

Greek neomigrant identities in social media: A discourse-centred online ethnographic study¹

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Since the onset of the Greek crisis, thousands of – mainly young – highly educated and skilled Greeks have chosen or/and have been forced to migrate in search of better career prospects and living standards. This neomigratory wave is broadly known with the neologism 'brain drain'. Considering 1) the transformative impact of new media on the lives and experiences of migrants (Madianou & Miller 2012), and 2) the pivotal role of social media in (dis)identification and identity construction processes (Leppänen et al. 2017), this study aims at exploring the ways in which Greek neomigrants (re)construct their identities in their social media discourse.

Based on a synergy between the constructionist approach to identities (Benwell & Stokoe 2006), a social semiotic approach to social media (Zappavigna 2012, 2018) and discourse-centred online ethnography (Androutsopoulos 2008), we present and discuss empirical data from Greek neomigrants settled in the UK and Germany, who write about their migration experiences on their blogs, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts. Our analysis demonstrates that Greek neomigrant identities are multifaceted, realized through a complex of linguistic and multimodal means. Having the neomigrants' own voice and perspective at the heart of our analysis brings to the surface crucial social, cultural and psychological aspects of the current Greek brain drain, often downplayed in economic and political analyses of the phenomenon. In this fashion, the potential of social media discourses to heighten awareness of neomigrants' dis/integrating processes is confirmed.

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