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Commemoration in crisis: A discursive analysis of who ‘we’ and ‘they’ have been or become in ceremonial political speeches before and during the Greek financial downturn.

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## **Abstract**

This paper analyses the discourse of statements of the leaders of two Greek political parties commemorating the restoration of Greek democracy on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1974; the ruling party New Democracy and the opposition, Coalition of the Radical Left. We focus on how these leaders act as entrepreneurs of their identities by constructing their in-groups in broad or narrow terms and their outgroups in vague or specific terms. These constructions were ventured during a period of relative political stability (2008) and instability (2012), and we focus on how in-group prototypes and group boundaries are narrated across Greece’s past, present and future in ambiguous or concrete terms. The study aligns the social identity approach to political leadership with studies on political discourse and ‘the rhetoric of we’. We view

commemorative statements as historical charters and respond to calls for discourse analysis to take greater account of historical context. The findings suggest concrete hypotheses about how leaders with different amounts of political support might define, as identity entrepreneurs, who 'we' are, and who 'we' are not in democratic contexts marked by stability or crisis.

Key words: ambiguity, categories, commemoration, concretion, discourse, leadership

## **Introduction**

In a recent study of identity entrepreneurship, Reicher and Haslam (2017) examined how Donald Trump's political success was enabled by his construction of himself as prototypical of the "ordinary American" (p.28). *Identity entrepreneurship* describes how leaders' regrouping of diverse communities into a single overarching group, and frame their political projects as the instantiation of that group's norms and the leader as the prototypical group member (Condor, Tileaga & Billig, 2013; Haslam, Reicher & Platow, 2011; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). But political legitimacy sometimes requires a leader to be seen by their followers as also something more than average. This paper examines the question of when leaders strive to appear akin to the people that they enjoin to follow them, and when they strike to position themselves beyond those people. To this end, our study examines variation in political leaders' rhetorical accomplishment of identity entrepreneurship in different macro-political context across time periods.

We examine this thesis empirically through a discourse analysis of modern Greek political leaders' commemorative statements of the restoration of democracy in 1974. Group history

provides an important resource with which leaders can broker their legitimacy as political representatives in democracies and other societies (Liu & Hilton, 2005). By constructing group narratives, political leaders align collective action with the interests of dominant identity groups (Simon & Oakes, 2006; Snow & McAdam, 2000). Group members and representatives are affected when rapid changes disturb the historical continuity of the group (Jetten & Hutchison, 2011). Accordingly, leaders can be expected to mobilise support for collective action differently in different contexts (Reicher, 2008). In this paper, we analysed speeches of the ruling and an opposition political party in 2008 and 2012 prior to and during a singular moment of crisis in recent Greek history. Below, we outline the context of these commemorative speeches, unpack how we expect this context to inform studies of identity entrepreneurship, and explain how we draw on discursive psychology to pursue this aim.

#### *Commemoration in Recent Greek Political History*

In the mid-1960s, Greece was a crowned republic, and Prime Minister George Papandreou and King Constantine were in conflict regarding Papandreou's intended, left-wing inspired reforms. The conflict led to elections in May 1967. Then, a group of army officers seized power, raising alarm about these reforms and rising left-wing ideologies. Long-standing political freedoms, social rights and civil liberties that were taken for granted and enjoyed by the Greek citizens were suppressed by the officers of the regime. Military courts were established and many political parties, particularly left-wing parties, were dissolved (Woodhouse, 1998). Popular protests against the military Junta followed, led by several communist and youth movements. Successful demonstrations in 1973-4 made the military cede power back to politicians in 1974. On 24<sup>th</sup> July 1974, Constantine Karamanlis came to Greece from Paris, where he had been in exile since December 1963, was welcomed by thousands of citizens, formed the 'National Unity' government, and became Greece's first Prime Minister after the fall of dictatorship (Colovas, 2007).

Since these events, 1974 and the re-establishment of democracy have become key moments that Greek politicians are required to commemorate. Annual commemorations on the 24<sup>th</sup> July since 1974 are occasions where leaders of Greek parliamentary political parties are obliged to revisit the traumatic experience of dictatorship, and to establish collective, powerful, resilient, democratic group identities (Sourlas, 2016). In sum, commemorating that historical event enables Greek political leaders to define a ‘trajectory’ (Liu & Hilton, 2005) that helps them construct the essence of Greek political identity; who ‘we’ as a political group are. The establishment of dictatorship in 1967 challenged the foundations of the democratic polity. Through commemorative speeches, modern political parties are presented as trusted representatives of democracy emphasising the role that they and their antecedents played in the fall of dictatorship and the return of democracy.

Leaders of the political parties within the two-party system that emerged after 1974 can trace their lineage to the events that lead to the restoration of democracy. Constantine Karamanlis founded the party New Democracy and became the first prime minister after the fall of dictatorship. He led the transition from dictatorship to democracy ‘from above’ legalizing the Communist Party and freeing political prisoners from the officers of the junta regime as gestures of political inclusion to establish cordial relations between groups of people (Spourdalakis, 1995). For some historians, the very name of the party, New Democracy, reflects the significance of the change of regime that he led (Urwin, 2014). New Democracy was the ruling political party in Greece during 2008 and 2012, the period under consideration here. Other former protesters against the dictatorship regime played key roles in establishing the political agenda of the main opposition party in Greece, SYRIZA or ‘the Coalition of the Radical Left’ (Karamanolakis, 2010). The events of 1974 and the fights of youth and other social movements anchor understanding of the historical origins that make SYRIZA a distinct political party within a polarized two-party political system, which New Democracy and the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) dominated from 1974 until mid 2009 (March,

2008). SYRIZA was in opposition throughout 2008 and 2012 whilst New Democracy and the Panhellenic Socialist Movement held the support of larger parts of the electorate (Ioakimidis, 2016; March, 2008). However, the breaking out of crisis in 2010 led to the rise of the popularity of SYRIZA not only on the Greek political scene but also as a leading model for the radical left worldwide, situating SYRIZA at the epicenter of political resistance to global neo-liberalism and to the dominance of New Democracy and PASOK at home (Spourdalakis, 2014). Thus the events of 1974 constitute a repertoire of events from which both parties could draw to establish their current place through commemoration in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The ‘crisis’ of 2010 constituted the major threat to Greek democracy since 1974. Greece joined the European Union in 1980, and was enjoying a period of socio-economic growth in the second half of the 2000s (Lyrintzis, 2011). In 2008, ahead of then forthcoming European elections, public discourse prioritised Greece’s membership in the European Union as one of the country’s most treasured priorities (Mavris & Simeonidis, 2016). The 2010 global economic crisis prompted surveillance of Greece by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Central Bank (ECB) and the European Union (EU), known also as ‘Troika’. These entities oversaw the first of several bailout packages for the country. Greek politicians lost the trust of the Greek people, and mainstream politicians’ legitimacy was called into question (Dalakoglou, 2012). The neo-nazi party, Golden Dawn, gained popularity and prominence after 2010 (Halikiopoulou & Vasilopoulou, 2015).

By 2012 the country’s EU membership itself had been called into question and in May-June - just prior to the usual July commemorations - Greece’s membership was negotiated as a precondition of a second bailout package resulting in a full leadership crisis (Lefkofridi, 2015; Van Esch & Swinkels, 2015). The illegitimacy of political leaders was pronounced for several reasons (Katsanidou & Otjes, 2016; Savvoura, 2014). Most obviously, the Greek Council of State openly characterised as anti-constitutional several measures implemented by the coalition government led by New Democracy with support from two further parties; PASOK and the

Democratic Left (DHMAR). The 2012 bail-out agreement also polarised political parties, and was portrayed in parliamentary and public debates as a loss of national sovereignty and a capitulation to external forces. The incumbent New Democracy government were particularly accused of ‘selling out’ the country (Vasilopoulou, Halikiopoulou & Exadaktylos, 2014). Public-opinion polls showed a swing in support to SYRIZA from New Democracy (Mavris & Simeonidis, 2016). As such 2008 and 2012 provide two ideal time points in recent Greek history to consider how political leaders of a ruling, and an opposition political party might craft a sense of ‘us’ acting as entrepreneurs of their identity in commemoration during periods of political stability and instability. Konstantinos Karamanlis, the nephew of the founder of New Democracy Constantine Karamanlis, was leading New Democracy in 2008, while Antonis Samaras was the party leader in 2012. Alexis Tsipras was leading SYRIZA both in 2008 and 2012. We next consider how the social identity theory of political leadership informs our particular interest in these speeches.

### *Social Identity and Political Leaders as Identity Entrepreneurs*

Tajfel’s (1978) social identity theory aimed to describe the cognitive dimension of social identity, particularly self-categorization processes and questions like ‘what categories are salient in group definitions?’ and ‘what makes people define their groups in terms of one or another category?’ (Oakes, Turner & Haslam, 1991). We build on that framework here and assume that people define themselves in terms of group memberships (Turner & Oakes, 1986), and that social categories are used in various ways to create the reality of social relations (Hopkins & Kahani-Hopkins, 2009; Hopkins, Reicher & Kahani-Hopkins, 2003; Reicher, Drury, Hopkins & Stott, 2001; Reicher & Hopkins, 1996a,b, 2001, 2003; Reicher, Hopkins, Levine & Rath, 2005).

Identity entrepreneurship in particular has been described as involving different facets referring to leaders’ efforts to define their groups (who ‘we’ are and are not) and the content

of their group identity (what ‘we’ stand for) by invoking particular contexts and dimensions of comparison across time (Steffens, Haslam, Reicher, Platow, Franssen, Yang, Ryan, Jetten, Peters & Boen, 2014). Political leaders can categorise themselves and their audiences as ‘we’ (Haslam & Platow, 2001), nominate themselves as prototypical ‘national characters’ who appear to personify the whole nation (Reicher & Haslam, 2016; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001), and by so doing, appear as its legitimate representatives and administrators (Klein & Licata, 2003; Liu & Khan, 2014; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Leaders can, therefore, depersonalise themselves and portray themselves and the followers as collaborative agents in understanding and transforming the social reality (Reicher, Haslam & Hopkins, 2005), so that their agendas appear to be those of the people that they address and not a pursuit of their own individual or party interests (Van Knippenberg, 2011; Van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003).

But identity entrepreneurship requires more of effective leaders than just being prototypical of the people. Such prototypicality can always be challenged (Steffens, Haslam, Ryan & Kessler, 2013), particularly in democracies where political opponents enjoy free speech. Political legitimacy in any such contested context is unlikely to be seized and held by leaders whose only claim to legitimacy is that they are no different from the people that they lead. In Ancient Greek democracy leaders’ prototypicality was challenged through a paradox relating to leadership processes that was expressed by the ancient Greeks by asking “how leaders could be both average citizens (ιδιώτης, *idiotes*) and have exceptional qualities that legitimized their political privileges (μέτριος, *metrios*)” (Haslam et al., 2011, p.154). In modern Greek democracy, effective leaders of democratic parties must both represent a broad in-group (i.e., the people) and a more narrow group who can be trusted to work on behalf of the people (i.e., their political party). Accordingly, political leaders may challenge their own prototypicality of the people (Steffens et al, 2013). Group identities are also constructed by representations of who ‘we’ are *not*. Leaders must also manage identity by rhetorically drawing group boundaries that specify who outgroups are or that leave that matter vague. In other words, group boundaries

can be “bright” or “blurred” (Alba, 2005, p.25).

However, social psychological studies of how and when leaders as entrepreneurs of their identity construct such identity and different relations in real political contexts are scant. Commemorations of the restoration of Greek democracy allow an investigation of how political leaders of ruling and opposition parties act as entrepreneurs of their group identity. In commemorative practices social identity processes can occur through the ways that leaders selectively remember events and give meaning to them, defining their group, its interests and its norms (Liu, Wilson, McClure & Higgins, 1999). During commemoration, leaders can mobilize their audiences by drawing selectively on shared historical representations to legitimize particular political agendas (Liu et al., 2005), as through analogies for example (Ghiliani et al., 2017). Historical representations constitute part of the fabric of the social reality for any group of people (Hilton & Liu, 2008), and memory can collectively communicate solidarity and coherence (Hammack & Pilecki, 2012). Commemorative occasions oblige identity entrepreneurs to narrate the past, present and future in a way that addresses challenges to leaders’ prototypicality by providing a timely answer to the question of ‘who we are’ grounded in the audience’s shared understanding of our “historical ancestors” (Hilton & Liu, 2017, p.298). The broader societal implications of defining in-group prototypes and group boundaries concern mobilisations that re-make the social world and history through historical trajectories (Liu & Khan, 2014) conferring a world-making power on political leaders (Reicher, Haslam & Hopkins, 2005). Next we describe how studies on political discourse and the rhetoric of ‘we’ further inform our research questions in relation to identity entrepreneurship process.

#### *Beyond social identity approach: The Discourse of ‘We’*

The social identity approach to leadership has less to say about the strategic use of ambiguous and concrete terms in group representations. However, studies of political discourse and rhetoric emphasise that political speakers’ identities are rhetorical productions that aim at



persuasion (Condor, Tileaga & Billig, 2013). Political speakers sometimes systematically and strategically deploy ambiguity to formulate deliberately vague arguments that allow various interpretations, which can all align with commonly shared values (Borthen, 2010; Duncan, 2011; Myers, 1999).

Psychologists, linguistics and historians have all analysed political rhetoric, and often concluded that political leaders use distinct rhetorical strategies to cultivate a sense of ‘us’ to manage followers’ expectations and perceptions about them (Steffens & Haslam, 2013). Consistent with our focus on leaders’ variable references to broader and narrower in-groups, research has typically shown that first person terms are particularly likely to wander within texts from broad to specific referents (Petersoo, 2007). Furthermore, outgroups may be represented in specific or vague terms too (Petersoo, 2007). Accordingly, leaders can align themselves as national characters with their audiences through the use of first person plural pronouns ‘we’, ‘us’, ‘our’ implying unity and common purpose (Duncan, 2011; Eisenberg & Goodwall, 1997) portraying their group interests as coinciding with those of the entire world (Billig, 1995). Alternatively, leaders can also use a more specific ‘we’ (De Cock, 2011; Flottum, 2010), to describe ‘us’ in terms of concrete prototypical figures or in-group role models (Van Leeuwen, 2007). Finally, ‘we’ formulations also engage historical charters; political speakers can deploy concrete examples of in-group members to instantiate historically expanded categories, and to make concrete the ideals for which the in-group should aspire (Condor, 2006).

### *The Current Study: Context, Analytic Approach and Research Questions*

Every year on the 24<sup>th</sup> July, Greek leaders have issued statements commemorating the restoration of Greek democracy in 1974. Commemoration provides Greek political leaders with the opportunity to establish and (re)construct their group identities aligned with democratic norms and values, to promote group interests and map out actions, and to act as

identity entrepreneurs. We analysed the commemorative statements of the ruling party, New Democracy, and an opposition party, the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA), in 2008 and 2012 respectively which are published on the webpage of the Greek Parliament ([www.hellenicparliament.gr](http://www.hellenicparliament.gr)). Original material was translated from Greek into English by a professional translator of the British Council.

We employ principles and concepts of discourse analysis (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992), and rhetorical psychology (Billig, 1991; 1996) to inform our analytic approach to commemorative statements. Discourse analysis has many variants (see Wiggins, 2017 for a recent review). We draw specifically here on early studies of 'interpretive repertoires' (Wetherell & Potter, 1988), which we use here to examine how context is brought to bear on the discursive devices that emerge in leaders' commemorations, as Gibson (2009) has done with lay discourse on 'representations of welfare reform and unemployment.'

Discursive scholars similarly emphasise the need for viewing group identity formations in organisational contexts as changeable in accord with the social relations context of actors both in general (Heracleus, 2006) and in the specific context of identity entrepreneurship (Leitch & Harrison, 2016). The possibility of variability in Greek political leaders' constructions of 'we' is further suggested by Hilton and Liu's (2008, 2017) insight that commemorations aim to re-set historical 'charters' to create consistencies between elements of the historical past with current political leaders' responses to current challenges. Commemorative statements do not say anything that has not been said before (Tileaga, 2008), but create "variations on a theme" of group identity (Nigbur & Cinnirella, 2007, p.675), instead of viewing group identities as reflections of situational factors (Tajfel, 1978). Responding to the need for theorising social identity through variations on a theme, we selected commemorative statements as the material of this study that show variations on the leaders' construction of democratic identity. The break out of political and financial crisis of 2010 allows a look at leaders' very real constructions of identities aligned with democratic norms and values which were constructed to handle multiple

democratic stakes and questions during a period of turmoil. Commemoration allowed these Greek leaders a point of reference to constructing their identities as relevant, and to align their work towards the good of the democratic polity.

It has long been an aspiration of discursive psychology to describe identity processes in historical context, although the extent of that achievement is a matter of some debate (Hook, 2013). The present study responds to this critique both by sampling discourse across historical time and by orienting to how continuities between the past, present and future are narrated. In the analysis below, we focus particularly on how political leaders from two different Greek parties represent in-group prototypes and group boundaries by drawing upon shared understandings of historical events. Analysis will begin with extracts from New Democracy's 2008 and 2012 speeches that show variability in the management of the leader's group identity across historical contexts.

*Broadly defined in-group prototypes: New Democracy's overarching group identity*

The following extract exemplifies the construction of in-group prototypes by Konstantinos Karamanlis in ambiguous and broadly defined in-group forms. The first person pronouns comprise exemplars of the overarching formulated in-group category of 'we all together'.

Extract 1: New Democracy (2008)

**1. Together, citizens and political forces**, with national responsibility and  
**2. political maturity**, with belief in our potential and confidence between **us**, with  
**3. collective effort**, **we** succeeded. **We** restored democracy. **We** built solid  
**4. institutional bases** that render it steadfast and ensure the political normality and  
**5. stability**. **We** set up a modern collegiate and privileged democratic state. **We**  
**6. removed** the country from international isolation and **we** made it an equivalent  
**7. member** of the European Family. **We, the Greeks**, administrators of the

*8*.precious legacy that the fighters of Democracy bequeathed **us**, know that the  
*9*.extremism, the efforts to challenge institutions and at the social leveling the  
*10*.rationales of depreciation and nihilism, hold only dangers...Today and in the  
*11*.years that come **we** will continue in the way that **we** began together and **we**  
*12*.regularly follow.

Deploying a ‘togetherness repertoire’ (Wetherell & Potter, 1992), Karamanlis unites the Greek people to identify with his political project (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001) by commemorating the people’s legacy (Hilton & Liu, 2008). The word ‘we’ appears nine times in this extract, and ‘us’ appears twice. Early on, ‘we’ refers to a shared in-group prototype that includes historical actors and the current Greek people for whom the actor speaks, as social identity theory might predict (lines 1-6). Connection to past achievements, in 3-6 may offer the present overarching in-group an existential security (Sani, Herrera & Bowe, 2009) and a sense of common fate (Liu & Hilton, 2005; Reicher, 2008). Karamanlis speaks for ‘citizens and political forces’ ‘together,’ defining a people whose membership are not bounded by political party or anything else, but who share potential and confidence in each other. Karamanlis narrates how this ambiguous ‘we’ successfully built and sustained the policies that achieved Greek democracy, suggesting that all Greeks share agency in these achievements. In line 7, a national term ‘the Greeks’ is used again to unite the leader and the Greek citizens in a common in-group, while the identity relationship between the ‘we’ in the past and the ‘we’ in the present becomes ambiguous. Constructing ‘we’ in 7-8 as the administrators of a legacy that past actors have ‘bequeathed us’ historically maintains continuity with the past as its administrators, allowing Karamanlis a different basis from which to claim his present legitimacy. However, neither past administrators nor the Greeks of the present are specified in more concrete terms. Mobilizing the ‘togetherness repertoire’ in lines 11-12 this legitimacy is brokered to urge the people forward as ‘we’ move together to a ‘golden future’ (Augoustinos, Hastie & Wright, 2011)

without needing to specify individual identities ideological preferences or category memberships further (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000).

In contrast with 2008, by 2012, Antonis Samaras was identifying concrete in-group prototypes in history to specifically represent the party in the here and now and to guide the nation into the future.

*Concrete in-group prototypes: New Democracy's specified group identity*

Extract two below illustrates how in-group prototypes can be specified in terms of who they exactly are and who is included in the in-group category. This kind of in-group prototypes does not include the wider audience in the formation of in-group categories.

Extract 2: New Democracy (2012)

1. **We** in New Democracy treasure the great democratic achievements of that  
 2. period which bear the stamp of the founder of **our** party, **Constantine**  
 3. **Karamanlis**... With consistency and determination **we** in New Democracy  
 4. continue the reforms that **our** country needs in order to be back on its feet and  
 5. head forward. **We** continue with belief in Greece and **trusting the Greek**  
 6. **people we** continue the fight for the salvation of our country. **Our** sole guiding  
 7. principle during difficult times is the collective, the national interest. It is the  
 8. common struggle of the people of Greece for the regeneration of lost  
 9. expectations... For a new Greece. The Greece **we** desire and **as New Democracy**  
 10. can create.

Again, this extract is about togetherness, but refers to a specified shared identity within the political party; 'we' appears five times and 'our' appears three times. Samaras begins in the first person with specific reference to members of his party who treasure the past, 'we in New Democracy' (1-2). This is a very different management of group identity that reflects another

way of acting as an entrepreneur of identity. Rather than regrouping the audience into a single overarching category, Samaras constructs a concrete exemplar of the in-group category as 'New Democracy'. Consistent with this construction of the party as the in-group - and in contrast to the 2008 statement - 'we' and 'our' refer consistently to the members of New Democracy from lines 3 - 9, and not at all to the 'Greek people.' The party believes, places its trust in, and fights for the salvation of the people (5-6), but as such the party is clearly not identical to the people. In crisis situations, leaders more often must respond to threats to their legitimacy by working to establish trust among their followers (Bligh, 2017). Separating 'we in New Democracy' from 'the Greek people' echoes the political climate of declining public endorsement of New Democracy by 2012. Mention of the party's trust in the people may be an appeal to re-gain the people's trust in the party. The reference to Karamanlis (2-3) may also serve to protect new Democracy against its many critics. References to authorities can effectively protect leaders from critics because such references require critics to denounce those credible authorities as well (Martin Rojo & Van Dijk, 1997). By tying his party's current political agenda with the values and achievements of Constantine Karamanlis as 'the founder of our party' (2), the current leader of New Democracy, Konstantinos Karamanlis clearly charts history *and* the future. With such solid grounding, Konstantinos Karamanlis can still focus on future togetherness and the 'regeneration of lost expectations' (8-9) portraying the political party as the ideal agent to ensure such outcomes. As the next extracts further show, projecting identity between the party and the people into the past and the future may be a particularly strategic way for political leaders to be entrepreneurs of their identity in situations of current weakness.

*'We in the Coalition of the Radical Left' in 2008 and 2012.*

In contrast to discursive shifts in New Democracy's management of who 'we' are, the leader of SYRIZA, consistently described his party in concrete terms as distinct from the Greek people

both in extract 3 and 4 in 2008 and 2012 respectively.

Extract 3: The Coalition of the Radical Left: SYRIZA (2008)

*1.*The day of the restoration of Democracy...is, above all, one day for paying  
*2.*tribute to the thousands of people that fought, were jailed and sacrificed for  
*3.*dignity, freedom and democracy. **Our own debt as the Coalition of the  
 4.Radical Left is**, as it was then, to release these social forces that will fight for a  
*5.*better today and tomorrow. Specifically this period of time...constitutes the  
*6.*moment, when **we as the reformative and radical Left** must shape new value  
*7.*principles that will aim to widen democracy and political and social rights...It is  
*8.*the moment **for us in the Coalition of the Radical Left** to speak up and resist  
*9.*against a policy that undermines and diminishes our social achievements.

Extract 4: The Coalition of the Radical Left: SYRIZA (2012)

*1.*The day of the restoration of Democracy is a day of tribute paid to thousands of  
*2.*people who fought, were imprisoned and sacrificed for dignity, freedom and  
*3.*Democracy. **Our duty as the Coalition of the Radical Left** is, as it was then,  
*4.*to fight together with the people for a better present and future...Now is the time  
*5.***for us as the Coalition of the Radical Left** to strengthen our voices, to  
*6.*overthrow the Memorandum...

Extracts 3 and 4 similarly define Tsipras's in-group as 'the Coalition of the Radical Left'. In both extracts, this in-group is mentioned twice, once orienting to the past, and once orienting towards an ideal future beyond the current consensus. As a coalition, Tsipras must portray a party with recognizable 'ideological consistency' (Feld & Grofman, 1988) to legitimize his political party a single coherent entity as a relatively new and less prominent political player.

Whilst New Democracy changed its discourse between 2008 and 2012, SYRIZA consistently positioned itself across time as ‘the Coalition of the Radical Left’. Rather than drawing upon memory of Constantine Karamanlis, Tsipras puts forward ‘the thousands of people who fought, were jailed/imprisoned and sacrificed for dignity, freedom and democracy’ (3) in 2008 and (2-3) in 2012 to ‘anchor’ the party’s identity with a historically familiar and specific group entity (Gibson, 2012). This use of 1974 provides a historical analogy between the people who fought in 1974 and SYRIZA in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As Aristotle knew, such analogies use the past to make sense of political uncertainty in the present (Ghiliani et al., 2017). By calling audiences to imagine such similarities between 1974 and SYRIZA here, historical analogies lend plausibility to suggestions to widen both democracy and political and social rights (6-7, 2008), by which means the party might fulfil its duty, or repay its debts, to the past. However, SYRIZA cannot claim to represent the Greek people whilst it remains identified as the opposition – and radical - party. Accordingly, like New Democracy in 2012, Tsipras used concrete terms to project the in-group prototype into the future when the current policy has been undermined (9, 2008) and the current Memorandum overthrown (6, 2012). Projections of certain prototypicalities communicate here a commitment of Tsipras to a social reality without compromises and modifications with respect to the party’s ideological orientation as ‘the Left’ (Nemeth, 2012).

Up until now, we have focused on variability in how these leaders construct in-group prototypes that explain who ‘we’ are. Although outgroup constructions are not clearly presented in all definitions of what it means to be entrepreneur of identity, these constructions can play a significant role in group identity definitions (Allen, Wilder & Atkinson, 1983). We now turn to constructions of blurred and bright group boundaries which define in ambiguous or concrete terms respectively who we are *not*; outgroups.

*Ambiguous outgroups: New Democracy’s Consistently Blurred Boundaries*



The following two extracts exemplify constructions of boundaries that define outgroups ambiguously. These extracts show how the leaders of New Democracy identify outgroups in a way that it is not clear who New Democracy's political opponents might be.

Extract 5: New Democracy (2008)

1.Today...we are invited to confirm in practice our will to move forward. To  
 2.override **anything** impedes our common course. To condemn **each attempt** of  
 3.revival of practices of bitterness, polarization and division. The Greeks,  
 4.administrators of the precious legacy that the fighters of Democracy bequeathed  
 5.us, know that **the extremism, the efforts** to challenge institutions and at social  
 6.leveling **the rationales** of depreciation and nihilism, hold only dangers.

Extract 6: New Democracy (2012)

1.We in New Democracy treasure the great democratic achievements of that  
 2.period...At the same time, we leave behind **the ailing** which developed in the  
 3.subsequent years and led the country to the economic and social crisis of the  
 4.recent years.

Both extract 5 and 6 include ambiguous and broadly defined terms used by Karamanlis to describe outgroups. Ambiguous terms referring to outgroups appear five times in extract 5 but only once in extract 6. In 2008 Karamanlis refers to 'anything impedes our common course' (2), 'attempt of revival of practices of bitterness, polarisation and division' (2,3), 'extremism', 'efforts to challenge institutions' and 'rationales of depreciation and nihilism' (5,6), while in 2012 Samaras only references 'the ailing which developed in the subsequent years...' (2). In both years ambiguity strategically serves to avoid a direct challenge (Ilie, 2003). References to ambiguous outgroups described in pejorative terms (e.g. extremism) attempt to unite the

heterogeneous audience of Greek people against acknowledged anti-democratic practices and beliefs (Myers, 1999). In neither speech do the leaders address outgroups in the political scene in more concrete terms. So doing could risk ‘re-evaluation of character’ of New Democracy’s leaders (Eisenberg, 1984) by audience members, particularly in 2012. In crisis even past actions by such unnamed others have become more vague, slipping from attempts to revive ‘bitterness, polarisation and division’ in 2008 to a more diffuse ‘ailing’ that somehow ‘developed’ by 2012. The next section focuses on how Tsipras makes use of outgroup forms in various terms to define his group boundaries.

*Shifts from ambiguity to clarity: Brightening the Boundaries of SYRIZA’s Outgroups.*

The following extract from 2008 exemplifies blurred outgroup definitions similar to the representations of outgroups in both of New Democracy’s statements:

Extract 7: The Coalition of the Radical Left: SYRIZA (2008)

1. Specifically this period of time, where the politics and democracy are also  
 2. affected and disdained due to **interweaving and corruption**, constitutes the  
 3. moment, when we as the reformative and radical Left must shape new value  
 4. principles... It is the moment for us in the Coalition of the Radical Left to speak  
 5. up and to resist against **a policy** that undermines and diminishes our social  
 6. achievements...

Extract 8 represents powerful outgroups as ‘interweaving’ (2), ‘corruption’ (2) and as responsible for ‘a policy that undermines and diminishes our social achievements...’ (5,6); practices described pejoratively, and against which SYRIZA is described as ideologically opposed (5). As with New Democracy in 2008 and 2012, SYRIZA constructs its opponents in ambiguous terms that are hard to challenge; who could speak for corruption, interweaving, or

undermining the achievements of our past?’ Rather, interweaving and corruption act as ‘comparison dimensions’ (Blanz, Mummendey, Mielke & Klink, 1998) offering SYRIZA an opportunity for positive evaluation. Ambiguously defining outgroups also avoid commitment to contestable concrete courses of action which could create conflict or fail in the political and ethical terms that this discourse sets up. As before, SYRIZA draws on shared values with the audience to look forward to ‘new principles’ (3-4), and back to past ‘social achievements’ (6), in the absence of majority public support in the present.

However, conditions of rapid change can prompt rapid shifts to such strategic representations of outgroups. By 2012, there had been a discursive shift from blurred to bright representations of SYRIZA’s outgroups that the following extract captures:

Extract 8: The Coalition of the Radical Left: SYRIZA (2012)

*1.*Thirty eight years after the restoration of Democracy, **the Memoranda** mean a  
*2.*complete overthrow of labour relations, the selling off of the public property and  
*3.*wealth...At the same time, the rise of **the neo-nazistic extreme right, Golden  
4.Dawn**, and the continuing fascist attacks to our fellow citizens point out that the  
*5.*fight for Democracy are more timely than ever before. Now, is the time for us  
*6.*as the Coalition of the Radical Left to strengthen our voices, to overthrow **the  
7.Memorandum policy and the parties that serve this policy, New Democracy  
8.and PASOK**, to bring democracy back to the spotlight...

This extract from the 2012 commemoration statement by Tsipras addresses outgroups five times. First (1) ‘the Memoranda’ are presented as a radical change that undoes past achievements a ‘complete overthrow’ and a ‘selling off’ of ‘labour relations’ and ‘public property and wealth.’ In (3) Tsipras, constructs the Memorandum as similar to the neo-nazi Golden Dawn by emphasizing temporal contiguity; ‘at the same time.’ This similarity

constructs a frame of specific political outgroups through which audience members might make sense of contemporary events – the continuing fascist attacks – to reach the conclusion that SYRIZA’s political fight for democracy’ is the right and timely political option (4-5). Temporal co-existence of a concrete in-group (the Coalition of the Radical Left) and concrete outgroups (Golden Dawn, ND, PASOK) communicates an immediate contrast (Lowe, 2012) that makes group differentiation and boundaries stark, reflecting that SYRIZA is the established opposition and consistent opponent (Breakwell, 1986) to the mainstream, and introducing an urgent need for social change away from that mainstream which can now be associated with fascism (Klein & Licata, 2003). Here, in contrast with the 2008 statement, Tsipras seems emboldened to present his political group with bright boundaries (Alba, 2005). Concrete and specific reference to powerful outgroups risk alienating audience members, and Extract 8 reflects the swing in popular support from New Democracy to SYRIZA by 2012. When political intergroup relationships are illegitimate and insecure, members of subordinate political groups tend to challenge the dominant group directly (Haslam et al., 2011). SYRIZA’s address of its political opponents in concrete terms to call for their overthrow is a well-timed risk for a minority party whose legitimacy was on the rise, especially in the context of lack of faith and collective displeasure towards New Democracy in 2012. We next summarise this analysis and suggest how it may inform studies of political leadership, social identity and discourses in historical contexts.

## Discussion

This analysis of commemorative statements made by Karamanlis, Samaras and Tsipras identified politically contextualised constructions of in-group prototypes and group boundaries in a recent and singularly important historical moment. New Democracy’s leaders identified ‘we’ broadly as the Greek people before the crisis, but narrowly as the political party in 2012, whilst Tsipras consistently specified the in-group narrowly as the political party on both

occasions. New Democracy represented its outgroups as – if anything – more vaguely defined in 2008 and 2012, whilst SYRIZA defined its outgroups more sharply in 2012 than in 2008. Our findings add to the existing literature in three ways.

First, these findings position identity entrepreneurship processes in historical and political context. Greek political leaders certainly acted as entrepreneurs of their group identity in different “situational contexts” (Song, 2010, p.877), which reflected different relationships between leaders and the audience and between political groups. The social identity work of leaders’ entrepreneurship is a “fluid consequence” (Mabey & Morell, 2011, p.110) shaped by various contexts and not just a fixed representation of leaders as consistent instantiations of the whole nation (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Identity entrepreneurship performance is “perspectival” (Gillespie, Howarth & Cornish, 2012, p.392), meaning that categorization processes stem from social positions, different ways of viewing historical reality and different ways of pursuing particular group interests to support political candidacies (Gleibs, Hendricks & Kurz, 2017). Our findings respond to and call for the need for inclusion of social contexts and various group relations in identity entrepreneurship processes (Steffens et al., 2014; Yukl, 2012).

Second, our findings shed light on the concept of prototypicality and its critiques. Specifically, our findings challenge the centrality of the strategy of leaders appearing prototypical of their audience or as national characters (see Steffens et al., 2013). Several reviews to date have critiqued the equation of leaders’ prototypicality with similarity between leaders and their audiences (Bartel & Wiesenfeld, 2013; Hogg, Van Knippenberg & Rast, 2012). From our close study of this unique and pivotal moment in European politics, it appears that leaders can best use this strategy of constructing similarity with the audience when they can already legitimately claim to have the support of the majority of the people, as New Democracy did in 2008. Cognitive psychologists have long recognised that categories are not simply formed around averages, but that similarities are constructed through frames of

reference (Tversky, 1977), categories organised around goals and are best represented by ideal types rather than averages (Barsalou, 1982) and categories are often held together by narrative coherence rather than pre-existing similarities (Lassaline, Wisniewski & Medin, 1992). When leaders lack majority support, and this lack is part of the common ground between leaders and their audiences, it may be more plausible to concretize in-group prototypes and, therefore, project similarity as a goal for the golden future – or a part of our noble past (Gkinopoulos, 2017) – than to gamble the claim that such a similarity is a reality in the present. We also identified discursive shifts in outgroup constructions. Deploying ambiguous and concrete in-group prototypes or blurred and bright representations of outgroups can be seen as speech acts. Such acts preserve or challenge the political order reflecting leaders' subjective understanding of historical reality and their future prospects (Drury & Reicher, 2005; Drury, Reicher & Stott., 2003; Klein & Licata, 2003).

Third, we have shown here how historical charters can be considered as interpretive repertoires of what the past has been, repertoires from which political leaders select events to manage and legitimise their identity in the present and to align the people around a future in which those leaders will either maintain or seize power (Hilton & Liu, 2008, 2017). Such social representations of history reveal “who our friends and enemies are” (Hilton & Liu, 2017, p.298), serving as “lessons of history and delineating honoured ancestors for a group” (ibid, p.298). How history is represented warrants the legitimacy for political order and groups' political socialisation that determines who we/they are (Hanke, Liu, Sibley, Paez, Gaines Jr, Moloney et al., 2015). In conditions of crisis and the democratic legality of policies into question, historical charters answer to ‘who best exemplifies the in-group’ and ‘what are the group boundaries and opponents’ by legitimising social and political arrangements through group (re)categorisations (Kelman, 2001). Therefore, the legitimacy issue becomes prominent in discursive illustrations of identity entrepreneurship.

Responding to criticisms that discourse analysis sometimes fails to put discourse in

historical context (Hook, 2013), we have sampled discourse across historical time here and sought to identify how macro-processes of shifting economic and political legitimacy are intertwined with linguistic shifts in constructions of identity (Wetherell, 1998). In drawing studies of historical charters and identity entrepreneurship together, we also note that these frameworks use different metaphorical frameworks which are relevant to the crisis of legitimacy in which New Democracy found itself by 2012. “Charters” have hitherto taken legal documents as their prototypes, such as the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi in Aotearoa/New Zealand, for example (Liu & Hilton, 2005). Entrepreneurship, on the other hand suggests the actions of a business agent in a free market. Of course, the political crises in Greece both in the late 1960s and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century were about the balance of national and free market control of Greek society. It is beyond the scope of this empirical paper to do more than suggest the continued need for a ‘genealogical’ understanding (c.f., Hook, 2013) of the metaphors by which discursive psychology structures understanding of discursive actors and actions at our own historical times (see Hayter & Hegarty, 2015; Wetherell & Potter, 2015 for further discussion).

### *Concluding Thought*

While existing scholarship on leaders and leadership abound, less attention has been paid to followership research (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe & Carsten, 2014). Followers’ behavior plays a significant role in entrepreneurship of identity, determining whether the leaders’ identity gambles will succeed or fail (Haslam & Reicher, 2016; Reicher & Haslam, 2017). To the extent that recent Greek leaders are effective identity entrepreneurs, the contents of their speeches suggest clear hypotheses about the effects of vague versus precise and broad versus narrow constructions of groups on followers under conditions of stability and instability. Thus, we argue that research on political leaders and followers identities and discourses in historical contexts might be fruitfully aligned.

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