

2018/48-6
October

Discover this journal online at
Wiley Online Library
wileyonlinelibrary.com/journal/ejsp

European **J**ournal of **S**ocial **P**sychology

WILEY

EASP
European Association
of Social Psychology

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Admissions of racism in discourse on migration in Greece: Beyond the norm against prejudice?

Maria Xenitidou*  & Antonios Sapountzist

* University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey, UK

† Democritus University of Thrace, Alexandroupolis, Greece

Correspondence

Maria Xenitidou, University of Surrey,

Guildford, Surrey, GU2 7XH, UK.

E-mail: m.xenitidou@surrey.ac.uk

Received: 4 November 2016

Accepted: 14 January 2018

<https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2364>

Keywords: migration, racism, ideological dilemmas, critical discursive social psychology

Abstract

The turn to language in social psychology is closely related to the study of prejudice as racist discourse has been the subject matter of some of the ground-breaking discourse analytic work. A widely accepted argument was that there seems to be a norm against prejudice informing Western societies: people commonly engage in denials of prejudice when they make negative comments about minorities. Recent work has argued that, due to ideological shifts in the wider societal context or because denying prejudice may not be people's only rhetorical concern, it is possible to find people admitting prejudice. We examine how people in Greece, Greek majority and immigrants, formulate admissions of racism in interviews on migration and citizenship in Greece. Drawing on Ideological Dilemmas and Critical Discursive Social Psychology, we argue that these admissions ironically operate within the norm against prejudice and discuss our findings in relation to the wider socio-political Greek context.

The norm against prejudice is widely spread, at least in the Western world, in discourse that relates to ethnic or racial minorities: people try to dissociate themselves from the stigma of prejudice using a variety of rhetorical strategies. Some researchers have tried to summarize this literature offering an overview of the different strategies employed by speakers (see Augoustinos & Every, 2007; Goodman, 2014; LeCouteur & Augoustinos, 2001) in verbal interaction. In recent work it is suggested that, on occasions, direct admissions of prejudice may be formulated by people while at the same time denying racism (Goodman & Rowe, 2014) or that blatant prejudice may be expressed when people feel comfortable in the presence of others, and not in the one to one situation of the interview context (Condor & Figgou, 2012). In line with this research, we examine instances where people in Greece, both Greek majority and immigrants,¹ employed direct admissions of racism while accounting for migration in Greece and a new naturalization law. We interrogate whether these admissions signal the absence of the norm against prejudice or an ideological shift *and* discuss the possibility that the new socio-political context in Greece, where the issue of migration has gained prominence and the extreme right-wing party, Golden Dawn, has

parliamentary representation, may have given legitimacy to direct admissions of racism.

Established Arguments for the Existence of the Norm Against Prejudice

The "turn to language" within social psychology is closely linked to the study of prejudice. An analytic concern of this work has been to examine the ambivalence of race talk. In this section we summarize some of the ground-breaking work on the discourse of racism focusing on the work of Billig and his colleagues and on that of Wetherell and Potter.

The pioneering work of Billig and his colleagues (Billig, 1988; Billig et al., 1988) on "Ideological dilemmas" has paid attention not only to the different ways people may try to distance themselves from prejudice but also emphasized and tried to trace the genealogy of the term and pinpoint the historical and social conditions that played a role in its modern meaning and, consequently, in the ways people use the term. They traced the meaning of prejudice back to the ideology of the Enlightenment, at that time designating beliefs that were formed without considering the relevant facts. The main enemy against whom the term was used was the unfounded religious faith propagated by the Church. A shift in the meaning of the term was evident in the beginning of the 20th century when it started to have the meaning it has nowadays, namely, negative beliefs against minority groups. However, it

¹We use the term 'immigrant' to refer to post 1990s migration for brevity, acknowledging the problematic use of the term to refer to people with various migration experiences, for example, long-term settled and 'second generation' immigrants.

did retain its link to (ir)rationality as is demonstrated in the seminal work of Gordon Allport (1979). In his work, prejudice is defined as an unjustified negative sentiment against other groups, and as a failing of individuals' cognitive processes to examine rationally relevant social information. Hence, when people try to utter negative opinions about minorities they have to demonstrate their commitment to rationality and tolerance.

The norm against prejudice manifests itself discursively in certain ways, a common one being the use of disclaimers, a rhetorical strategy used in order to avoid the stigma of prejudice when people talk about migration and intergroup relations. The well-established disclaimer "I am not prejudiced but" is considered as a manifestation of this norm, which seems hegemonic in the Western world. According to Billig (1988), the disclaimer (or prolepsis as originally termed by Hewitt & Stokes, 1975 to denote preventive means of negative attributions) "I am not prejudiced but..." allows the speaker to align him/herself with the moral community of the tolerant and to utter negative beliefs about immigrant groups. Moreover, people usually go to great lengths to demonstrate their rationality before making negative comments against a minority, since otherwise their claims might be undermined. For Billig and his colleagues (1988) though, this is not just an effort to trick the recipient of the comments or some kind of face keeping done discursively: people actually endorse liberal beliefs, while at the same time also holding racist beliefs. This is one of the basic premises of the thesis of Ideological Dilemmas. Every society provides people with values, beliefs and axioms that are contradictory or given the occasion can be found in opposition to each other, which may engage people in dilemmas.

For Billig and his colleagues (Billig, 1988; Billig et al., 1988), the main issue behind the antithetical values and beliefs is that they can be equally reasonable. To identify the sources of this contradiction, the authors turn back to the ideology of the Enlightenment and to the relation it held to liberalism, on the one hand, and to nationalism, on the other. They argue that the motto of the Enlightenment "Liberty, equality, fraternity" meant that people could potentially enjoy similar rights and travel freely in an open international environment. At the same time though, the ideology of the Enlightenment (along with German Romanticism) was responsible for the creation of the modern nation-states and, thus, for the distinction between citizen and foreigner, with the latter not enjoying similar rights to the former. This ambivalence, according to Billig and his colleagues, is something that informs common sense in most Western countries and has given birth to the dilemma of prejudice versus tolerance.

Many of the aforementioned ideas are echoed in the seminal work of Wetherell and Potter (1992). In common with Billig (1988) they argue that people try to avoid the stigma of prejudice. However, they trace the theme of rationality not only to the philosophy of the Enlightenment, but also to the different ways socio-psychological theory has represented prejudice as a failing

of human rational thinking. In their work, they draw parallels between socio-psychological theory and the way their participants in New Zealand attempt to dodge the identity of prejudice: individual psychological shortcomings are often seen as the cause of prejudice, pathologizing the prejudiced "other". Their aim is two-fold: *first*, to demonstrate the different strategies participants mobilize in order to avoid the identity of the prejudiced. In that respect they examine how participants use what they termed "interpretative repertoires" towards different ends in verbal interaction. They argue that common sense is often contradictory and that contradictory interpretative repertoires can be used by people in different contexts. Their *second* goal was to examine what the macro-social consequences of the deployment of these strategies were. It is claimed that questions about prejudice in the New Zealand society were treated as a kind of accusation and the participants in the study had to account for their opinions. What Wetherell and Potter (1992) argued is that while the strategies used at a micro-social level work towards the denial of racism, managing thus the moral identity of the speaker, at a more distal level the same strategies serve to perpetuate unequal relations within the New Zealand society, reproducing racism.

As regards the denial of racism in particular, another notable approach comes from socio-linguistics. van Dijk (1984, 1987, 1992) examined how racism is reproduced through discourse and communication. Unlike the previous approaches, van Dijk draws heavily on concepts from cognitive social psychology such as attitudes, stereotypes and social representations. His aim is to examine how these cognitions are mobilized in concrete social interactions taking into account power relations. He treats the denial of racism as a normative concern deriving from impression management: people try to appear non-prejudiced because they want to make a positive impression to the hearer, hiding their "true" attitudes. Examining the various strategies people mobilize in order to deny racism, van Dijk provided a very detailed taxonomy of how people dissociate themselves from the stigma of prejudice.

The aforementioned approaches have to a large extent 'opened' the field for analyzing how prejudice is mobilized (and denied) in discourse. In the next section we summarize some of the admittedly extensive work in the area.

The Norm Against Prejudice in Discourse Analytic Work

This section discusses existing discourse analytic work on the norm against prejudice in order to contextualize our study and research aim. In that sense, it does not offer a detailed analysis of the discursive strategies used to deny prejudice. Previous work has demonstrated the various strategies adopted to deny prejudice in various settings (see Augoustinos & Every, 2007; Goodman, 2014; LeCouteur & Augoustinos, 2001; McKinlay & McVittie, 2008; van Dijk, 1992). This work in general

demonstrates that the denial of prejudice is quite common at least in the Western world, in lay, political and media discourse. What we are interested in examining here is how previous work has theorized racist discourse and the norm against prejudice as well as the possible advances, additions and criticisms to the initial arguments presented above. In this way, we aim to both contextualize and foreshadow the contribution of the argument developed in this paper.

A strand of discursive research that draws explicitly from conversation analysis (CA) and ethnomethodology has attempted to uncover the ways in which participants themselves treat discourse on prejudice and racism as potentially problematic as well as the different strategies they mobilize in accounting for prejudice (Antaki, 2003; Edwards, 2003; Rapley, 2001; Whitehead & Stokoe, 2015). Robles (2015), for example, examines how people manage hearably racist talk by echoing previous turn extreme case formulations in order to do repair work in discourse. She discusses how participants orient to racist talk and problematizes treating racism as repairable insofar as it downgrades its status as an overt instance of racism. Similarly, Whitehead (2015) has sought to examine decision-making and collaborative work entailed in racialized actions: disaffiliation or incipient disaffiliation responses presented in dispreferred turn shapes can give the opportunity to the previous speaker to understand and possibly repair the potentially accountable discursive actions.

The contribution(s) such approaches offer² are that, first, they focus on the local – interactional – context first and foremost and participants' own orientations to racism. By studying racism and antiracism in action, they reveal some of the complex ways in which everyday racism and antiracism are manifested in the unfolding of naturally occurring interactional exchanges. Second, these approaches analyze naturally produced talk rather than interviews through which, they argue, data are co-constructed (see Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Edwards, 2003). Nevertheless, researchers in this line of work also point to inferences for consideration beyond the immediate exchanges. Stapleton (2016) has argued that the same accountability work performed in racist talk can be found in mundane everyday topics other than racism. Rather than focusing on the ways in which racist talk is managed, the focus should, thus, be on how people manage potentially accountable topics in specific contexts. This line of research sensitizes us towards the potential reification of categories, ideologies and theories in discursive analysis (see also Condor & Figgou, 2012; Condor, Figgou, Abell, Gibson, & Stevenson, 2006).

²For a discussion of the differences between the various types of discourse analysis and/or discursive psychology and conversation analysis see Benwell and Stokoe (2006); Wooffitt (2005); and the exchange between Schegloff (1997, 1998, 1999a, 1999b), Billig (1999a, 1999b) and Wetherell (1998).

Other researchers have argued that research on the norm against prejudice has tended to view prejudice as a relatively uncontroversial construct, supposing that people have a similar understanding of what counts as prejudice (Figgou, 2002; Figgou & Condor, 2006). In her research, Figgou has examined what people may treat as problematic in prejudiced talk as well as what it is actually that they try to disclaim. An important finding of this research is that people try to distance themselves from negative stereotypes about immigrants treating them as problematic, as an instance of an irrational generalization. At the same time though, their own or others' fears of immigrants were justified on the premises that some of the immigrants may be involved or are more likely to be involved in criminal activities due to economic deprivation (Di Masso, Castrechini, & Valera, 2014; Figgou & Condor, 2006; Figgou, Sapountzis, Bozatzis, Gardikiotis, & Pantazis, 2011).

The approaches above have problematized the ways in which the norm against prejudice has been studied but also manifested in talk. This is of relevance to this paper in so far as we noted an unexpected display of the norm in talk and aim to contextualize it in relation to existing theory and work but also with reference to the specific socio-cultural context in which these instances of talk occurred. In that respect, of relevance to this paper is also recent research that has argued that the norm against prejudice itself *may* be undergoing some kind of change or transformation focusing on specific contexts. It has been argued that making accusations of racism may be a normative accountable act as well: people who accuse others of prejudice may be accused themselves of playing the "race card", implying that they try to censor the free expression of opinion (Goodman, 2010). Thus, "delicacy" is to be found in race talk but also in making accusations of racism. Goodman and Rowe (2014), examining online discussions on the issue of Gypsies in the UK, argue that, faced with accusations, people in some instances accepted that what they utter may sound like prejudice, but they denied that it was racism. Prejudice was justified on 'rational' grounds – due to Gypsies' behaviour not complying with widely accepted societal norms – while at the same time 'irrational' racism was emphatically denied and still remained something that people wanted to dissociate themselves from.

Goodman (2014) claims that it may, thus, be necessary to dissociate the notion of "prejudice" from the notion of "race" (Goodman & Rowe, 2014), as people seem to orient to hierarchies of prejudice with some instances of it being treated as acceptable and with racism occupying the non-acceptable, extreme end. This is of relevance to our work as it concerns formulations and reformulations of the norm against prejudice. While the above research studies displays of the norm against prejudice from within the standard discursive psychological analysis of rhetorical displays of the norm, other relevant recent work argues that prejudice may be seen as a thing of the past, rendering normative concerns to

dissociate oneself from accusations of prejudice irrelevant. Students in the UK seemed to employ an 'end of prejudice' discourse, where prejudice was presented as a past problem, a problem of older people or of other places. It is argued that this finding may signify a shift from a norm against racism to a norm against the existence of racism (Andreouli, Greenland, & Howarth, 2016). We take these into account in considering the strength and perseverance of the norm against prejudice in our study.

Finally, studies on the rhetoric of prejudice have examined how *both* the inhibition of prejudiced opinions *and* the facilitation of their expression may be achieved collaboratively in conversation. This is due to the fact that the construction of a non-prejudiced identity is something that requires the persuasion of an audience. Condor et al. (2006); also Condor & Figgou (2012) have demonstrated that in dialog people may not only defend or mitigate the racism of others, but may also jointly police discussion so as to censor the appearance of prejudiced talk. Nevertheless, (Condor 2006; Condor & Figgou, 2012) has also demonstrated that openly prejudiced expressions may be facilitated when people are in the presence of other, familiar people. The main argument is that in everyday interactions between people who know each other, various local rhetorical tasks may be achieved. In group interviews, explicitly racist comments may be uttered in order to retain the floor, preventing any attempts on behalf of the interviewer to regain the floor, or even serve as an identity marker dissociating the speaker from the upper class social scientist. This research is relevant to the present paper as it problematizes the display of the norm against prejudice in social interactions that attend to the issue in general, stressing the local and interactional contexts. Our paper is in line with this research as we examine how explicit admissions of racism are articulated in individual and group interviews on a new naturalization law in Greece and consider their implication for the norm against prejudice. We discuss immigration and its reception in Greece in the next section.

Migration in Greece and Its Reception: An Outline of the Greek Context

At the end of the 80s and the beginning of the 90s Greece became a destination place for immigrants coming mainly from Eastern Europe following the collapse of the communist regimes and the subsequent political and economic turmoil. In 2004 it was estimated that around 1 150 000 immigrants were living in Greece (Baldwin-Edwards, 2004), while according to the recent census in 2011 there were 912 000 third country nationals (both documented and undocumented) living in Greece (Triandafyllidou, 2014). Stay permits held by immigrants in Greece in 2014 amounted to 449 889 but there is also a large population of undocumented immigrants that is difficult to estimate (Maroukis, 2008, 2012). The main immigrant population are people from Albania who comprise more than 50% of the total

immigrant population (Baldwin-Edwards, 2004; Triandafyllidou, 2014). The second biggest immigrant group are people from the former Soviet Republics. Most of them were considered to be Pontian Greeks and enjoyed preferential treatment from the Greek state, with more access to welfare and to low rate loans to settle in comparison to other immigrant groups (Cavounidis, 2002; Kokkinos, 1991).

The Greek official policy proved quite slow in adapting to the new multicultural social reality. The naturalization law was quite out-dated, placing emphasis on the right of blood (*jus sanguinis*) as a guiding principle for granting citizenship to immigrants (Tsitselikis, 2005; Χριστόπουλος, 2012). It relied heavily on an ethnic conception of the Greek national identity, making naturalization extremely difficult for people of non-Greek descent, resulting in being one of the strictest naturalization laws in the EU compared to other European countries (Koning, 2011). As a consequence, large populations of immigrants in Greece, despite residing for many years in the country, did not enjoy full citizenship rights. Only recently, in 2015, a new naturalization law was voted that had favorable conditions for acquiring citizenship status, especially for the children of immigrants.³

Apart from the official policies above, prejudice and discrimination also seemed to rise in Greece after the entrance of immigrants. In the 2009 Eurobarometer 61% of the respondents believed that immigrants do not enrich the cultural life of Greece, while 80% argued that their presence increases insecurity. The negative attitudes were translated into discriminatory behaviors as well. In the small town of Michaniona (and in other places in Greece) residents openly opposed an Albanian student bearing the Greek flag during a local school parade that commemorated the entrance of Greece into the Second World War (Tzanelli, 2006). In the midst of the economic crisis, which erupted in Greece in 2009, hitting immigrants harder owing to their employment, economic and civic status – most of them held jobs in the construction business that stalled (Triandafyllidou, 2014) – the extreme right-wing party Golden Dawn (GD) was met with unexpected electoral success. In the elections of 2012 the party won almost 7% of the votes electing 21 MPs, while in the last election in 2015, despite being under criminal investigation for the murder of an anti-fascist musician (Pavlos Fyssas), and with many of its MPs in jail, it managed to retain the same percentage and became the third political party in the vote share. The party does not only adopt openly an anti-immigrant agenda but also takes up an activist stance towards politics, organizing blood donations "for Greeks only", patrolling neighborhoods that the media construct as being rampaged by immigrants, and organizing the beating of immigrants. The

³In 2010 the then socialist government had passed a naturalization that was ruled as being against the Greek constitution by the supreme constitutional court, reaffirming the *jus sanguinis* principle.

fact that GD was elected into Greek parliament has given its members new access to public media as well as grounds for political and social legitimacy. Although people in general seem to condemn them, for a portion of the public some of their actions such as the patrolling of neighborhoods and the perceived intimidation they imposed upon the traditional and corrupt Greek political system is positively valued (Angouri & Wodak, 2014; Figgou, 2017). In addition, some of the mainstream political parties in Greece adopted an anti-immigrant stance on the issue of migration in order to approach and recruit Golden Dawn voters (Ellinas, 2013).

This paper discusses the potential interrelation between the social and political climate of crisis-ridden Greece and racist discourse. Specifically, it examines the ways in which people in our interview contexts formulated direct admissions of racism when discussing migration and citizenship in Greece.

Method

Data Collection and Participants

The present paper is part of a larger project⁴ that investigated the way participants construct citizenship, migration and identity in Greece in interview contexts. Individual (N = 24) and group (N = 10) interviews were conducted with immigrants (N = 25) and Greek majority people (N = 25) who resided in the city of Thessaloniki, the second biggest city in Greece with regards to population, around 7% of which are immigrants (Katsavounidou & Kourti, 2008). Twenty-six of them participated in group interviews and each interview group was of the same background (Greek majority or immigrants). We opted for both group and individual interviews to enable a variation of contexts – the former more ‘naturally’ representing social interaction, the latter potentially encouraging more in-depth discussion – yet acknowledging the co-existence of intersubjectivity and multisubjectivity (Billig, 1989) and that the addresses of participants’ utterances could be present or absent (see Xenitidou & Greco-Morasso, 2014). Nevertheless, there is an ongoing debate on whether interview material of any kind is the appropriate method to study the social world (Edwards & Stokoe, 2004; Potter & Hepburn, 2005). From a Discursive Psychology (DP) and CA perspective it is argued that usually the interactional nature of the interview is not taken into account and most research focuses mainly on the contribution made by participants, not paying attention to how the interviewer and interviewee interact (Potter & Hepburn, 2006). Nevertheless, researchers have used group interviews to study the suppression, justification or even defense of racism (Condor, 2006; Condor et al., 2006). The

above-mentioned research pays attention to how participants interact with the interviewer in the construction of events, treating what people do with ethnic categories as collaborative accomplishments. Of course, the use of interviews has also been criticized on the grounds that researchers flood the analyses with their own categories that do not necessarily stem from the immediate discursive context (Edwards & Stokoe, 2004; Potter & Hepburn, 2006). Nonetheless, Wetherell (2003) argues that the resources participants use may not originate only from the micro-context of the interview but from the wider argumentative context and the researcher may share a common set of resources that are available to all members of a community. Thus, interviews may be useful in examining these resources and how they are managed in talk. Taking the above arguments into consideration, we examined how wider assumptions about racism are deployed in talk and how admissions of racism are invoked in interview contexts, either as an interaction between participant and interviewer, or as interaction between interviewer and several participants.

Greek majority participants lived across Thessaloniki and its outskirts and came from various professional backgrounds including construction, health and public services, and education while some of them were facing unemployment. Immigrant participants had mostly come from Albania (N = 16), then Georgia (N = 5), Ukraine (N = 1) and Romania (N = 1). They mainly worked as unskilled workers, some of them were university trained (or in the process of, N = 6) or had completed vocational training (N = 4),⁵ one was a doctor, a nurse and one held her own business offering translation services. All of the immigrants were documented (or in the process of), but lacked Greek citizenship. Certain workplaces were selected to recruit participants, where it was expected that Greek majority people interact with immigrants: construction, tourism and hospitality, food, service and recreation industry, domestic work, public and health services, schools, parents’ groups etc. Most interviews took place at coffee shops after working hours and in participants’ homes.

The interview topics concerned participants’ daily life, the various ways in which the crisis has affected them, what it means to be a citizen, migration, the new naturalization law, naturalization criteria in Greece in general, the state management of migration at the time (2012–2014) and the rise of the extreme right in Greece. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed using a simplified version of the Jeffersonian system (Jefferson, 1984).

Analytic Method

After an exhaustive reading of the data we found that participants formulated admissions of racism. While there were some denials of racism (N = 7), admissions appeared more times in the interviews (N = 15). In one interview denial and admission of racism occurred

⁴The research complied with the ethical standards detailed in the 7th Framework Programme (FP7) and received the relevant ethics clearance required.

⁵Residence permits are granted upon proof of work or study.

in the same passage (extract 1), while in two other interviews they occurred within the same interview but not in the same passage. Being attentive to the ways in which racism may be manifested, admitted or disclaimed, we noted that admissions of racism were consistently formulated making use of the words "racist" and "racism"⁶. We subsequently re-read the data extensively, focusing on the contexts in which these words appeared and on the ways in which they were used and constructed. Some of the admissions of racism identified were collective where participants differentiated self from the racist ingroup ("Greeks are racists"). On occasions, however, participants formulated admissions of racism that were collective and included the self ("We, Greeks, are racist"), or were individual admissions of racism ("I am racist..."). In this paper, we focus on the latter instances. Exemplar extracts of these instances were translated from Greek to English and an effort was made to keep both meaning and structure as close to the original as possible without losing any semantic information.

Our analysis draws on two analytic approaches. The first is Ideological Dilemmas (Billig et al., 1988) and the second is Critical Discursive Social Psychology (Wetherell, 1998). The thesis of Ideological Dilemmas was introduced in the beginning as it constitutes one of the established approaches to the study of the norm against prejudice and race talk. Here we would like to stress that in our analysis we try to exemplify the way participants negotiate the dilemma between prejudice and tolerance in their talk when they formulate admissions of racism. The dilemma lies at the heart of liberal ideology: on the one hand, universal human rights of freedom, brotherhood and equality were advocated while on the other, the rise of nation-states meant that new boundaries between ingroup and outgroup needed to be established. Billig et al. (1988) argue that on occasions (and more frequently) dilemmatic aspects are not explicitly uttered but they are expressed in a subtler way. A hermeneutic approach is suggested as the appropriate means to examine how discourse that appears to argue for a straightforward point may contain its own dilemmas. Should open admissions of racism be treated as a possible dilemma or could they be an instance where participants move beyond the norm against prejudice, signaling an ideological shift (see Andreouli et al., 2016)? This question is addressed in the analysis and in the discussion. A second point that is related to the thesis of Ideological Dilemmas is that notwithstanding ideological dilemmas, every society has its own dilemmatic aspects. The values and beliefs of every society contain their own contrary elements that given the occasion can clash. Billig and his colleagues (1988; see also Billig, 1988) offer a genealogical analysis of how the idea of

prejudice acquired its own contrary themes. The societal context and the different ways in which the distinction between ingroup and outgroup is embedded with meaning plays a pivotal role in how dilemmas that appear universal, like prejudice versus tolerance, may be articulated.

The second analytic tradition we draw upon is Critical Discursive Social Psychology (CDSP). CDSP accepts Ideological Dilemmas as one of the main axis for analysis. This tradition aims to combine the focus of DP to the microanalysis of discourse with post-structuralist theories that examine how certain representations of social phenomena came into being and circulate in certain socio-historical contexts as well as their consequences (Bozatzis, 2009; Edley, 2001; Wetherell, 1998). CDSP following DP (Edwards, 1997; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996) pays close attention to the various rhetorical strategies that participants use in order to manage their accountability when they engage in verbal interaction. People have to manage a dilemma of stake when they make a point: on the one hand, they have to support their version of events, opinions etc., but, on the other, they have to show that they are "disinterested" (stake inoculation), that they do not have a specific interest in presenting their view in this specific way in order to appear rational and be persuasive (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996). This dilemma of stake is not only managed through stake inoculation but also through stake confession (Potter, 1996), which is of relevance for the admissions of racism discussed in this paper. On occasions, issues of stake may be so relevant for participants that they are very hard to ignore. One of the best ways to resolve this is to confess the stake. Admissions of racism may be an instance of stake confession, where participants admit being racist on the face of too obvious negative comments about immigrants. Stake confession may also prevent or mitigate the potential of subsequent challenge as that has already been disclaimed through confessing the stake in the first place. Following DP, we examine how such admissions of racism may work as stake confessions in the course of verbal interaction within interview contexts.

At the same time, though, the more distal context may also be relevant in a verbal interaction since it constitutes the wider argumentative fabric of a society (Wetherell, 2003). CDSP scrutinizes the discourses mobilized for the socio-historical debates they may carry from their development in certain epochs, for the intergroup relations they represent that (may) serve to maintain or undermine unequal social relations. Following the argument put forward by Wetherell (2003) therefore, we believe that changes in the wider socio-political context may play a crucial role in facilitating admissions of racism.

To sum up, the main research questions we want to examine are *first*, whether open admissions of racism may mean the absence of the norm against prejudice or an ideological shift in the meaning of the term and, *second*, what the role of the Greek context may be in the articulation of racism.

⁶Overall use: 26/50 interviews. We should note that there are no differences in the semantic meaning of the word racism between Greek and English. The word prejudice was also found in our data (N = 2), referring to reverse prejudice towards Greeks, from immigrants and the Muslim minority respectively.

Analysis

Explicit denials of racism appeared in the data six times. Participants mobilized different forms of the disclaimer "I am not racist but..." in order to achieve different rhetorical tasks such as to essentialize ethnic identities, dodging the identity of prejudice. For reasons of brevity we focus only on the instances where racism was admitted, which were more numerous in the data (N = 15).

"You become racist": Racism as an understandable response to social conditions

In the following extract, the participant admits racism as something that is imposed upon us by social factors, namely, the economic crisis that tantalizes Greece. Before the extract, participants were commenting on migration in Greece claiming that the corrupt Greek political system favors it in order to gain political clientele. They also claimed that some immigrants acquired a Greek identity card and, thus, citizenship via illegal means.

Extract 1

352 Costas: Not that we are racists but=
 353 Ioannis:= The circumstances (.) made us I believe
 most I am sorry (.) most
 354 Greeks (.) to become racist. Because not to see
 your brother your friend your
 355 dad (.) even worse (.) not to have a job (.) your
 Greek dad not to have a job (.)
 356 and to see (.) the: criminal foreigner (.) the guy
 that the previous night broke a
 357 store because he got wasted (.) a::nd stole a car (.)
 to work and take double the
 358 wages to the ones you are getting (.) because they
 have him either as a
 359 specialized worker (.) or supervisor (.) or any-
 thing that would raise the salary.
 360 All of these make you become racist. All of these.
 (Group interview: Costas, man, 45, construction/
 unemployed; Ioannis, man, 31, construction/
 unemployed)

Costas begins his turn by a collective denial of racism (line 352). He is interrupted by Ioannis who attempts a repair by providing an explanation of why people become racist, offering a collective admission of racism. Developing a narrative, he starts by arguing that the circumstances lead most Greek people to become racists. In this way racism is not constructed as something that is developed through people's own volition, nor as something inherent, but something that is forced upon them. Via a three-part list (Jefferson, 1990) he constructs friends and family as unemployed (lines 354–5). The family is also invoked in the next sentence where an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) is used ("even worse", line 355), in conjunction with the adjective Greek (uttered emphatically). The family construction here does important rhetorical work. First, it

justifies strong sentiments about these people and their well-being, prioritizing the national ingroup over the immigrants. Second, the addition of the word "Greek" helps to merge the two ingroups (family and nation) together. The narrative moves to a contrast where the unemployed Greek family member is juxtaposed to the criminal foreigner (line 356). His/her criminal behaviour is given through vivid images (Wooffitt, 1992) in lines 356–7. The injustice against the Greek family member is further worked up with the use of a three-part list that lists the privileges immigrants have at work. The narrative ends in the same fashion as it started using in addition an extreme case formulation: "all of these" circumstances force "us" to become racist.

In this extract, the participant offers a repair to a denial of racism converting it into an admission of racism, and confesses racism as contingent upon a narrative that then unfolds. As Condor and her colleagues have demonstrated, the defense of racism can be a 'collaborative achievement' as in the present case (Condor et al., 2006; Condor & Figgou, 2012). The narrative that is mobilized through a contrast presents racism as unavoidable, a natural consequence of experience. According to Edwards and Potter (1992), narratives present a sequence of events as necessary or unavoidable. Racism is, therefore, presented here as the unavoidable outcome of the comparison between family and foreigner presented as two extremes – "your Greek father" and the "criminal foreigner". This has some important implications: first, racism is constructed not as an inherent characteristic but as something one is driven to; second, racism is contingent upon circumstances that implies that it can change; third, it is not under volitional control – people cannot be blamed for "becoming racist"; finally, this is still treated as accountable since the speaker employs form (narrative of unavoidability and contrast of extremes) and content (violation of the principles of fairness against Greeks, the natural claimants, by not only non-natural but also criminal foreigners) to make this state justifiable. Therefore, although racism is not seen as something positive, it definitely is understandable.

In the next extract, the participant admits racism as something that she "becomes" in certain circumstances. Before the extract, participants were commenting on the issue of religious education in schools, originally addressed to the (majority) Christian orthodox population, while children of different religious backgrounds now also attend. At this stage they also started to talk about the flag and who should be entitled to bear it during commemoration parades.

Extract 2

217 Victoria: As far as the flag is concerned (.) °I shall
 say now° (.) tha::at (.) eh:h I
 218 prefer this arrangements to the ones before (.) the
 tall ones (.) should be there
 219 wasn't that racism? Wasn't tha:at discrimination?
 The tall ones should go to the

220 parade (.) the tall ones should hold the flag (.) the tall ones were doing
 221 everything (.) I remember I was an excellent student at primary school and
 222 they didn't let me hold the flag because I was short.
 223 Chrysa: I have also experienced that ((laughter)).
 224 Victoria: That is where I experienced racism too (.) I mean racism is whether
 225 the:: Albanian holds the flag? This is not the issue (.) the issue is that (.) it does
 226 not matter whether s/he is Albanian whether s/he is Russian or whatever (.)
 227 but to have Greek citizenship (.) not to be like not to::o be like e:h (.) in the USA
 228 (.) the other declares s/he is an American citizen (.) to be able the:e Albanian
 229 to declare or to accept to declare that s/he is Albanian (.) citizen (.) with
 230 Albanian and Greek citizenship (.) as we the Greeks did (.) second and first
 231 generation in the USA (.) why shouldn't s/he declare his/her status? Because I
 232 recently saw on the internet (.) I was speaking of Tsenai who de: de: not
 233 denounced I do not know whether this is the right expression eh:h (.) he was
 234 saying I am Albanian and I held the Greek flag and I didn't feel anything (.) it is
 235 good that s/he feels (.) the one who holds the flag (.) to feel something (.) and
 236 the Greek guy in the USA was feeling something (.) s/he was feeling proud (.)
 237 that s/he was an American (.) many second generation Greeks (.) I mean their
 238 children they were eh::h when you would ask them "I am proud (.) I am
 239 American" and the like (.) the Albanian though does not say this here in Greece
 240 (.) why doesn't s/he say this? s/he should say it (.) otherwise s/he
 241 shouldn't hold it (.) why do I become racist (.) because at the same time s/he
 242 raises the flagpole (.) the whatever s/he:: blasphemes the: (.) I see it like
 243 sacrilege (.) for me the flag is sacred (.) yes (.) but (.) I want whoever (.) worthy
 244 feels like it (.) to raise it.

(Group interview: Victoria: woman, 37, public/health services, Chrysa: woman, 42, public/health services)

Victoria begins by declaring that she prefers the situation now in schools where the student with the best marks is the flag-bearer in commemorative parades independently of country of origin. Nevertheless, she links her own experience from her school years to the nowadays situation. With the use of rhetorical questions, she argues that a form of discrimination and racism was also present when she was a student. The tall

students were the ones to participate in the parades (given in the form of a three-part list, lines 219–221) while she was excluded because she was short (with emphasis on the word short, line 222). By presenting herself as a victim of racism the speaker constructs an entitlement for her to speak to these issues. In addition, the almost comic account that is reinforced with the contribution and the laughter of the second speaker links the attribute of being short to that of cultural difference and makes the two comparable and underplays their seriousness.

In the rest of the extract the participant builds an account where immigrants are presented as obliged to develop feelings of affection with the host country and since they become citizens they should declare their national affiliation. Through a contrast formation (Edwards & Potter, 1992), which juxtaposes the national affiliation that Greek immigrants 'demonstrate' abroad to the national affiliation that the immigrants in Greece do not demonstrate towards their host country, the behaviour of immigrants in Greece is presented as accountable. Albanian immigrants are treated as prototypical in this context, using a specific example ("Tsenai"⁷). Having built the accountability of this behaviour, the speaker admits racism in the form of a rhetorical question ("why do I become racist?", line 241). This admission first constructs racism not as an inherent characteristic but as something that someone is driven to by external factors. Second, this comes as a reflexive move using a rhetorical question, acknowledging that the previous formulations might leave her accountable to charges of prejudice. Third, although she has already provided good reasons for becoming racist, she seems compelled to cater for her accountability further and justify why she becomes racist. She does this using a vocabulary that is akin to religion (blasphemes, sacrilege, sacred, lines 242–3), applying intertextuality (Fairclough, 1993) between practices related to religion and the nation. This strong vocabulary further contributes to presenting the behaviour of immigrants as accountable. Towards the end, by using an extreme case formulation ("whoever worthy feels like it", line 243) she declares that she does not discriminate since the sole criterion for holding the flag is not the country of origin but the existence of a national sentiment.

In this extract, therefore, the participant admitted that she becomes racist. Racism in this way was presented as a state that someone comes to and not as an essential part of her identity. While her stake is confessed, her confession is still treated as accountable since the speaker seems compelled through form (rhetorical question) and content (good evidence) to make this state justifiable.

⁷Tsenai was a student of Albanian origin in the town of Michaniona who, based on his marks, should have borne the Greek flag in the 2000 and 2003 parades commemorating the entrance of Greece to the Second World War. The reactions of the parents and students deterred him from holding the flag during these parades.

In the first two extracts participants used admissions of racism, constructing racism not as an inherent personal characteristic but as something one becomes. Even so, this still seems problematic for their accountability as participants cater it by grounding their transition to this state on certain social conditions and on the behaviour of immigrants. Therefore, participants *still* attend to the norm against prejudice, while confessing racism seems to prevent accusations of the stigma of racism *and* provide a legitimate base to make arguments against immigrants. In the next three extracts the formulation of the admission of racism is different as participants admit racism as something that they are in particular cases, as something that they are hypothetically, and as something they are unfortunately.

In extract 3 the participant admits racism openly, as something that she *is*, yet only with certain immigrant groups. Before this extract the interviewer and the interviewee had been discussing Golden Dawn (GD) and thus the pronoun 'they' in the opening refers to GD members.

"I am also racist": Explicit admission of racism but only with some

Extract 3

357 Venetia: It was this the (.) it was the mentality they had the conviction (.) that

358 they could not accept difference in general whether it had to do with the color

359 or it had to do >I don't know< with the country you come from or everything. I

360 believe this (.) I believe it is very hypocritical (.) it simply hit ground in the times

361 we live and in the end when a person comes under such ugly circumstances like

362 the Albanians (.) I am not telling you about the Rossopontians⁸ because I don't

363 have a very good (.) generally I don't consider them very: (..) I am also racist

364 that is bu::t as far as it concerns the Albanians or the black or anybody else tha:t

365 has come from his country under adverse conditions s/he hasn't got to eat and

366 has to work you don't offer him work or you take advantage of him for ten euros

367 (.) eh s/he will act differently (.) when s/he experiences in a country and is

368 molded through these situations (.) s/he will pass ((behave)) (.) accordingly.

(Interview: Venetia, Woman, 36, private health services)

Venetia talks about GD members arguing that they are intolerant of any kind of difference *in general*, juxtaposing the adverse living conditions that the Albanians suffered. She then draws a distinction between

immigrants from Albania and the people who came to Greece from the former Soviet Republics. She makes a false start (line 363–4) that she tries to repair with another false start (line 363), which is repaired with a confession of racism (line 363) towards the latter group. She then continues to talk about the adverse conditions Albanians faced in Greece.

Having constructed GD members as the prototypical intolerant "other" who are blindly racist towards everyone in general, Venetia's racism is constructed as softer, non-blind and particular, minimizing the negative effects the admission of racism may have for her self-presentation (cf. Goodman & Rowe, 2014). In addition, while the way in which the admission of racism is formulated – "I am racist" – constructs racism as a characteristic, the distinction Venetia makes between immigrants' groups helps to particularize it, strengthening her claim and differentiating herself from the indiscriminate – thus irrational – racism of GD. In other words, her own racism – by not being blind as it is addressed to a specific group – bears some reason compared to the one exhibited by GD members. The sympathy she demonstrates towards Albanians, which is built through vivid images (lines 366–7), also works towards these ends. Therefore, Venetia's account does two things for the sake of our argument: first, by contrasting her racism to that of GD members, Venetia inoculates herself from accusations of blind, irrational racism; second, it constructs racism not as a general characteristic that blind, irrational people may have, but as a particular one against a specific group allowing for possible reasons for that. Both construct her racism as more acceptable, attending to her accountability and catering for the stigma of prejudice. Importantly, the racism of GD is used as a resource in constructing her racism as less problematic and accountable. In this way, political extremes can be used in racist talk as the rhetorical "other", allowing the speaker to distance him/herself from these extremes, while at the same time demanding harsh measures against minorities (Billig, 1988). This is also the case in the next extract.

In the following extract the participant admits racism hypothetically, as an identity his account renders him open to. The extract is taken from a group interview with three immigrants. The participants were commenting on the Greek migration policy before this extract and they positioned themselves against illegal migration.

"Say that I am racist": Hypothetical admission of racism

Extract 4

1250 Ulysses: The dirty cloth has to pass from the washing machine. The country has

1251 to pass (.) to wash well (.) these are all wrong that they did (.) that we know

1252 why they did it (.) my opinion is they have to clean <the historical country that

1253 we love>. Whoever it is if this person does not come here like we came to have

⁸People who came to Greece from the former Soviet Republics, some of whom had Greek ethnic descent.

1254 a family to live with dignity he has to go. (...) Not
 and 85–90% to go these that
 1255 are here and ruin everything for us e::h say that
 I am racist >I don't care< all
 1256 of them to go to clean to wash our cloth to: put it
 to: dry to wear it well. That's
 1257 it. All of them have to go (.) my opinion right.
 Say that I am a guy from
 1258 Golden Dawn. They have to go. >I don't care for
 them that say the Pakistanis
 1259 and the others< let them go to their country
 they have a big county=
 1260 Takis:= We are talking
 1261 Ulysses:= Ten times bigger than Greece and they
 have a good climate there let
 1262 them go there. This is what I say.

(Group interview: Ulysses: man, Georgia, 42, construction/unemployed, Takis: man, Albania, 50, construction/unemployed)

The speaker begins the extract by using a metaphor of a dirty cloth that needs washing to refer to the country. This is a widely used metaphor in the rhetoric of the GD party. The speaker employs the first person plural in this formulation and then also declares his emotional link to the country (lines 1252–3) seemingly aligning himself with the Greek majority. In the next sentence he adopts the footing of the immigrant introducing a dichotomy between the “family men” immigrants and the opportunists, positioning himself in the first group, arguing that the second group should leave Greece. The demand is followed by a high numerical approximation of the percentage of immigrants that have to leave and by a statement that their presence causes problems to other immigrant groups. At this stage in line 1255 a hypothetical admission of racism is introduced. The fact that this follows the demand for the repatriation of other immigrant groups is not a coincidence since it demonstrates that the participant can reflexively appreciate the existence of the norm against prejudice and that his account can be considered racist. Nevertheless, the potential accusation that he is racist is not denied, but it is followed by an assertion that this does not concern him. The explicit demand for repatriation is repeated again in line 1257. At this stage, the speaker declares that this is his opinion – implying that he is entitled to have a personal opinion – and this is followed by another hypothetical adoption of an identity, that of a GD member. Again, the participant acknowledges that his account may sound extremist and makes a reflexive move by placing himself in the role of the animator who recognizes that someone else might think that he is a member of GD. Still, this reflexive move is treated as requiring further moderation as Ulysses resorts to a favorable presentation of the country of origin of the immigrants in question.

In this extract the participant uses a hypothetical admission of racism, which, adopting the footing of the animator, he puts on the mouth of the hearer. Namely, he reflexively acknowledges that his demand for the repatriation of immigrants can be heard as racist. However,

this formulation allows him deniability: just because another party might think that he is racist does not mean that he is. Even so, the participant declares that his moral profile does not concern him. In this way the participant places himself at a liminal position, which allows him to both attend to the norm against prejudice through a confession of a hypothetical stake *and* to potentially adopt the identity of a racist, providing him with a foothold to make arguments against immigrants. It is also important that the participant orients himself to ‘Golden Dawn’ using a similar formulation as that of ‘racism’. As in the previous extract, the racism of GD is used as a resource in making arguments against immigrants. In contrast to the previous extract, though, where the participant differentiates herself from GD members, in this case the participant uses this as a reflexive move recognizing that he can be classified as an extremist. The way in which the account is constructed does various things: first, it attends to the norm against prejudice through being reflexive about the identity a hearer may attribute to the speaker using both a hypothetical admission of racism and GD membership *and* further through presenting the destination of repatriation in favorable terms; second, it positions the participant in a liminal position and leaves vague whether he really is racist and/or a GD member; finally, by dismissing being a racist and a GD member of moral accountability in making arguments against immigrants, racism in general and GD membership in particular are used as shields in making such arguments.

“Unfortunately racist”: Explicit admission of racism

In the final extract, the participant uses an explicit admission of racism when she is asked about migration in Greece. Before the extract, interviewer and interviewee were talking about the economic situation in Greece.

Extract 5

56 Maria: With the people that have come to Greece
 (.) that ha:s (.) I am not talking
 57 only about now that it has many years
 58 Frosso: Unfortunately I am a very big racist [so I
 will talk very bad about them.
 59 Maria: [how do you see it?
 60 Frosso: It is something that I detest (...) better in
 their country than here (.) because
 61 also Greece cannot feed her children she will feed
 the foreigners? It can't be. And
 62 they take pensions (.) without having worked a
single day? Eh this can't be done.
 63 The how (.) how will Greece not be in debt?
 (Interview: Woman, 39, public health services)

Maria poses a question about the immigrants in Greece. In the literature on prejudice it is common to answer this type of question with a disclaimer. On the contrary, here the account is prefaced by an admission of racism. The unpleasantness of racism is not denied

as the word “unfortunately” indicates, while the extreme case formulation (“very big racist”) is used to justify what follows next (“so”) in line 58. In contrast to the two previous extracts where racism was particularized or hypothetical, racism here is constructed as a personal characteristic. In the rest of the extract, the participant uses rhetorical questions in a list form to argue that immigrants should be repatriated, mobilizing a family metaphor to construct the relationship between Greece and Greeks and blaming immigrants for the financial situation in Greece (lines 61–3).

In this extract, the participant instead of using a stake inoculation (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996) in the form of the disclaimer “I am not racist but...”, she uses an open stake confession – “Unfortunately I am a very big racist” – from the beginning. This functions as a disclaimer, prefacing the racist talk that ensues whilst preventing (new) challenges to the speaker’s identity. The reflexivity that Frosso demonstrates by admitting being racist seems to constitute a sign of sincerity that allows her to make negative comments about immigrants. Yet, the negative consequences for self-presentation that such an admission is open to are not denied as the word “unfortunately” shows. In addition, the negative comments about immigrants are formulated in a way that further caters to her accountability (family metaphor and rhetorical questions in a list form). Therefore, Frosso’s account is informed by the premises of the norm against prejudice as she orients to racism when she is asked about migration, shielding herself with the morally positive consequences of the norm of sincerity against the morally negative ones of racism. Interestingly in this account, a sincere admission of racism is used as a shield to inoculate the speaker. Even so, this is treated as accountable still as demonstrated by Frosso’s justifications of her position (lines 61–3) as appeals to reasonableness.

All in all, in the extracts above, admissions of racism (stake confessions) are used in the place of denials (stake inoculation) in making arguments against immigrants. While these draw on racism as a resource, the fact that they are uttered in the first place and the ways in which they are formulated show an awareness of the norm against prejudice. Ironically though, although these admissions draw on racism as a resource, they seem to function as shields to inoculate speakers from the stigma of prejudice. This does not mean that racism was seen as positive as participants try to account for it in many ways – as being forced to it, as only applicable to certain groups, as hypothetical or unfortunate. Most importantly, beyond and besides the function of this formulation as a rhetorical strategy, participants cater further to their accountability than the stake confession allows and mobilize GD (rhetoric and membership) as a resource in doing so.

Discussion

In the extracts presented above participants used admissions of racism in the context of a discussion on

migration and citizenship in Greece. In contrast to the majority of the existing literature, which argues that racism is usually discursively denied, in our data participants often used admissions of racism as a legitimate basis to make negative comments about immigrants. On some occasions racism was seen as something that one is driven to either due to immigrants’ behaviour (who do not fulfill their civic obligations or are involved in criminal activities) or due to the challenges posed in Greece by the economic crisis. In these instances, racism was verbally constructed as something contingent upon social situations. On other occasions participants used an admission of racism constructing it as selective and particular, or as a hypothetical or unfortunate characteristic. All of these instances allowed participants to express negative opinions about immigrants, while shielding them from further accusations to what they had already confessed. Besides stake confession, though, these admissions of racism are noted for their prevalence in the interviews as well as for being accompanied by further mitigations and for mobilizing the extreme right-wing party, Golden Dawn, (rhetoric and membership) as a resource in doing so.

In view of the above, the main issues this paper addresses can be summarized as: do these admissions of racism signal a shift in the norm against prejudice? And how are we to contextualize this more open and blatant racialized discourse? We took into account recent contributions that stressed the specificities of the interactional context and topic of discussion (see Robles, 2015; Stapleton, 2016; Whitehead, 2015) avoiding the reification of the racist category itself beyond the ways in which it is oriented to by participants (extracts 1–5). We also noted that racism is collaboratively constructed in some extracts (see extracts 1 & 4) as also discussed in the work of Condor et al. (2006). In relation to recent work that argues for the dissociation of prejudice from racism (see Goodman, 2014; Goodman & Rowe, 2014), remaining loyal to the participants’ orientations, we have identified that participants in our data specifically mobilized ‘racism’. While the word prejudice exists in Greek language, participants mainly mobilized the words racism and racist. We do not claim to disambiguate which is what, nor shed light into what constitutes racism (see also Condor et al., 2006; Condor & Figgou, 2012). Not only is this beyond the scope of the present paper but also beyond the participants’ own orientations. What is noted, however, is that there is a reformulation of the norm against prejudice in talk, one that in its verbal display (“I become racist”, “I am also racist”, “Say that I am racist”, “I am a very big racist”) seems to go beyond mere “hierarchies of prejudice” (Goodman & Rowe, 2014). Rather than disambiguating between the two terms, therefore, it seems critical to interrogate whether this blatant display of racism signals an ideological shift in the norm against prejudice as Andreouli et al. (2016) have suggested in their analysis of banal constructions of racism among students in English schools. In considering that argument, we note that: *First of all*, participants oriented

themselves to issues of racism when they discussed migration. This indicates that they were aware that their constructions could have negative effects for their moral accountability. Had it been otherwise, they could have uttered negative opinions about immigrants without any reference to racism. However, the admission of racism was used as a reflexive move that allowed participants to present themselves as honest people, who acknowledge that their formulations could be heard as racist. *Second*, participants acknowledged that racism carried negative connotations, with some of them orienting to the unpleasantness of racism. *Third*, although they admitted racism, they still had to provide good justification to further support this admission. This was done either with recourse to the social conditions in a crisis-ridden Greece or by constructing immigrants' behaviour as unlawful and against civic ethos. All in all, therefore, similarly to the standard discursive psychological analyses of the norm against prejudice, speakers do not want to be seen as having an irrational dislike of immigrants and they take steps to insulate themselves from such an ascription while then going on to express negative views about immigrants. However, what is new in our data is that the insulation work is being done through a reformulation of the category 'racist' itself, presented as a rational response to a negative situation. Presenting the racist category as ostensibly rational and justified, the speakers try to prevent and disclaim accusations of prejudice, which, as a strategy, does not divert from the standard orientation to the norm against prejudice.

Although we thus argue that the admission of racism does not imply the absence of the norm against prejudice, we definitely think that this reformulation may be alarming as this reflexive move allowed participants to admit racism using it as a legitimate basis to make negative comments about immigrants. Drawing on participants' own orientations *and* the wider social context as a resource, we would argue that the latter may have played a vital role in how participants formulated admissions of racism. As was stressed in the beginning, during the last few years in Greece negative opinions towards immigrants are openly uttered not only by lay people but also by politicians, since extreme right-wing parties gained popular support and managed to gain seats in parliament. A typical case is that of the Golden Dawn party, which adopts an extreme anti-immigrant agenda that goes hand in hand with political activism. While it is not possible to discern whether the rise of extreme right-wing parties in Greece allows participants to utter racist arguments or whether this argumentative context contributed to their rise, it seems relevant to consider the relation between context and discourse. For some discursive and for most conversation analytic researchers, context signifies only the immediate interactional context and the relevance of the wider socio-cultural context for analysis depends on whether participants orient to it (see Schegloff, 1997, 1998, 1999a, 1999b). In our case, in two occasions at least, participants oriented towards the rhetoric of the Golden

Dawn party explicitly when admitting racism, presenting their opinion as tolerant in comparison (cf. Billig, 1988). Thus, we would argue that drawing on racism as a resource indicates that context is also relevant even if it is not explicitly uttered. According to CDSP, notions such as interpretative repertoires, positioning and ideological dilemmas are concepts that, on the one hand, allow the examination of participants' own orientations and, on the other, allow room for an analysis that takes into consideration the historical, social and political context that informs participants and their verbal interactions (Bozatzis, 2009; Edley, 2001; Wetherell, 1998). Our analysis indicates, therefore, a possible interaction between the political context and racist discourse, which may also explain the different insights we draw from Andreouli et al. (2016).

To sum up, the admissions of racism presented in the analysis section seem to be informed by the dilemma of prejudice versus tolerance. Participants admitted racism but not irrationality, providing justification not to be heard as pre-judging immigrants, thus catering for their moral identities. In addition, the wider social context at the time of the interviews (2012–2014) where arguments against immigrants were openly uttered, extreme-right wing political parties have gained parliamentary representation, and their discourse may have consequently gained legitimacy (see Figgou, 2016), seems to interact with these admissions of racism. We acknowledge that our data cannot be generalized easily beyond the interview contexts, yet it indicates the recurrent need to focus and expand research on displays of racism and the mobilization and (re-)construction of the racist category in different contexts, attending to the functions these have in interactional settings and beyond, but also to the socio-cultural contexts within which they occur.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by a Marie Curie Career Integration Grant within the 7th European Community Framework Programme (N° 294227, call reference: FP7-PEOPLE-2011-CIG). We would like to thank Lia Figgou, Stephen Gibson and Villy Tsakona for their useful comments on earlier drafts of the paper. We are also obliged to Clifford Stevenson for his advice and elaborate work during the whole process of submission. Finally, we would like to thank three anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments.

References

- Allport, G. W. (1979). *The nature of prejudice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co.

- Andreouli, E., Greenland, K., & Howarth, C. (2016). 'I don't think racism is that bad any more': Exploring the 'end of racism' discourse among students in English schools. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 46(2), 171–184. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2143>
- Angouri, J., & Wodak, R. (2014). 'They became big in the shadow of the crisis': The Greek success story and the rise of the far right. *Discourse & Society*, 25(4), 540–565.
- Antaki, C. (2003). The uses of absurdity. In H. Van den Berg, M. Wetherell & H. Houtkoop-Steenstra (Eds.), *Analyzing race talk: Multidisciplinary approaches to the interview* (pp. 85–102). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Augoustinos, M., & Every, D. (2007). The language of "race" and prejudice: A discourse of denial, reason, and liberal practical politics. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 26(2), 123–141.
- Baldwin-Edwards, M. (2004). Στατιστικά δεδομένα για τους μετανάστες στην Ελλάδα: Αναλυτική μελέτη για τα διαθέσιμα στοιχεία και προτάσεις για τη συμμόρφωση με τα standards της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Ερευνητική Έκθεση για το I.M.E.P.O [Statistical Data for immigrants in Greece: Detailed study of the available data and suggestions for compliance with the standards of the European Union. Report for I.M.E.P.O].
- Benwell, B., & Stokoe, E. (2006). *Discourse and identity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Billig, M. (1988). The notion of prejudice: Some rhetorical and ideological aspects. *Text*, 8(1–2), 91–110.
- Billig, M. (1989). The argumentative nature of holding strong views: A case study. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 19, 203–223.
- Billig, M. (1999a). Whose terms? Whose ordinariness? Rhetoric and ideology in conversation analysis. *Discourse and Society*, 10(4), 543–582.
- Billig, M. (1999b). Conversation analysis and the claims of naivety. *Discourse and Society*, 10(4), 572–576.
- Billig, M., Condor, S., Edwards, D., Gane, M., Middleton, M., & Radley, A. R. (1988). *Ideological dilemmas: A social psychology of everyday thinking*. London: Sage.
- Bozatzis, N. (2009). Occidentalism and accountability: Constructing culture and cultural difference in majority Greek talk about the minority in Western Thrace. *Discourse & Society*, 20(4), 431–453.
- Cavounidis, J. (2002). Migration in southern Europe and the case of Greece. *International Migration*, 40(1), 45–70.
- Condor, S. (2006). Public prejudice as a collaborative accomplishment: Towards a dialogical social psychology of racism. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 16(1), 1–18.
- Condor, S., & Figgou, L. (2012). Rethinking the prejudice problematic: A collaborative cognition approach. In J. Dixon & M. Levine (Eds.), *Beyond prejudice: Extending the social psychology of conflict, inequality and social change* (pp. 200–221). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Condor, S., Figgou, L., Abell, J., Gibson, S., & Stevenson, C. (2006). 'They're not racist ...' Prejudice denial, mitigation and suppression in dialogue. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 45(3), 441–462.
- Di Masso, A., Castrechini, A., & Valera, S. (2014). Displacing xenophobia: The discursive legitimization of native supremacy through everyday accounts of urban insecurity. *Discourse & Society*, 25(3), 341–361.
- Edley, N. (2001). Analyzing masculinity: Interpretative repertoires, ideological dilemmas and subject positions. In M. Wetherell, S. Taylor & S. J. Yates (Eds.), *Discourse as data: A guide for analysis* (pp. 189–228). London: Sage.
- Edwards, D. (1997). *Discourse and Cognition*. London: Sage Publications.
- Edwards, D. (2003). Analyzing racial discourse: The discursive psychology of mind-world relations (pp. 31–48). In H. Van den Berg, M. Wetherell & H. Houtkoop-Steenstra (Eds.), *Analyzing race talk: Multidisciplinary approaches to the interview* (pp. 85–102). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Edwards, D., & Potter, J. (1992). *Discursive psychology*. London: Sage Publications.
- Edwards, D., & Stokoe, E. H. (2004). Discursive psychology, focus group interviews and participants' categories. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 22(4), 499–507.
- Ellinas, A. A. (2013). The rise of the Golden Dawn: The new face of the far right in Greece. *South European Society and Politics*, 18(4), 543–565.
- Fairclough, N. (1993). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Figgou, L. (2002). *Social psychological and lay understandings of prejudice, racism and discrimination: An exploration of their dilemmatic aspects*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Lancaster University.
- Figgou, L. (2016). Constructions of "illegal" immigration and entitlement to citizenship: Debating an Immigration Law in Greece. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 26(2), 150–163. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2242>
- Figgou, L. (2017). Everyday politics and the extreme right: Lay explanations of the electoral performance of the neo-Nazi political party 'Golden Dawn' in Greece. In C. Howarth, & E. Andreouli (Eds.), *The social psychology of everyday politics* (pp. 206–221). London: Routledge.
- Figgou, L., & Condor, S. (2006). Irrational categorization, natural intolerance and reasonable discrimination: Lay representations of prejudice and racism. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 45(2), 219–243.
- Figgou, L., Sapountzis, A., Bozatzis, N., Gardikiotis, A., & Pantazis, P. (2011). Constructing the stereotype of immigrants' criminality: Accounts of fear and risk in talk about immigration to Greece. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 21(2), 164–177.
- Goodman, S. (2010). "It is not racist to impose limits on immigration": Constructing the boundaries of racism in the Asylum and immigration debate. *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines*, 4(1), 1–17.
- Goodman, S. (2014). Developing an understanding of race talk. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 8(4), 147–155.
- Goodman, S., & Rowe, L. (2014). "Maybe it is prejudice... But it is NOT racism": Negotiating racism in discussion forums about Gypsies. *Discourse & Society*, 25(1), 32–46.
- Hewitt, J. P., & Stokes, R. (1975). Disclaimers. *American Sociological Review*, 40(1), 1–11.
- Jefferson, G. (1984). Transcription notation. In J. M. Atkinson & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis* (pp. ix–xi). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Jefferson, G. (1990). List-construction as a task and resource. In G. Psathas (Ed.), *Interaction competence* (pp. 63–92). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

- Katsavounidou, G., & Kourti, P. (2008). Homogeneous migrants from the former Soviet Union in Thessaloniki and the transformation of the western quarters of the city. In M. Baldwin-Edwards (Ed.), *Ethnicity and migration: A Greek story* (pp. 61–70), Special issue of *Migrance* 30. Paris: Editions Memoires-Generiques.
- Kokkinos, D. (1991). The Greek's state overview of the Pontian issue. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 4(4), 312–314.
- Koning, E. A. (2011). Ethnic and civic dealings with newcomers: Naturalization policies and practices in twenty-six immigration countries. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 34(11), 1974–1994.
- LeCouteur, A., & Augoustinos, M. (2001). The language of prejudice and racism. In M. Augoustinos & K. J. Reynolds (Eds.), *Understanding prejudice, racism, and social conflict* (pp. 215–230). London: Sage.
- Maroukis, T. (2008). *Undocumented migration counting the uncountable. Data and trends across Europe*. Country report, Clandestino research programme.
- Maroukis, T. (2012). *The number of irregular immigrants in Greece at the end of 2010 and 2011*. ELIAMEP Briefing Notes.
- McKinlay, A., & McVittie, C. (2008). *Social psychology and discourse*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Pomerantz, A. (1986). Extreme case formulations: A new way of legitimating claims. *Human Studies*, 9(2-3), 219–230.
- Potter, J. (1996). *Representing reality: Discourse, rhetoric and social construction*. London: Sage Publications.
- Potter, J., & Hepburn, A. (2005). Qualitative interviews in psychology: Problems and possibilities. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2, 1–27.
- Robles, J. S. (2015). Extreme case (re)formulation as a practice for making hearably-racist talk repairable. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 34(4), 390–409.
- Schegloff, E. A. (1997). Whose text? Whose context? *Discourse & Society*, 8(2), 165–187.
- Schegloff, E. A. (1998). Reply to Wetherell. *Discourse & Society*, 9(3), 457–460.
- Schegloff, E. (1999a). "Schegloff's texts" as "Billig's data": A critical reply. *Discourse & Society*, 10(4), 558–572.
- Schegloff, E. A. (1999b). Naïveté vs sophistication or discipline vs self-indulgence: A rejoinder to Billig. *Discourse & Society*, 10(4), 577–582.
- Stapleton, K. (2016). Accountable preferences? Discourse, identity, and the anti-prejudice norm. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 35(5), 491–514.
- Triandafyllidou, A. (2014). *Migration in Greece: Recent developments in 2014*. Report prepared for the OECD Network of International Migration Experts, Paris, 6–8 October 2014.
- Tsitselikis, K. (2005). Citizenship in Greece: Present challenges for future changes. In D. Kalekin-Fishman & P. Pitkänen (Eds.), *Multiple citizenship as a challenge to European nation-states* (pp. 145–170). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Tzanelli, R. (2006). "Not My Flag!" Citizenship and nationhood in the margins of Europe (Greece, October 2000/2003). *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 29(1), 27–49.
- van Dijk, T. A. (1984). *Prejudice in discourse*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- van Dijk, T. A. (1987). *Communicating racism: Ethnic prejudice in thought and talk*. London: Sage.
- van Dijk, T. A. (1992). Discourse and the denial of racism. *Discourse & Society*, 3(1), 87–118.
- Wetherell, M. (1998). Positioning and interpretative repertoires: Conversation analysis and post-structuralism in dialogue. *Discourse & Society*, 9(3), 387–412.
- Wetherell, M. (2003). Racism and the analysis of cultural resources in interviews. In H. den Berg, M. Wetherell, & H. Houtkopp-Steenstra (Eds.), *Analyzing race talk: Multidisciplinary approaches to the interview* (pp. 11–30). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wetherell, M., & Potter, J. (1992). *Mapping the language of racism: Discourse and the legitimation of exploitation*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Whitehead, K. A. (2015). Everyday antiracism in action: Preference organization in responses to racism. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 34(4), 374–389.
- Whitehead, K. A., & Stokoe, E. (2015). Producing and responding to -isms in interaction. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 34(4), 368–373.
- Wooffitt, R. (1992). *Telling tales of the unexpected: The organization of factual accounts*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Wooffitt, R. (2005). *Conversation analysis and discourse analysis: A comparative and critical introduction*. London: Sage.
- Xenitidou, M., & Greco-Morasso, S. (2014). Parental discourse and identity management in the talk of indigenous and migrant speakers in Greece and the UK. *Discourse & Society*, 25(1), 100–121.
- Χριστόπουλος, Δ. (2012). *Ποιός είναι έλληνας πολίτης; Το καθεστώς της ιθαγένειας από την ίδρυση του ελληνικού κράτους ως τις αρχές του 21^{ου} αιώνα*. [Who is Greek citizen? The status of citizenship from the foundation of the Greek state until the early 21st century]. Athens, Greece: Βιβλιοδράμα.