

**“NARRATIVES OF FLIGHT”: ACCOUNTS OF PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT
RELATIONS AND EMIGRATION FROM GREECE. A CRITICAL DISCURSIVE SOCIAL-
PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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ABSTRACT

Recent survey data attest that young professionals and graduates massively opt to emigrate from crisis-ridden Greece. Drawing on interview data by young professionals (18-26 years old), in urban centres of Greece, this study attempts to explore the discursive practices which informants mobilise to account for the prospect of migrating abroad, as well as the constructions of agency and subjectivity within these ways of accounting. Analysis drawing on insights from critical discursive social psychology indicates that participants articulate a 'narrative of personal effort': a) by characterising and evaluating through metaphors of the Greek labour and migration regime as context; b) by asserting their effort and agency, tracing their mobility to their psychological properties; while c) accounting for the ambivalence of 'fight or flight'. Analysis also points out how participants orient themselves to a dilemma of stake and accountability, being concerned to position themselves as effortful and entrepreneurial subjects, opting to emigrate.

INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to explore the ways in which young professionals in Greece working in precarious conditions: a) account for the decision of emigrating in an interview context; and b) narratively construct their agency and identity within these ways of accounting. Drawing on critical discursive social psychology (Wetherell 1998; Wetherell & Edley 1999) the study attempts to reach the above objectives by casting light on both the discursive practices as well as on the ideological resources that are prominent in the discourse on precarious employment relations and emigration in times of economic crisis.

THE NEO-LIBERAL REGIME OF PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS IN GREECE

There has been a widespread assertion among social theorists that in the last 30 years we have globally witnessed the advent of neoliberalism (eg Beck 1992; Berardi 2007, 2009; Boltanski & Chiapello 2010; Duménil & Lévy 2011; Furlong &

Cartmel 1997; Ross 2009; Sennett 2005). A lot of academic debate and documentation worldwide has also been devoted to the concept of 'precarity' in neoliberal times: namely, the flexibilisation of the work contract and the proliferation of possible employment relations (for instance, Letourneux 1998; Gallie & Paugam 2002; Rodgers & Rodgers 1989; Standing 2011 2014).

'Precarity' is used in this study as an umbrella term to refer to a labour 'regime'¹ encompassing such irregular working conditions as, to name but a few, part-time employment, hourly wages, temporary or short-term contracts and undeclared labour: in general, forms of employment deviating from the 'standard employment relationship', which was developed under the aegis of legislation or collective negotiation and agreement (Rodgers & Rodgers 1989). Precarity can hence be defined as 'a cumulative combination of atypical employment contracts, limited social benefits, poor statutory entitlements, job insecurity, short tenure and low wages' (Lewchuk, De Wolff, King & Polanyi 2003: 23). Furthermore, Kalleberg places emphasis on the distress produced by precarious work, when he defines it as 'uncertain, unpredictable and risky from the part of the worker. Resulting distress, obvious in a variety of ways, reminds us daily of such precarity' (Kalleberg 2009: 2).

To theorise this global tendency, Guy Standing (2011, 2014) has suggested that in times of global crisis, we witness the rise of the precariat, a new global social class. Recent publications on precarious employment relations estimate that 40% of the Greek population has worked in precarious labour/bad jobs (eg Mouriki 2010). In addition, Kapsalis (2015) draws from ILO (2014) data to attest that in the years 2010-2014, undeclared labour as formally estimated by the officially appointed control authorities (the Special Agency of Insurance Control) started from 29.7% in 2010, only to skyrocket to 40.5% by 2013 and eventually decline to 25% by 2014. What is more, in the period 2009-2015 new contracts for part-time work increased by 329%, while job rotation contracts increased by 707% (Kapsalis 2015). According to the Labour Force Survey, the unemployment rate reached 22% in 2011, increasing to 25% in 2012 and continued to go up to 27.2% in January 2013 until its decrease to 24% in the last quarter of 2015 (INE-GSEE 2016). According to the recent report by the Institute of Work of the General Confederation of Greek Workers (INE-GSEE, 2016), it is estimated that the unemployment percentage for young people aged 15-19 in Greece exceeds 58%, for people aged 20-24 amounts

¹The notion of 'regime' is employed to refer to conditions of precarious work in order to set its prevalence in neo-liberal times of crisis. Walther (2006: 124) states that the notion of 'regime' "relates to existing institutional settings that have a history structured not only by conflicts and the interest of specific social actors but also by the set of values and interpretations which they constantly reproduce. Institutions and concepts merge into what is conceived of as a 'normal' in a given context, which also includes a 'normal' relation between individual entitlements and collective demands. Herein, cultural and social patterns are also concerned with influencing individuals' biographical orientations".

to 48% while for people 25-29 it reaches 34%. These data suggest that flexible and precarious employment patterns are becoming the norm in the Greek labour market, maximising employment vulnerability and its organisational and social consequences. Kesisoglou, Figgou and Dikaiou (2016) have also demonstrated how such a norm of precarity is constructed discursively as a 'banal' work regime for young people, impacting their subject positions (Davies & Harré 1990) and agency (Gershon 2011).

IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION REGIME IN CRISIS

For at least the past 25 years, Greece has become a destination country for labour migration, hosting migrants from Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa. The labour regime of precarity was first tested and applied on the migrants working in the Greek industrial farming, the factories and the service economy, as Alvaro, Marvakis, Parsanoglou and Petracou (2008) and Kesisoglou (2013) suggest. Moreover, what is termed as the 'migration regime' of Greece (Alvaro, Marvakis, Parsanoglou & Petracou 2008; Marvakis 2004), favours irregular immigration, undeclared labour, 'limbo' permit status, effectively creating a social apartheid for immigrants (Marvakis 2004), while lacking official inclusion policies, apart from the right to a school education. According to data from the EU Labour Force Survey, in 2014 773,000 of the working age population in Greece were of migrant origin, while reaching 11% of the overall population. Triandafyllidou (2010) also estimated that before the advent of the economic crisis, approximately 1.3 million immigrants and expatriates resided in Greece. Of course, in the recent decades there is a 'second generation'²¹ in Greece. According to the 2014 EU Labour Force Survey, 126,000 of the second generation were in the working age population, while approximately 30% of the poorly educated and almost 60% of the highly educated second generation were in employment.

Labrianidis (2013) and Labrianidis and Vogiatzis (2013a, 2013b) observe that, with the advent of the 2010 economic crisis, there has been a rise in emigration from Greece. This 'brain drain' has led to over 126,000 university graduate professionals leaving Greece. This in turn translates into about 10% of graduates in Greece; 50% out of that 10% are Ph.D. graduates. On the same issue, Lambrianidis (2013) and the think tank Endeavour Greece (2015) estimate that 200,000 Greeks younger than 35 are employed abroad, a 300% increase since the crisis.

² According to the definition by Portes and Rumbaut (2005: 894) "a second generation immigrant is someone who lives in the host country for the last 5 years, has immigrated prior to adolescence, and has at least one foreign parent". One of the overall main interests of this research project was to investigate the similarities and potential differences in the accounts of native Greek and young adults of the second generation of (im)migrants regarding work and precarity.

Moreover, due to the crisis the immigrants in Greece massively opt to move again, or to repatriate. According to data from the Greek Statistics Agency, non-European residents in Greece declined in 2012 by 164,959 persons (Tsiros 2014). In the first five years of crisis (2009-2014), 33% of foreigners' work contracts literally vanished (Tsiros 2014). Finally, it is worth noting that the Institute of Work of the General Confederation of Greek Workers (INE-GSEE 2016) indicates that between 2014 and 2015 the unemployment percentage declined by 13.5% and 5.1% among the ages of 25-29 and 30-44 respectively. This decline, following the decline in the workforce, is directly attributable to emigration from Greece.

Hence, even though there are pioneering studies on the facts of the emigration of professionals, qualitative accounts and narratives of emigration in times of crisis are a fairly novel subject, both for the field of sociology of labour and employment relations, as well as for social and political psychology. This paper contributes to this project, aiming to advance the debate on the emigration of young highly-skilled professionals of Greece, in times of crisis. Therefore, the study aims to explore: a) the ways in which Greek young professionals account for opting to emigrate vis-à-vis their precarious employment conditions; and b) issues of identity and agency elicited in the context of these narrative accounts. On such an endeavour, a critical discursive social psychological approach (Bozatzis & Dragonas 2013; Tuffin 2005; Wetherell 1998) was considered appropriate. This choice was predicated on its emphasis on everyday ideologies and narratives and their multifaceted nature, which can help us shed light on the complex ways of understanding the option to emigrate in conditions of crisis and precarity.

CRITICAL DISCURSIVE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Critical discursive social psychology (Bozatzis & Dragonas 2013; Bozatzis 2009; Wetherell 1998; Wetherell & Edley 1999), as a method of qualitative data analysis, aims at examining talk-in action, as processes of ideological reproduction in talk, as specific social practices, taking into account the constructive and action-oriented nature of discourse (Potter 2007). This approach stems from the dialogue between the fine-grained conversation analysis with the political-genealogical lens of post-structuralism (Wetherell 1998); it provides researchers with analytic frames, concepts and tools in order to conduct better analyses, focusing on both micro and macro contexts of discursive production. Such tools and concepts are interpretative repertoires (Potter and Wetherell 1987); subject positioning (Davies & Harré 1990; Wetherell 1998); the management of accountability in talk (Bozatzis 2009); categories constructed in talk (Figgou & Condor 2006); ideological dilemmas (Billig et al. 1988); and psycho-discursive practices (Wetherell & Edley 1999; Wetherell 2007, 2008).

There has been an extensive debate on the evaluation criteria regarding discursive research (eg Lincoln 1995; Wood & Croger 2000). Potter and Wetherell (1987) proposed a criteria framework concerning the validity of discursive research, based

on a social constructionist (Gergen 1985) and 'epistemologically relativist' (Potter 1996) perspective. Their first criterion lies in the coherence of the analytic claims in relation to the body of discourse analysed, ie 'analysis should let us see how the discourse fits together' (Potter & Wetherell 1987: 170). Participants' orientation is the second validation criterion, as analytic claims should not diverge from the actual discourse of the participants. The third advanced criterion is the emergence of new problems and questions arising upon giving analytic answers. Finally, the fruitfulness of the analysis, generating novel explanations, making sense of new kinds of discourse in a research field is the fourth criterion proposed by Potter and Wetherell (1987).

Through this methodological perspective, we aim to address, in an interview context, the question of how young people working in precarious conditions in Greece speak about their possibilities of emigrating. In this effort, analytic focus is placed on how the informants employ discursive accounts to narratively construct their agency and identity.

According to Edwards and Potter (1992), accountability is a routine feature of interaction, since speakers ordinarily deal with issues of agency and responsibility when offering reports of events. Thus, accounting and accountability are pertinent in a research interview as a local interactional context for the description of work and the construction of the self. This is indeed the context where informants employ psycho-discursive practices, defined as 'recognisable, conventional, collective and social procedures through which character, self, identity, the psychological, the emotional, motives, intentions and beliefs are performed, formulated and constituted. Psycho-discursive practices are those which among the sum of social practices constitute a psychology, formulate a mental life and have consequences for the formation and representation of the person' (Wetherell 2007: 668). In this analysis, the concept will be seen as a resource for the narrative construction of identity performed by the participants in the interviews. Drawing on Anderson (1997: 212), 'narrative is a dynamic process that constitutes both the way that we organise the events and experiences of our lives to make sense of them and the way we participate in creating the things we make sense of, including ourselves'. The prominent argument in this paper is that the regime of precarious employment relations has become widespread and 'banal' in crisis-laden Greece. The discursive analytic approach (Potter & Wetherell 1987; Wetherell 1998) can be fruitful in the study of accounts of emigration by young professionals, in order to highlight constructions of identity, as discursive practices and narrative constructions of the self, ie as regularities across a sample of participants in a study, embedded though in the macro social and political context.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND ANALYTIC LENS

Participants and interviews

For the purposes of this project, 40 semi-structured interviews were conducted with young adults, 18-27 years old. The interviews were held during 2010-2012, in the early years of the Greek crisis. In this procedure, 19 persons of second generation immigrant origin and 21 native Greeks were interviewed in depth. All the participants were living in urban areas of Greece, most of them in the capital city of Athens. They were all high school graduates in Greece and most had higher education qualifications (ie university or college degree). Interviewees were reached through personal contacts, then by snowball sampling, using their social networks, acquaintances and family ties. The interviews were digitally recorded and lasted about an hour. All interviews were fully transcribed, focusing on the reproduction of content.

The interview schedule consisted of open-ended questions structured in three sections. The first section involved questions on the socio-economic background of the participant, the origin and structure of the family, the school and higher education years. Chronologically, this part involved the past and the context of each participant. The second part consisted of questions on participants' previous work experiences, starting with the earlier ones and proceeding to the latest. Questions concerned the term of employment, the way the job was found, the sum of pay, insurance and the reason for the termination of employment. This section roughly addressed the present period in the participant's life history. Finally, the last section revolved around the projected future, inquiring on aspirations and future plans. This was the section that provided the data for this paper.

It needs to be mentioned³ that the wording of the interviews which provided the extracts in Greek were translated in English by the first author after the analysis, then corroborated by the other two authors.

Analytic procedure

The first stage of data analysis involved the selection of manageable chunks (Potter & Wetherell 1987) from the transcripts (in the original Greek language), according to thematic similarities. The second stage, which provided the extracts for this paper, was organised around the search for regularities, recurring patterns and argumentative lines (Wetherell 1998; Wetherell & Edley 1999). Following on from Kesisoglou, Figgou and Dikaiou (2016), the interview as a method of data elicitation, as a specific dialogic interaction (Potter & Hepburn 2005), was taken as a local context, which afforded particular types of accounts, categorisations and

³ As suggested by Temple and Young (2004), the act of translation needs to be identified, since the role of the researcher/translator of the findings is inextricably bound to the socio-cultural positioning of the researcher. In effect, the act of translation of findings has been found to be fruitful for the researcher/translator/author in order to reflexively discuss issues of meaning in the extracts.

evaluations (Edwards & Stokoe 2004; Potter 1998) regarding precarious work and emigration. It was inferred that jointly the participant and the interviewer performed the constructions of emigration in this local context of the interview, drawing on shared resources and shared knowledge (Edwards 1997) regarding the conditions of the labour market. In such an effect, particular analytic effort was exercised, in order to be reflexively mindful (Georgaka 2003) of the power asymmetry in the interview, ie to be reflexive regarding the imposition of the researcher's concerns and socio-cultural positioning⁴ (Billig 2003). This step then identified the patterns of accounting in the local interview context. As a next step of analysis, the identified regularities in the interview were hermeneutically contextualised in the macro level, drawing on relevant discursive studies as well as social and political theory. The final step involved the production of the analytic arguments, in an accessible report of findings, contending that their intelligibility and trustworthiness are indicative of their robustness and transferability outside the interview contexts (Kesisoglou, Figgou & Dikaiou 2016; Wetherell & Edley 1999).

ANALYSIS

In this section, three essential psycho-discursive practices will be highlighted as examples, which were consistently mobilised by the informants in their accounts on emigration. These practices were helpful in the narrative construction of the self and the personal agency. The first practice was the rhetorical construction and evaluation, through the effective use of metaphors, of the Greek labour regime. The second practice involved the assertion of individual agency, by the subject positions of the speaker. The third one highlights an example of the discursive construction of personal ambivalence regarding the repatriation of a second generation man of Albanian origin.

A) Metaphors for the Greek regime

In this extract, Elpida⁵, a 26 year old woman of Albanian origin, is accounting in the interview for trying to emigrate from Greece.

⁴ It is essential to address reflexively this power asymmetry, once it affects the positioning and accounting in the local context, as well as the constructions performed. The interviewer and the interviewees were of similar age, sharing the same language and similar conditions of living and working in crisis and precarity. Nevertheless, the difference of the socio-cultural background, the country of origin for the participants of the second generation (as the interviewer was Native Greek), the educational level, as well as the gender, proved to be meaningful differences for the dynamics of the interview, regarding the management of accountability for being effortful or not (Gibson, 2009, 2011; Kesisoglou, Figgou and Dikaiou, 2016) in precarious conditions of work.

⁵ All names and personal details of the participants have been anonymized, according to the relevant ethical standards.

4.4.1 – 4.36 “You live in a nightmare here”

1	E	But, 5 years you say, it is very hard, because, for example, with the
2		residence permit, I cannot wrestle this situation. I have already
3		applied for the Lottery, e.g. for America. I want in a very big degree,
4		it's just that I don't have this opportunity. If I had this opportunity I
6		would leave.
7	G	Without the lottery?
8	E	Yes
9	G	OK. Seeing that I have already had an interview on that, what do you
10		think of that, in America, do you have, say, any relatives?
11	E	A friend of ours went there recently...
12	G	Did he win the lottery?
13	E	No, he married an American. While we finished our degrees together,
14		generally things there move much faster. You live a nightmare here,
15		things are in slow motion, they never move and never advance.
16	G	Then, what would you like to do in America, if you won?
17	E	To continue there, for sure to go for a masters' degree because that's
18		my repressed wish, and I would work as a translator... I would also
19		prep myself for academia.

When asked to discuss her future expectations for the ensuing five years after the interview, she frames it as 'very hard' (l.1), she 'cannot handle the situation' (l.2), as she has a problem with her residence permit, as a member of the second generation. Thus she constructs a negative evaluation of the personal effects of the migration regime (Alvaro, Marvakis, Parsanoglou & Petracou 2008), in order to position herself (Davies & Harré 1990) as a person who is trying to emigrate. Her account, from then on, frames the migration regime through metaphors, in order to convincingly articulate her personal agency and effort as a neo(-liberal) subject (Dardot & Laval 2014). In line 14, she mobilises the metaphors for the Greek regime as a “nightmare”, where “things are in slow motion”, effectively setting both the evaluation and the time pace. Hence she can back up rhetorically the contrast of the American setting with the Greek (eg l.14, “things there move much faster”), establishing through an evaluation what is preferable for her. Notwithstanding, through this metaphor, she effectively describes the limbo temporal status of the migration and precarity regime in Greece, linking the perception of immobility with precarious conditions.

The participant then recounts the prospect of emigrating by rhetorically evaluating the Greek regime and contrasting it with the American one. Hence she can assert her personal agency (Gershon 2010) and effortfulness (Gibson 2009, 2011), when asked to, in lines 17-18. It is worth noting that in line 13, she employs a psycho-

discursive practice where she characterises “my repressed wish”⁶, the decision to study for a Master's degree, thus constructing an 'inner will' to further advance her studies. This rhetorical tracing of the agency is indicative of the psychological articulation of an entrepreneurial subjectivity (eg Scharff 2015; Dardot & Laval 2014). The assertion of personal agency through a 'narrative of personal effort' will be the focus of the next set of extracts, by Konstantina, 24 years old, of Greek origin, theatre worker and Ioli, 26 years old, of Albanian origin, software programmer, both of whom discuss mobility and emigration.

B) Asserting individual agency

In the following extract, Konstantina is accounting for the prospect to emigrate in Germany. What is interesting to note, following on from Elpida, is the inner psychological attributions she articulates, while speaking about her plans and expectations (l.2: 'that is in my mind'; l.3: 'if things don't cover me there'; l.4: 'I have this in my mind'; l.4-5: 'like a target that is, now I have this one'; l.8: 'I hoped'; l.19: 'that's what I want'; l.20: 'this is my first target').

4.4.1 – 2.34 “I will go and try there”		
1	G	OK, are there any other plans, what else are you looking, or doing?
2	K	You know, I am planning to leave, for Germany... that is in my mind to
3		begin with. Not being sure that I will stay there. But I will go and try
4		there. If things don't cover me there as well, I will leave for elsewhere.
5		But initially I have this in my mind. Like a target that is, now I have this
6		one. Leaving for Germany and going there to find.
7	G	For postgraduate studies or for work?
8	K	Initially, I want to work. I am in this period when I first want to work
9		and then go for postgraduate study. That I hoped would happen in
10		this year, so that later I can leave and directly go for postgraduate
11		study, but once it didn't happen, I first want to go for work... and then
12		go... decide on the postgraduate course that I want, find the right one,
13		so and so.
14	G	Yes, and... in Germany, what would you like to do?
15	K	Eh, I would like to work in a theatre, whether as an assistant stage
16		manager, basically because I have gone through all positions in the
17		theatre, I can be anyone's assistant in the theatre. So, OK, the most
18		approp-... the nicest for me would be to become a director's assistant.
19		Or, my second choice, stage manager's assistant. From then on, I can
20		do everything, so if I could at least find something in the theatre, in
21		the space to be in the creative process, and we will see later.
22	G	Yes, I understand
23	K	For another position. I mean, just being in the theatre, working there.
24		That's what I want. This is my first target.

⁶ In Greek, Elpida states: “ it is my repressed” [*einai to apothimeno mou*], attesting that it is a repressed wish of hers.

She effectively mobilises these psycho-discursive practices (Wetherell 2008) in order to construct an entrepreneurial self (Scharff 2015; Rose 1999), 'trying' for the best by emigrating to work in Germany. Thus she psychologically traces the personal agency of the neo(liberal) subject (Dardot & Laval 2014). It is also important to stress the temporal aspects of her account. Konstantina is employing several time-marker phrases in her account, such as 'to begin with' (l.2-3), 'initially' (l.5, 8), 'I am in this period' (l.8), 'later' (l.10, 21). Hence, she narratively constructs her emigration, by stressing her personal and work-related mobility. This mobility is also spatial, as Konstantina from the beginning asserts that she is prepared to move from Germany, if things fail to work out there. Moreover, in lines 15-21 she positions herself as an 'effortful' subject (Gibson 2009, 2011; Kesisoglou, Figgou & Dikaïou 2017), stressing her versatile work experience, in order to account for her conviction to work in theatre production. In this extract then, the participant is narratively asserting her personal agency to emigrate, by employing psycho-discursive practices which in turn construct her personal effortfulness and her expectations of the emigration. Thus we have in this extract a narrative construction of the decision and the agency to emigrate, stressing the personal psychological tracing, the effort and the welcome prospect of mobility. We term this as the 'narrative of personal effort'. In the following extract, by Ioli, we can discern the same set of discursive strategies.

4.4.1 – 1.33 “If things don’t work out in here, I won’t bother”

1	I	So imagine, that we can do something, and especially on the fact that
2		I came from another country, I came to Greece. If things here don't
3		work out, I will not bother and break my head here. The option of
4		going to another country of going back is always open for me.
5	G	That's what I wanted to ask for, in a little bit.
6	I	[...] If the other one fires me, I will either have set up something of
7		mine and I will be able to stand on my own feet, or, when I see that
8		things are very difficult, I will have started to search on my own so
9		that I do not reach the point of being fired and staying jobless, even
10		though you never know, the conjunctures may end up so that you
11		can't.

This extract was preceded by a long account of an entrepreneurial prospect Ioli was considering at the time. Here, in brief, Ioli is asserting not only her entrepreneurial 'ethos' and effortfulness (eg l.6-7 'I will either have set up something.... on my own feet', l.8 'I will have started... jobless') but also her option to be mobile, to work abroad or repatriate (l.4). A point of particular interest in this extract is that Ioli directly connects this mobility with her foreigner status, in line 2. She is therefore rhetorically constructing the subject position of a second generation effortful, educated person, who is open to emigrate from Greece, if things 'are very difficult'

(1.8). In those two extracts we have examples of the subject positioning of the 'brain drain' emigrants, as Lambrianidis (2013) has demonstrated. Entrepreneurial subjects assert their agency through narratives of the self via psycho-discursive practices of effortfulness and mobility.

C) Accounting for ambivalence

The decision of 'flight' is not always so straightforward in the narrative of the self, as evidenced by Dionysis, 24 years old, of Albanian origin, secondary school instructor.

4.4.1 – 5.37 “I have made an effort here and I want to contribute here”		
1	G	Your parents, have you discussed this... whether you are thinking of
2		leaving? Do they support you, I meant to ask?
3	D	Going back?
4	G	Yes
5	D	Yes, for sure
6	G	OK, they may have asked you to stay, it's better here
7	D	No, look, my parents live on the dream of returning... which I don't
8		have... They are a generation of immigrants, the first generation of
9		immigrants... they came older in age, they got tired, they worked, they
10		had hard times, now they want to go back. And it would be happier for
11		them should I go back with them.
12	G	Yes, yes, I understand.
13	D	But in the case that I found a job and worked in the field that I have
14		chosen, they would not mind for me to stay here, I mean, ehh... so my
15		parents would very much like for me to go back, ah, I am sticking here
16	G	Yes, I understand
17	D	You know, I have grown up here, it is different to...
18	G	Yes, while they came in...
19	D	... in an older age, they have not being so included, they have not entered
20		so much in the... in thing... and say not even... my mother and my father
21		may not even know the Greek language so well, they may have such
22		problems. And they support my option of going back to my country, “I
23		will buy you a house and you will stay wherever you want and you will
24		have a job as well” and my mum promotes the following argument, she
25		tells me “and no one will tell you that you are a stranger”. You know, aah,
26		completely sentimental, but charged, you know, to make me to go back. I
27		am not easily touched because I know that I have made an effort here
28		and I want to contribute here. I have grown up here, my mentality is
29		Greek for good or bad, what is there to do?

This extract was selected as Dionysis is deliberating the dilemma of staying in Greece or repatriating. Such a dilemma is common to many members of both the 'second generation' as well as of young professionals of the brain drain.

Furthermore, it presents an account of an inner debate of ambivalence, illustrating the anxiety and incoherence in the narrative of the self. In this extract, his parents' perspective is put forward, in relation to the differences between the first and the second generation of migrants. Moreover, this ambivalence is indicative of the dilemma (Billig et al. 1988) Dionysis is facing: a difficult inclusion in Greece or a family repatriation? The arguments for and against this dilemma are debated, but the most important discursive/affective practice to be analysed in this account is in its conclusion, in lines 26-29. There, Dionysis highlights the 'sentimental but charged' argument by his mother regarding his and/or their social exclusion in relation to their different origin. Even though it could be an actually affective experience for him (being called a stranger), he prefers to use it rhetorically in his account to highlight his will to stay in Greece (l.26-27). It is notable that he terminates this account with a rhetorical question, 'what is there to do?' This extract thus is indicative of the ambivalence and incoherence in the 'narrative of personal effort' we propose as the common thread in the accounts of the participants, as entrepreneurial subjects (Scharff 2015; Dardot & Laval 2014; Rose 1999).

To sum up the common discursive strategies in those extracts, interwoven in a 'narrative of personal effort', the first one involves the evaluation through metaphors of the Greek regime of labour and migration, which facilitates the positioning of the speaker as an 'effortful subject'. The second discursive strategy in the accounts is the assertion of personal agency, via the articulation of a narrative account of the subject's effortfulness (Kesisoglou, Figgou & Dikaiou 2016; Gibson 2009, 2011) and mobility. Hence the positioning as 'entrepreneurial' or 'neo(liberal)' subjects (Scharff 2015; Dardot & Laval 2014; Rose 1999) of such graduate emigrants of the brain drain. Last but not least, the third strategy involves the anchoring of such subjects in the ambivalence, or the dilemmas of 'fight or flight', ie of staying put or emigrating/repatriating. Such ambivalence serves as an instance of incoherence in the narrative of personal effort, maximizing the weight of the decision to migrate, thus the subject's personal effort in the narrative of the self.

CONCLUSION

This paper provided an exploratory narrative perspective on three discursive practices participants mobilised, in order to account for the prospect to migrate from Greece. Even though this study was not focusing on this issue, it formed an important orientation of the participants' accounts, constructed as a stake in the interaction of the interview. It is useful to reflect on the power asymmetry of the interview interaction (for reference, see footnote 4), as a local context facilitating accounts and subject positions, since the macro-context of the economic recession and crisis is experienced both by the interviewer and the interviewees. Hence, the shared knowledge (Edwards 1997) and the common place (Billig et al. 1988) of the

regime of precarious work constructed a local interview context which called for participants' accounts for their prospect of 'flight'. In this context, the first indicated discursive practice was used to characterise and evaluate through metaphors the regime of precarious work as the context of their/our lives. Thus the participants were oriented to construct precarious employment as a banal regime (Billig 1995) of the Greek society. Precarious labour was not seen by our respondents as the exception, but as a commonplace practice in the Greek labour market and way of life (Billig et al. 1988). The construction of this regime through various discursive practices is important in the debates of social psychology of work, as it affords the place for the construction of subjectivities.

As follows, the participants of our study oriented to position themselves as active entrepreneurs (Scharff 2015) of their biographical/employment projects, asserting their individual effort and (neoliberal) agency (Gershon 2011). Gibson (2009, 2011) argues that the significance of the mobilisation of the trope of effortfulness in the act of accounting lies in the common sense assumption of individual responsibility for 'making an effort', despite societal conditions, ie the labour market and the regime of precarious work. It is a psycho-discursive practice evident of the social process of individuation, according to Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) and Rose (1999). The mobilisation of this culturally accessible resource suggests that ordinary social actors, such as young professionals from Greece, have culturally entrenched those norms of individual responsibility. It is further interesting that in the extracts it was evidenced that in their accounting they trace these norms through a psychological thesaurus of the will (Edwards & Potter 1992). As Rose (1999) argues, in advanced liberalism the passive citizen of the welfare state becomes an active citizen with rights, responsibilities and expectations; an active entrepreneur of the self, since 'citizenship becomes conditional upon conduct' (Rose 1999: 267). Furthermore, for participants facing social exclusion, such as the second generation 'control is now to operate through the rational reconstruction of the will' (p. 270). This reconstruction of the will is demonstrated through the mobilisation of the trope of effortfulness and the psychological tracing in the accounts of personal agency and mobility. According to Gibson (2009), the ideological function of such tropes of accounting is to predicate social citizenship rights on individual psychology, or to legitimise the attribution of social citizenship as being the result of a liberal, fair system which rewards individual 'effort' and punishes 'laziness'.

Moreover, an important psycho-discursive practice evidenced in the above extracts is the ambivalence constructed by Dionysis. Aside from the dilemma of inclusion vs repatriation, this practice demonstrates the self-critical, anxious and insecure (Scharff 2015) aspect of the narrative of the self of the entrepreneurial young professionals of Greece, eager but ever self-doubting to move abroad and work in their specialty field.

Overall, these discursive analytic claims suggest that young professionals, such as Lambrianidis (2013) surveyed, position themselves in their accounts as effortful (Gibson 2009, 2011), entrepreneurial (Scharff 2015) neo-liberal subjects (Dardot & Laval 2014), articulating a 'narrative of personal effort' of the self. In this narrative, the prospect of migration is a means of career advancement, vis-à-vis the Greek regime and social crisis. Such findings are important for the debates of employment studies and sociology of labour; moreover, we can argue that they pertain to generalisability, since they reflect the context-rich and ideological nature of language in accounts of emigration and precarity (Goodman 2008). The banal regime of precarity and the debate of emigration, besides being reflexively recognised as commonplace in the micro-contexts of interactions, seems to have become a common Southern-European reality in the macro context, creating ever-mobile flows of young graduates and brain draining countries in the midst of social crisis. More discursive research is definitely needed on the situated talk-in-action of the young graduates of the brain drain vis-à-vis the work regimes of their destination countries, as well as on the identification of the ways in which the social and historically available discursive resources of effortfulness, hard work, responsibility and individualism are articulated with regard to the self and entrepreneurship. Lastly, further quantitative research is needed on the large-scale documentation of the brain drain for Southern Europe.

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