seen internationally). The external factor is, as I have already pointed out, significant because it has an impact on how Greeks feel about themselves. That the external factor is important is indisputable- Greece does not exist in a vacuum, it is a member of the Eurozone and accountable to the EU¹³- but what is more interesting here is the way it has affected the way Greeks think and feel. Negative depictions have made some feel even more shameful, and angry, and enhanced their views (old or new) regarding the socio-political so called 'inferiority' of the Greeks, especially when compared to other EU countries.

¹³ And financially dependent on it for its financial bailout.

Of course, discourses are neither fixed nor stable, and conflicting discourses and attitudes are sometimes seen within the same individuals. I found it particularly interesting that the same person who was referring to the crisis as a conspiracy, and who (when they found out that my research would be read abroad) was insisting that the Greeks represent the highest ethnic rank, posted comments on their social networking page, mentioning how backwards the country was, and how this does not surprise him, as he is living in Greece! The fact that I was not from Greece, and the knowledge that information given to me would be disclosed to a wider public that would go beyond the Greek borders again seemed to have made a difference to the depictions made by some participants.

Again, this has been explored by anthropologist Herzfeld (2005), who argues that this takes place because the ethnographer/researcher is seen to trespass an internal space- what he calls 'cultural intimacy'. It is fascinating to see how important the external image is, and how in reaction to this perceived violation of cultural sensitivities, some reactions become very defensive. Intrusion into the privacy not only of individual space, but of the 'privacy of nations'- Herzfeld¹⁴ applies this to anthropologists, but I argue that the same reaction can also be extended to external researchers, financial analysts, journalists etc.

As Takis Pappas put it: 'a new social and political contract is necessary if Greece is to exit the current crisis and reconstitute its political system' (November 29th, 2010). Some Greeks, insist that the change has to come from without. Fortunately, they are not the majority. Most Greeks have in some way or another, some more painfully than others, admitted that Greece needs to change its political culture, its system, the everyday thinking and behaviours of its people. This, has had an impact on how Greeks feel and speak or write about their nationality, and about their nation. What remains to be seen, is if this ideational re-construction will remain long enough so that one can speak of 'social learning' (see Checkel, 2001) i.e. if the crisis will lead to any changes in the material behavior of these citizens.

Conclusion - Emotions matter

Three years after the publication of Bleiker and Hutchinson's article in 2008, which was concerned with the scarcity of scholarly studies of emotion in world politics, a desired improvement is beginning to manifest itself. Although, scholarly debates on the *methodological* issues at stake in 'emotions research' in the discipline of political science, have not followed pace, scholarly publications on the role of emotions have been a 'sexy' topic lately, filling up the content of many conference panels (the Political Studies Association conference of April 2011 had 6 papers on the role of emotions in politics, 2 of which directly discussed the role of emotions in the financial crisis). One could argue that it is too soon to speak of a change, or to empirically try to assess or show a change, especially as this would ideally mean a systematic comparison with a project that had pre- and post-crisis data, so as to ensure internal reliability. This research paper points towards a temporary rupture in the nationalism of the Greek people, but one that could have

¹⁴ Michael Herzfeld also uses this concept to explain what he sees as a paradox of citizens rejecting state – sanctioned norms, but in times of crisis prove to be loyal citizens. I disagree with this latter point, especially in the context of the financial crisis, as the thousands of demonstrators have shown that they neither want nor trust the state mechanisms. Perhaps, this is an exception to Herzfeld's norm, precisely because the crisis is an esoteric one, not to do with foreign policy or the fear of the 'Turkish' other, for example, but one that has directly and actually impacted the individual Greek and whose repercussions are actually 'felt' in both ideational and material ways. What the crisis has done however, is to unite their people in their 'suffering'.

positive effects if acted upon, both in a discursive and a more practical, action-oriented sense. I have presented some of the constructions of the crisis, and how these relate and refer, directly or indirectly, to national identity.

Although the observations I have made are rather preliminary, they are important in providing us with a closer insight into the possible links between emotion, national identity, and financial crises. Therefore, just as nationhood creates identity spaces, financial crises offer the opportunity for ruptures in these identity spaces, that take place through a discursive struggle in the wider discursive context of the crisis. What Laclau and Mouffe (1985) call an organic crisis, and Derrida (1978) sees as ruptures, can be seen in essence, as dis(ruptures) of thought and emotion. Financial crises which develop into socio-political crises, call into question the existing national identity, give rise to emotional responses that 'resonate' within society, and make possible certain changes by legitimising or delegitimizing processes.

These processes offer a means for new constructions to emerge, whilst the line that differentiates between the past and present constructions is a blurred one due to the partiality and 'unfixability' of meaning. This reconstitution has either involved change to maintain, or change to disrupt, continuity. Both strategies, can be thought about in terms of binary oppositions that Greek people currently draw upon and that frame their everyday thinking and behaviours. The people of Greece have been forced to rethink and question presumptions regarding nationalism, Hellenism, their identities, that have existed for so long in their national and personal narratives. I hope that with this analysis I have exposed both the arbitrariness and the contingency of emotional constructions of national identity in Greece.

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