# Exploring Youth Identities and Educational Pathways:

# Habitus, Technologies of Time, Identifications

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I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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# ABSTRACT

This study entails the exploration and interpretation of youth identities and educational pathways. Youth, regarded as a diversified and unequally experienced phase of life, has been extended in terms of time as well as being attached to a more autonomous and less transitional status. Located within the broader context of redefinitions of youth and the changing content of youth experience, my concern focuses upon what has been constructed in the field of youth research as 'mainstream youth' or 'ordinary kids'.

My research was set out and conducted in Greece during the mid- to late 2000s, prior to the outbreak of the financial crisis. The general aim of my inquiry is to experiment with an analytical technique that allows the capture, exploration and making sense of the diversity of youth. First and foremost, this study constitutes an exercise in theory and method that is founded upon Bourdieu's epistemological contributions. While drawing on Bourdieu's reflexive sociology I shift between three different analytical standpoints and consider each as a distinctive lens through which I explore different forms of youth experience. Second, the study employs exploratory research, the aim of which is to unpack and look into the experiences of 'ordinary' young Greeks in the era of modernisation. The data comprise youth narratives of the self that have been elicited via semi-structured and in-depth interviews with young Greeks in the final year of post-compulsory secondary education.

By deploying Bourdieu's habitus and setting it against Beck's and Giddens' theorisations of reflexivity I interrogate young people's imagined futures along with the material and symbolic accumulations involved in their social positioning. By working with the concept of social time and drawing on Foucault's technologies of the self I unravel the temporal elements of youth self-formation processes and read temporalities alongside forms of self-care. Through the deployment of Hall's identification I explore the multiplicity of youth identifications as well as the ways in which they are stitched together to form situated temporary articulations. Overall, shifting between these three different standpoints allows me to shed light on different aspects of youth narratives and develop a multifaceted understanding of youth identities and educational pathways.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We will always have Patras.

CONTENTS

To my mum Christina,

PREFACE

This thesis presents and discusses my study of young Greeks and their involvement in the making of identities and educational pathways. My research focuses on young people at the end of their school careers and was conducted during the mid-2000s, prior to the severe financial crisis that recently hit the country. Here I provide a brief overview of the social conditions within which my interest in youth has been shaped as well as providing an overview of the broader environment within which my research participants live. The period during which my research was carried out is currently and retrospectively referred to as the 'days of prosperity' for Greek society. In this introductory section I provide a brief overview of the changing historical, economic and political conditions that occurred at the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s. I discuss this period as featuring the emergence, growth and hegemony of modernisation discourses in the public domain. As will be explained, modernisation has marked this period not only by feeding into the political agendas of the two dominant political parties, but also through its influence on dominant cultural discourses and the fabrication of popular discursive practices (Sevastakis, 2004; 2006). My understanding of this period, as will become apparent below, draws heavily on the work of Nikolas Sevastakis (2004; 2006).

In historical terms, many commentators have associated Greek late modernity with the conclusion or the end of the post-junta period (the end of the cycle of *metapolitefsi*, as it is very often referred to) (Diamantouros, 2000; Mouzelis, 2003; Sevastakis, 2004). The phase that followed the fall of the junta was associated with political changeover and both democratisation and economic growth in the country. Voulgaris' (2002) study of the history of the post-junta period suggests that throughout the period spanning from 1974 to the 1990s there was 'a wave of radical social and anthropological change in Greek society' (Voulgaris, 2002, p.126). According to Voulgaris, the basic elements of this social transformation were greater social mobility and a reduction in vast social inequalities within the context of subsequent national Keynesian policies and state interventionism. According to his study, the decades following the fall of the dictatorship featured the rise of a society

of prosperity as well as the growth of collective and individual expectations and prospects of mobility and progress.

However, a number of social scientists have also pointed out the dark side of the post-junta period (*metapolitefsi*) and have highlighted the establishment of a two-party democracy along with the rise of populism and corruption. Mouzelis (2003) argues that throughout the post-junta period the two political parties grew significantly in size, without simultaneously seeking to enhance their democratic operation. Quite the opposite happened, he explains, as the rapid expansion of the two parties went hand in hand with the growth and spread of populism and corruption. As the two political parties extended their mechanisms they dramatically increased their control over public institutions by imposing their political interests and aims upon the operation of these institutions. This process fostered a culture of clientelism at all levels of public life, from state workings to organisational operations and from individual identities to everyday lives. One parallel implication of this was the establishment of the people's increased dependency on political parties and politicians. Consequently, relying heavily on micro-politics, personal networks and political friendships became part of many people's everyday lives and allowed very little space for transparency and meritocracy (Mouzelis, 2003).

Although the features described above did not change in any considerable way in the years that followed, nevertheless at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century there has been a noticeable shift in hegemonic trends and discourses in the Greek economy and society. Mouzelis (2003) describes this in terms of a shift from the politics of change (*allagi*) to the politics of modernisation.[1] As Vamvakas (2010) comments, *allagi* worked for many years as a catch-all concept that involved an ambiguous 'symbolic mixture of socialism, modernism and patriotic paternalism' and progressively developed into a 'catch-all proposition denoting the opening of the state apparatus to unprivileged social strata' during the post-war period in Greece.[2] In the years that followed the rhetoric of *allagi*

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[1] *Allagi*: a central slogan of the labour party that almost monopolised political discourse throughout the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s and referred to the end of the junta and the democratisation of political life in Greece.

[2] Vamvakas (2010) http://monumenttotransformation.org/atlas-of-transformation/html/c/change-allagi/allagi-vassilis-vamvakas.html

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gave way to the discourse of modernisation. Hirschon (2012) observes that in the past three decades modernity and modernisation (*eksynchronismos*) have been prevailing themes in Greek political life and argues that they have worked as 'a key slogan under both the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) and New Democracy (ND) governments' (p.2) The discourse of modernisation, together with the discourse of Europeanisation, dominated the public field throughout the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s and sought to foster the rise of a different era for Greek society.

In particular, at the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s the economic and political fields were marked by optimism and celebratory discourses of the rise of a 'new' financially robust country. The country was presented as no longer standing at the periphery of the EU and now responding to the contemporary challenges of playing a key role in financial activity and enterprise in the Balkans. The expansion of the European Union to include former communist countries, the Greek EU presidency of 2002, the entry of Greece into the European Monetary Union in 2001 and the hosting of the Olympic games in 2004 were all constructed within the public discourse as signifiers of a 'big change', a break away from the 'miserable' past and a rise of a new and promising era of progress and growth. The following extract from Professor Pagoulatos' paper, presented in 2002, is exemplary of the hegemonic economic and politically triumphant discourse of this period:

> Twenty-two years since its 1981 entry into the European Community, this is, in many ways, a very different Greece. A most impressive transformation involves Greece's position in the EU. Greece is no more the 'reluctant partner', the 'problem case', the 'black sheep' of the Community (to recall just some of the rather uncharitable terms once employed). It has matured to become not just a 'normal' country, a 'mainstream' EU member, but an ardent and committed European, and (since its 2001 EMU entry) finally a 'success story' as well. This graduation from troubled adolescence and marginality to European 'normality' and membership to the Eurozone core of Europe not only summarizes the momentous socioeconomic and political transformation of Greece, but it also testifies to the success of the European Union in helping to bring about this transformation. (Pagoulatos, 2002, p.1)

Such euphoric references to economic transformation and growth, typical of the political discourses of the modernisation period, accompanied political declarations

about the formation of a new landscape for the Greek economy. The Greek governments of this period put forward privatisation plans in order to reduce state-owned businesses and encouraged foreign investment mainly for infrastructure projects, such as the construction of railways, airports, the Athens Metro and so on. The rate of employment in agriculture dropped by one third while there was considerable growth in employment in the service sector (Sevastakis, 2004, p.62). Moreover, there occurred an increase in female participation in further and higher education as well as a substantial expansion in women's employment (Ketsetzopoulou, 2002). The presence of financial immigrants in Greece contributed to the growth of the Greek economy during this period (Tzortzopoulou, 2001). The employment of immigrant women as domestic labourers in many cases allowed Greek women to participate in and/or remain in the labour market (ibid.).

According to Sevastakis (2004), the array of political, economic and cultural events of this period formed a new universe of meanings and new symbolic and discursive landscapes; his study pays particular attention to the exploration of the 'practical philosophies of Greek late modernity' (p.13), as he describes it. Sevastakis (2004) observes the emergence of a new set of values, words and meanings, even in cases where there are no actual or significant changes in the structure of employment. He suggests that the emergence of new discursive means for addressing changing or even recurring circumstances brings about changes in the definition of social practices and self-identification (ibid, p.46). For example, in the past a typical owner of a small family business would have been likely to identify himself as struggling to cope with the financial pressure exerted by big business and multinational companies, yet in the late 1990s he might have been referred to as an entrepreneur and investor absorbing EU structural funds, an example of flexible growth and development.

According to Sevastakis' (2004) study, the dominant cultural discourses constructed by the media were employed in the making of a new economy and the formation of new economic ideals. Similar to Illouz's (2007) arguments on the making of 'emotional capitalism', Sevastakis (2004) suggests that such discourses were characterised by a passing from a materialist and pragmatic to an emotive and aesthetic language, from the presentation of numbers and statistics to value statements (p.83). Prospects of modernisation and the emergence of a new economy were based

on a call to break away from the past and were discursively devised through a lyrical juxtaposition of the present vis-à-vis the future. The new economic development model was presented as light, clean and smart and was set against the old one, which was described as crass, parochial and rigid. Sevastakis (2004, p.82) discusses – among other examples – an article titled 'Greece in 2000: Florida or Aliveri?', written by the publisher of one of the major and particularly popular lifestyle magazines of this period, *KLIK*, in which elegant and high-tech Miami is juxtaposed against Aliveri and is presented as a realistic model of development for the Greek economy.[3] Such aesthetically infused discourses helped to fabricate economic ideals in which light and technologically advanced services would replace parochial state-owned industries and give way to promising and dynamic private entrepreneurship.

Dominant narratives of modernisation also worked towards configuring new political and social scenarios in which political, economic and class divisions faded away. In light of the split between the old and the new worlds, and in effect between those willing to take up the invitation to join this future and those who remained stuck in the past with their 'union of national moaning and grief' (Pretenteris, 1996, quoted in Sevastakis, 2004, p. 80) social hierarchies were presented as losing relevance. Thus the remaining social divisions present in the public arena were constructed as being out-dated and deriving from institutional and ideological pre-historic relics (Sevastakis, 2004, p.101). Conversely, asymmetries of power were glossed over by smart individual strategies (ibid, p.102). The social ideals constructed throughout cultural discourses of modernisation portrayed Greece as comprising a large middle class and were infused with national pride, thus putting forward a vision of Greece as a nation of potentially successful and fun-loving individuals. The following extract from *KLIK* perfectly captures this logic:

> We are a massive middle class; perhaps the last one in the world.
> What does this mean? It means that this country has no social
> desperadoes, no hopeless proletariats who have known since day one
> that they will never see the sun rising for them. For instance, in

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[3] *KLIK* was a major and very popular 'trendsetter' magazine throughout the 1990s and the 2000s. It was a landmark of pop culture, contemporary style and mainstream cultural practices throughout these years. *KLIK* is no longer published as the company that owned it was severely affected by the financial crisis and went bust last year.

Germany or in the US the worker's son knows that he will never find himself anywhere near university. The pathways of social progress are closed off. He will never be allowed to step into the good clubs of Paris or New York. Here one finds the chap from Ilioupoli sitting next to Jiger, competing with the bottles he opens. Mimesis one might say. That's wrong, love. This is a social letting off of steam. Everyone in this country can say 'I was there too' – everywhere – and this counts a lot more than the biggest American Dream. When you are born you know for sure that you will do better than your father and have a better time too. This is democracy and I don't give a damn about the operation of institutions when obviously institutions exist in order to guarantee stagnation. (KLIK, Vol. 72, 1993 cited in Sevastakis, 2004)

In this way the prospect of modernisation, as it was constructed in hegemonic cultural discourses, involved the promise of progress and well-being for all. The nation was constructed as unified under new forms of consumption and lifestyles that were presented as open to everyone. In these discursive landscapes politics and the traditional divide between the right and the left seemed parochial and unsophisticated while 'class was declared redundant' (Taylor, 2012). Here Taylor's research into deindustrialisation and social identities in the North East of England can be taken into consideration. Taylor (2012) comments that newness 'holds an appeal, a possibility, and a different way of being,' but she goes on to enquire, 'when or where is this achieved, and what losses as well as gains may be highlighted when the future of tomorrow as free, open and up for grabs is abstracted from constraints, traditions, legacies and inequalities?' (p.4). Taylor (2012) finds that not everyone can or wants to fit into the new de-industrialised, de-traditionalised regimes and shows that individuals' responses to change and their engagement with complex social regimes in transition are not independent of their class and gender or ethnic and spatial positioning.

Above I presented a brief overview of the historical and socioeconomic conditions active in Greece during the 2000s. My interest in youth grew out of this context of modernisation, a period characterised by economic restructuring and the emergence of new sets of values and cultural discourses alongside the remaining presence and significance of Greek traditions. Within these changing conditions the question of youth is to be considered in fresh ways. My concern here is to think anew

and research youth from a critical sociological perspective, that is, by questioning discourses that attempt to unify individuals into a future-oriented and ready-to-be-modernised whole. In broad terms, my aim is to untie unity and to unpack and explore coherence. My particular task is to experiment with ways of exploring and understanding the diversity of youth experience within these new and complex social surroundings.

# CHAPTER 1. CONCEPTUALISING YOUTH

**Introduction**

In the literature on youth there is not one single approach or theoretical perspective. Youth is referred to as a generation, a phase, a social category and an age period. In some texts youth is described in terms of either a 'hope' or a 'danger' for the future of societies (Miles, 2000). In other instances youth is approached as being 'in crisis'. The field of youth studies is an interdisciplinary one and aspects of youth are addressed by different traditions; there is not one single conceptualisation of youth. However, below are the points at which accounts of youth by social researchers seem to coincide.

1) First, they distance themselves from conceptualisations that either define youth as a group with particular biological characteristics or approach it in terms of development and maturity. Instead, they stress the socially constructed features of the concept. Characteristic examples are Sideris and Sideris' (1986) and Kongidou's (2005) critical accounts of youth definitions. According to their arguments, although youth is connected with some biological phenomena, such as puberty and the end of physical development, there is not one particular decisive biological event that marks and frames the period of youth. Furthermore, they highlight that bodies are sites of social and cultural inscription, which makes the definition of youth in terms of biological characteristics inadequate.

2) Second, youth is understood as a relative and unstable category in terms of the period for which it lasts and the characteristics that are attributed to it. Youth is socially constructed within particular historical, economic, political and social conditions and its content is defined within such contexts. In this respect definitions and perspectives of youth are not static but influenced by changes occurring in these respective fields.

In accordance with the above I frame youth as a socially constructed notion that is neither static nor stable both through time and throughout geographic space. My

starting point will be the assertion that the way we make sense of youth, the characteristics that we attribute to it, its status and duration, vary across different time periods and are marked by respective economic, political and cultural conditions. I will then go on to illustrate a more detailed definition along these lines and develop my approach to youth while discussing aspects of youth literature.

## Traditional Definitions of Youth

The common-sense definition of youth is constructed in terms of age. Frith (1984) raises a question mark over such a definition by pointing out that it 'describes aspects of people's social position, which are an effect of their biological age but not completely determined by it' (p.2). In the context of sociological enquiry Frith (1984) suggests that the focus should be set on the '"social organization" of youth as an age group' (p.2). From this point of view he suggests two central notions that would facilitate an understanding of youth in terms of social organisation: the notion of dependency and that of responsibility. Definitions of dependency and responsibility are connected to particular institutions, such as family, education, work and leisure (Frith, 1984, p.3).

Another rather traditional definition of youth is constructed in terms of people's participation in either education or the labour market. The former approach sees life-course as divided by imaginary temporal axes and therefore separated into successive passages with distinct characteristics attributed to each. People within each phase can be seen as constituting a single group. This is a definition of youth that is primarily deployed in structural terms. Such perspectives consider people's participation in the labour market as the basic criterion for distinction between youth and adulthood. From a similar point of view, Kongidou (2005) argues that youth and its duration depend on the opportunities that people have to remain outside the labour market and instead participate in educational processes.

Having this as his starting point Marvakis (2005) goes further to suggest that the opportunities for participation in education render youth a social good. Furthermore, he claims that youth constitutes a social good that is unequally distributed. According to Marvakis (2005), there is a kind of scale or continuum with

a minimum and a maximum of youth on its two poles; hence, there is no such thing as youth in terms of a unified category. Instead, youth includes different sub-groups, which he calls 'sub-youths'. He sees 'sub-youths' as being formed on the basis of available opportunities for accessing the social good.

Considering youth as an unequally distributed social good and stressing the non-unified character of the notion are useful points within Marvakis' approach, both of which are taken into consideration within the context of this study. However, I will adopt a rather differentiated conceptualisation of youth, which I will elaborate upon later. The definition of youth in terms of a (unequally distributed) social good seems to direct the focus of research towards questions of distribution or, in other words, towards questioning who does and who does not possess this good, why some people possess more compared with others and so on. However important these questions might be it is equally important for me to unpack further the notion of youth and explore its content in greater detail. In particular, to question what it means to be young and investigate what kind of experiences it is related to and therefore to analyse what kind of questions it raises in relation to the constitution of subjectivity. In this respect inequality does not only concern those who do not own youth as a social good but it is also posed as a question and an issue for further research for those who own it but experience it in different ways. I will pick up this point later on while discussing the division between mainstream youth and at-risk youth.

**Re-definitions of Youth**

As I have already indicated I will consider youth as a socially constructed notion that is reconstructed and redefined through time and space. I will therefore draw on the relevant literature of youth to sketch an understanding of current definitions and I will describe the distinctive characteristics of youth. This will provide me with a foundation for indicating possible limitations or inadequacies in the traditional definitions to which I refer to above. According to Chisholm (2001), there exists a 'reconstruction of youth both in its own terms and as a constituent element of the social life course' (p.63). First, in terms of time it can be observed that the youth phase has been prolonged (Du-Bois Raymond, 1998, p.64) since youth often extends

up to the third decade (Zinneker, 1990, p.23). In terms of status the notion of youth seems to be shifting from a transitional phase, that is, 'a status between childhood and adulthood' (Du-Bois Raymond, 1998, p.64) towards one with an autonomous status. Therefore, youth is defined less in relation to adulthood and childhood and is rather deemed to be a phase in itself.

Zinneker (1990) notes that this length of time 'becomes a norm, i.e., what is expected for all social groups' (p.24), thus showing that this extended youth phase – with autonomous status – is becoming widespread and socially legitimised. However, Zinneker (1990) relates this norm to expectations of 'creating and reserving an extra and distinctive period of time for the acquisition of cultural capital' (p.1218). At this point Du-Bois Raymond (1998) can be taken into account in terms of the suggestion that status passages that were linked to 'certain institutions have also changed in content and structure' (p.66). From this point of view it might be asked whether life passages are clearly and strictly connected to particular institutions.

Moreover, in the literature on youth we find that within youth 'new subdivisions are created: early adolescence, late adolescence, post-adolescence' (Du-Bois Raymond, 1998, p.64). Similarly, Zinneker (1990) suggests that the traditional youth phase that covered the period between the fifteenth and the twentieth years has now been extended up to the third decade and has 'accreted a suffix, which we might term post-adolescence' (ibid, p.28). Post-adolescence (Zinneker, 1990; Du-Bois Raymond, 1998; Ball, et al., 2000) is characterised by a paradoxical combination of features of adult life and financial dependency or semi-dependency. It refers to a state in which young people are recognised as adults and are given the full rights of adults, while simultaneously they are not fully independent in terms of economic status. Located in the context of changing forms of employment and attitudes towards marriage and the family (Heath, 1999) post-adolescence is connected to flexible patterns of employment, mixed housing arrangements and diverse types of financial dependence. Ball, et al. (2000) relate post-adolescence to 'flexibility, manoeuvrability, postponement, delay and interruption' (p.198).

Since the notion of adulthood is a relational one (Ball, et al., 2000) the redefinition of youth and the construction of such sub-divisions also has consequences for the way in which we make sense of what it means to be adult. Under such

conditions the sense of 'adult membership is derived from a demonstration of competence in cultural, political, consumer life' (Zinneker, 1990, p.29). At this point it is important to consider Dwyer et al.'s (2003) argument that in order to give a thorough account of disrupted youth transitions it is necessary 'to recognise [that] the time slippage that has occurred cuts both ways' (p. 21). In particular, they see that 'there has been a downward trend in the exposure of youth to what were traditionally seen as adult choices in life' (Dwyer, et al., 2003, p.22) and they suggest that 'there are now overlaps between roles that were once viewed as separate or sequential' (ibid, p.22). As a consequence, the boundaries between adulthood and youth are less clear and are more blurred. In all these respects the difficulty of specifying an age point as a general indicator, a general marker of transition to adulthood for all young people, makes any approach to youth as an age-specific cohort inadequate.

Earlier I referred to redefinitions of youth that describe it as a phase characterised by 'ambiguous dependency' (Ahier & Moore, 1999, p.516) that relate it to engagement with education as well as hybrid forms of employment (cycles between education, semi-employment, unemployment and full-time employment) and flexible patterns of housing arrangements. The traditional indicators for the transition from youth to adult life, that is, the formation of family and entering into a stable or permanent position of employment, seem to be no longer useful in capturing the range of features that formulate youth or the scope of experiences that can be connected to it. Approaches to youth in terms of an age group are similarly insufficient (see Miles, 2000; Dwyer & Wyn, 2001). The reconstruction of youth seems to open areas for further research, including the exploration of horizons of experience that are bound to redefinitions of youth, the possibilities and constraints that the reconstructions of youth bring into play, as well as the way in which young people engage with identity and their struggles to construct a sense of selfhood. These concerns constitute the broad area of interest in my study.

Although I have suggested the inadequacy of traditional definitions of youth, at this point it is useful to consider these further in order to discuss conceptualisations of youth in terms of generation. First, I will consider Mizen's (2002) points. Mizen (2002) suggests that in an attempt to move away from psychological definitions of youth social researchers have ended up seeing youth in terms of a group of changes or

a set of transitions. Accordingly, the idea of generation was been cast aside. Mizen (2002) finds that although there is a rich analytical tradition that explores the ideological and discursive significance of youth in relation to the exercise of political power, one equally important issue, that is, the role of the state, has been left out of consideration (Mizen, 2002, p.5). He argues for a return to the generational idea and indicates the usefulness of searching for relationships between state and youth in a period of restructuring in which the form of the state is being transformed.

Ahier and Moore (1999) argue for the need to see youth as a generation and focus on the examination of an 'inter-generational transfers of assets.' According to both, this point of view enables the consideration and study of the public and private spheres as well as relationships of dependency and reliance (Ahier & Moore, 1999, p.528). At the same time, while Du-Bois Raymond (1998) suggests that terms like youth 'have become individualised' (p.65) within contemporary youth research, Ahier and Moore (1999) see such approaches as overly 'individualistic in their orientation' (p.516).

The adoption of either of the above conceptualisations of youth has implications in relation to the orientation of research. For example, approaching youth as generation sets the focus of interest upon the common characteristics that comprise young people as a social category and the direction of interest is placed outwards; the orientation of the research would be that of examining the relationship of this group with other social groups or institutions. In contrast, my approach is closely related to Miles' work. Miles (2000) suggests that instead of seeing youth as an 'undifferentiated mass of people of similar age, experiencing similar things' (Miles, 2000, p.10), what sociologists should be describing is a 'highly differentiated group of people of a similar age subject to a whole variety of experiences' (Miles, 2000, p.10). This indicates an inward direction for research since the interest is focused within the category of youth and on the identification of the different ways in which young people experience youth. This does not make the study of youth merely a study of individual fortunes but rather the study of each individual case 'reveals more widely shared, social experiences' (MacDonald, et al., 2001).

**Structuralism and Culturalism**

In this section I will refer to some further aspects for the way in which youth has been constructed and presented in the relevant literature. I will do so by first referring to two main traditions, the cultural and the structural and their representations of youth.

While providing an account of the history of youth studies in the UK, MacDonald, et al. (2001) discuss two main traditions: the youth cultural studies tradition and the youth transitions tradition. Miles (2000) makes a similar distinction but refers to these traditions as culturalism and structuralism. The former has its roots in the work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) and the study of youth sub-cultures as forms of class resistance, which was developed during the 1970s. This school of thought has been criticised for prioritising issues of appearance and style for a minority of young people while neglecting other more important issues in young people's lives. Clarke expresses this type of critique by questioning 'the value of decoding the stylistic appearances of particular tribes during a period in which young adults are the prime victims of a state policy of manufactured unemployment' (Clark, 1982, p.1 cited in MacDonald, et al., 2001). MacDonald, et al. (2001) refer to these critical voices as being located at the beginning of the 1980s, a period marked by the advent of Thatcherism, increased youth unemployment and the expansion of youth training schemes (MacDonald, et al., 2001, p.2).

From a different point of view, Tait (1992) employs Foucault's conceptualisation of power and knowledge to examine the practices of the CCCS and the types of truth constructed throughout it in relation to young people. In particular, he points out and problematises the construction of what Brown (1987) calls the 'invisible majority' of 'ordinary kids' (Brown, 1987). According to Tait (1992), ordinary kids are constructed in contrast to sub-cultural groups that attract the concerns of the tradition of cultural studies, highlighting that they are positioned as 'too drab and passive to warrant investigation' (p.13). He also refers to male working class sub-cultures as connected to 'revolutionary fantasies' in which 'mods became quasi-revolutionaries and skinheads became the last line of resistance' (Tait, 1992, p.13).

On the other hand, structuralism is related to the study of youth-to-work transitions. This tradition was developed from the 1980s onwards, expressing a 'shift away from cultural studies towards more "social problems" oriented approaches' (Griffins, 1993; MacDonald, et al., 2001). This form of structuralism is mainly connected to research on school-to-work transitions and has been criticised for failing to consider other aspects of young people's lives. It is deemed to be failing to prioritise the actual views and interests of young people by underscoring issues of education and employment as most significant (Miles, 2000). But according to Miles (2000) the most damaging element of the transition debate is the 'treatment [of] young people as troubled victims of economic and social restructuring without enough attention to the active ways in which young people negotiate such circumstances' (Miles, 2000, p.10).

MacDonald, et al. (2001) show that the division between these two traditions does not only concern the focus of interest but is also related to further methodological questions. In particular, the study of transitions has been dominated by quantitative methods, mainly by the use of questionnaire surveying, while cultural studies basically use ethnographic observation (MacDonald, et al., 2001, p.2). MacDonald, et al. (2001) argue for the reassertion of the value of the transition perspective, claiming that the concept of transition 'predisposes us towards a study of youth that is fundamentally the study of youth as a life phase [...] [which] remains a critically important period in which individual life chances are established' (MacDonald, et al., 2001, p.13). Nevertheless, they stress the need for extending the notion of transition to include all areas of people's lives and thus integrate issues that have been identified by cultural studies (MacDonald, et al., 2001, p.5). Therefore, they challenge the 'standard, questionnaire and survey-based methods' (ibid, p.9) and suggest a shift towards qualitative methods and the development of more sensitive methodological tools.

One example of this kind of work is Ball, et al.'s study (2000) of youth transitions. The researchers use the notion of transitions in terms of that which MacDonald, et al. (2001) would characterise as a 'broadly conceived notion' (MacDonald, et al., 2001, p.4). In essence, they extend it to include not only issues of education and work, but also the equally important issues of leisure, consumer

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attitudes and lifestyles. Furthermore, they explore these issues by employing qualitative methods.

## Mainstream Youth, Youth at Risk and Youth in Crisis

A different mix of culture and structure is evident in the work of researchers who divide young people into mainstream youth and youth at risk. Dwyer and Wyn (2001) discuss this division and the dilemmas that it encompasses for the orientation of research with reference to social change. In particular, they mount a critique in relation to the relevance of such a division within current social conditions. They argue that such a division is no longer relevant as it ignores the current state of 'more flexible and less predictable life patterns of post-industrial society' (Dwyer & Wyn, 2001, p.56). In such conditions this division 'ignores the uncertainties and risks which all teenagers share in common due to the far-reaching social and economic changes affecting their lives' (ibid, p.56). Therefore, Dwyer and Wyn (2001) suggest that risk and uncertainty have become expanded and thus experienced by all young people, not just those who traditionally belong to sensitive or high-risk social groups. If this is the case and such divisions no longer make sense then according to Dwyer and Wyn (2001) it is irrelevant for youth research to be organised in relation to them.

On this matter Chisholm (2001) can also be taken into consideration. She suggests a 'move towards more complex perspectives, beginning by unpacking dualisms' (Chisholm, 2001, p.69). According to her, the focus of youth research should be centred on the way in which young people's biographies and identities are constructed. Additionally, the interest has to be centred not only on excluded or marginalised young people, but also on those who 'manage to construct satisfying and productive lives in the face of significant personal and social disadvantage in the early years' (Chisholm, 2001, p.70). From a similar position, Du-Bois Raymond (1998) adopts the view that 'risks are no longer concentrated among those with few qualifications, but also apply to the culturally privileged' (Du-Bois Raymond, 1998, p.64) and indicates the need for research into not only underprivileged youth but also those who constitute 'the cultural elite, the young "trend-setters"' (ibid.).

Other researchers discuss these divisions by connecting them to traditions of structuralism in youth research. Heath (1999) suggests that constraint models dominate youth research. While acknowledging that such research has provided a powerful critique of the negative impact on marginalised young adults of successive social policies (Heath, 1999, p.552) she points out the limitations of such approaches and argues that they fail to develop 'a more rounded approach which might include the development of a sociology of affluent youth, or of conformist youth' (ibid, p.552). Miles (2000) also suggests that sociology has neglected to consider 'mainstream youth' in favour of either melodramatic expressions of lifestyle or structural conceptions of youth disadvantage. According to his view, this constitutes an oversimplified approach that fails to capture the complex features of young people's lives.

In his effort to problematise the practices of youth studies Kelly (2000) refers to the representation of 'youth in crisis' by discussing the normalisation effects of such approaches and their regulating power. While giving examples in literature where youth is connected to drugs, alcohol, suicide and crime, he suggests that youth in this literature has 'historically occupied the "wild zones" of modernity' (Kelly, 2000, p.303) and comments that these representations of 'delinquency' and 'disadvantage' have often been 'situated in relation to conceptions of "normal" youth"' (ibid, p.303). From this point of view such perspectives have shaped definitions of what is normal and what is not, thus setting norms and patterns for youth and so working towards their normalisation. They also cultivate the prospect of 'smoother', 'safer', 'more appropriate' behaviours and modes of being. Dwyer and Wyn (2001) provide some additional instances in which youth discourses seem to have a similar effect. They refer to the field of family studies and life-course analysis where a 'clear distinction between the functional and the "dis-functional" is made, and problems need to be dealt with as "deviant and exceptional behaviours"' (Dwyer & Wyn, 2001, p.57). They also see this 'uneasy balance between the normal and the problematic' (ibid, p.57) reflected in the public policies that address young people.

## Summary

The above discussion raises issues for consideration as well as providing some useful resources for thinking about the method and the research design of my present study. As presented above, the transition debate indicates the need for a more rounded conceptualisation of the different fields in young people's lives. Consequently, in order to provide a rounded account of young people's experiences and their involvement in identity work I need to consider all the areas of their lives and regard these as 'blending areas of life' (Du-Bois Raymond, 1998). Furthermore, the interests of the research will be focused upon what has been referred to as 'the invisible majority of ordinary kinds' (Brown, 1987). Along with some of the views presented above, I consider the distinction between mainstream youth and youth at risk particularly important in the sense that it has directed the attention of research towards social inequalities and provided critical insights in relation to dominant policies and their effects (MacDonald, et al., 2001). At the same time, this distinction seems to set into one category all those people who are not in the margins and are not in danger of social exclusion, treating them as a unified social group with a comfortable way of living. However, I will adopt the view that this majority of young people also constitutes a diverse group, the exploration of which is an issue of equal importance.

The problematisation of the practice of youth studies influences the method adopted herein and, in broader terms, shapes the type of practice that I adopt in the present study. These accounts indicate the need to leave open the possibility for young people to 'elude and escape the categories which attempt to regulate them' (Kelly, 2000). This is possible only through adopting a reflexive stance towards the implications of the representations constructed within the relevant research. The possibility of eluding and escaping also draws attention to the importance of working with research techniques that allow space for the concerns of research participants to be exposed and enable their voices to be heard. I am going to pick up on these points later when discussing the method of my study.

# CHAPTER 2. THEORY AND METHOD

## Introduction

The working definitions of youth discussed in the previous chapter delineate a certain direction for research into youth. While locating my study within the context of redefinitions of youth and the changing content of youth experience, broader analytical attention is centred on unpacking and exploring youth. More specifically, I focus on what has been constructed in the relevant literature as the 'silenced majority', 'mainstream youth' or 'ordinary kids' (Brown, 1987). In this chapter I specify the object of my study while also discussing, and therefore trying to make visible, the epistemological underpinnings that have influenced its formulation. I present as interrelated the epistemological principles that inform my study and the method I practice. I then introduce the theoretical framework within which I work when analysing the data. Theoretical tools, methodological choices and research techniques are discussed as interrelated and mutually constitutive. I then lay out the design for my research and provide an account of the research tools used along with some reflections and critical remarks on my engagement with the project.

## The Research Inquiry

My study is positioned within the context of redefinitions of youth and the changing content of youth experience. While reviewing aspects of the literature on youth I indicated some different conceptualisations of youth, as well as referring to (re)definitions of youth. Here I use some of these in order to frame my research enquiry and explain the design of my research project. More specifically, in the previous chapter I put forward a definition of youth as a phase that is internally divided and highly differentiated. By highlighting the internal diversity of youth I indicate an inwards direction for youth research. That is, I indicate a concern with unpacking and exploring difference and inequality within different forms of youth experience. Although problematising the unity of youth, I argue for the usefulness of retaining the concept within the vocabulary of the social sciences.

On the one hand, the aim my study is to unpack and explore youth and in particular, 'ordinary' forms of Greek youth experience during the 2000s. On the other hand, I am interested in exploring different analytical possibilities and interpretive perspectives in research into youth. In other words, the task I am undertaking in the context of this study has a dual focus. First and primarily, it constitutes an experiment with theory and method and in this sense the object of my inquiry relates to method. While deploying three different lenses to make sense of youth narratives, my aim is to grapple with the analytical possibilities that different frameworks offer as well as experiment with interpretive limitations in understanding youth. Second, this thesis comprises a substantive research study into youth in contemporary Greece. In particular, my concern focuses upon that which has been constructed in the field of youth research as the 'silenced majority' of 'ordinary kids' (Brown, 1987). While unpacking and looking into this group my quest is to explore the identities of these 'ordinary kids', as well as throw light on the diversity of their youth experiences.

The exploration of actual youth identities and the lived experiences of 'youth' started out as the primary focus of this study. However, over time my focus shifted and this substantive analysis became a secondary one. Aside from personal preference, this shift can also be justified by taking into account Bourdieu's and St. Martin's argument that 'however important, the specific object of [this or that] research, [this] counts less indeed [...] than the method which was applied to it and which could be applied to an infinity of different objects' (Bourdieu & St. Martin, 1982, p.50 cited in Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.5). While working towards researching youth identities I found myself becoming increasingly interested in the methods through which such explorations were performed. I became more concerned with the theoretical tools that I was using and began to work with different theoretical frameworks and experiment with their interpretive possibilities. I decided to deploy Bourdieu's concept of habitus, Foucault's technologies of the self and Hall's identification in order to explore youth narratives of the self. As I explain later, this choice was very much driven by my personal interest in particular forms of educational and sociological research.

Throughout my text I use the word 'method' and understand it as much more than simply a set of technical procedures and instruments. In alliance with Bourdieu,

Wacquant (1992) argues that 'one cannot disassociate the construction of the object from the instruments of construction of the object and their critique' (p.30). While adopting such a holistic and all-embracing definition of the word method, I also regard method as inseparable from the different steps of the research process. Seen in this way, method can be abstracted from the particularities of a research object in order to be transferred and applied to the study of others. Nevertheless, this does not signify a general autonomy of method in relation to the research object. Bourdieu (1992; 1993) refers to approaches that see method in an autonomous technical way, something he refers to as 'methodologicism', and criticises them sharply. He counter-poses these to a conceptualisation of method that is inextricably connected to research; one that is generated from empirical research with its final purpose being to facilitate research. Such an understanding of method requires an on-going dialogue between epistemological principles, theoretical departures, analytical tools and research techniques.

**The Method**

So far I have described my study as both methodologically experimental and substantively exploratory. It is intended that the method I develop and experiment with will address both types of inquiry and accommodate the dual focus of my research. Below I elaborate on the method I practice by discussing some affinities with Best and Kellner's (1991; 2001) 'multi-perspectivism' over and against eclecticism and as distant from claims of neutrality. I then position the method I practice in epistemological terms, locating it within the field of Bourdieu's epistemological contributions.

The method I employ does not involve one single theory and therefore excludes the use of one analytical framework. Instead, my theoretical position involves shifting between three different perspectives and deploying three different concepts: I utilise Bourdieu's habitus, Foucault's technologies of the self and Hall's identification. I therefore work with three different interpretive frameworks to explore youth identities. Shifting between three standpoints to explore the data by no means

suggests any kind of claim to neutrality. In other words, I do not consider myself as being positioned on neutral ground from which I appropriate and deploy these three analytical concepts. On the contrary, I consider the choice of the three concepts and the broader layout of my study as pervaded by personal predispositions. I will elaborate on this later.

Shifting my focus from researching 'ordinary' youth identities to also experimenting with a method for carrying out such exploratory research and analysis is marked by personal interests and inclinations, as well as my individual social trajectory and preferred values. I identify myself as being allied with critical sociological traditions (Bernstein, 2000; Apple, 1996; Bourdieu, 1986; 1977a; Ball, 1994; 2005). I am therefore, in principle, predisposed to approaches that examine inequalities and seek to reveal the workings of power and question it; I am drawn to those that challenge dominant orders and meanings, to provide descriptions and better understandings of social realities, which is a first and necessary step towards thinking otherwise, towards change (Bernstein, 2000). The overall project and the choice of the three scholars I draw on are infused with this standpoint. I will elaborate on this later by articulating and therefore making visible the epistemological underpinnings of my project as well as reflecting on some fundamental choices that inform my work.

Apart from representing my personal standpoint in the field of sociological and educational research, choosing to work with Bourdieu's, Foucault's and Hall's concepts was also inspired by their contribution to understanding the formation of subjectivity. Despite working in different fields, and despite their methodological and/or epistemological differences, these three scholars have offered useful tools (Ball, 2006) for understanding the construction of social identities. Hall starts by reference to economic, political and social conditions and focuses on the study of cultural identities that he understands both as discursively and materially constructed. Furthermore, Hall problematises the notion of the 'unified subject' and understands identities as localised and positional. He approaches the construction of identities as a continuous, multifaceted, open-ended, culturally and temporally specific process, which he terms identification. For Foucault the ontology of the subject is historical. Individuals turn themselves into subjects within the flow of discourses that are made available to them across various institutional settings. The process of 'subjectification'

(or 'subjectivation', the French equivalent in Foucault's texts) is a dynamic one, one that is inextricably connected to the workings of power and which encompasses individuals' active engagement and struggles. Bourdieu's starting point is the form of hierarchical positions and class relations that dominate a particular social field. He understands the construction of 'social subjects' in terms of the interplay between material and symbolic configurations, as well as structure and agency. I will introduce the three frameworks in greater detail later on in this chapter. 'Habitus,' technologies of the self and identification are central to Bourdieu's, Foucault's and Hall's respective conceptualisations of subjectivity and they have all been particularly influential concepts in contemporary social theory and in social and educational research.

The deployment of different frameworks in analysing data has been described in the field of cultural studies as multi-perspectival analysis. According to Best and Kellner (1991, 2001), multi-perspectivism refers to the utilisation of different elements from different perspectives in a single research project. Best and Kellner (1991; 2001) argue for the need to develop multi-perspectival approaches within the broader context of changes at the social level and paradigm shifts in the field of social theory. More specifically, Best and Kellner (2001) refer to significant socioeconomic, technological and scientific developments occurring along with paradigm shifts in the fields of theory, art and culture. While describing these changes in terms of a 'postmodern turn' they point out that the social world has become much more complex, consisting of both modern and postmodern features. The authors consider social realities as entailing elements of old social orders and new social arrangements. In addition, they suggest that researchers are faced with highly complex social realities. According to Best and Kellner (2001), in order to address such multifarious and dynamic social configurations the social sciences need to utilise elements from different perspectives and combine them in order to produce rich mappings and insightful understandings of contemporary social settings.

Elsewhere, Kellner (1995) presents his take on a critical cultural studies research agenda as inseparably critical, multicultural and multi-perspectival. He notes that however awkward the concept of multi-perspectivism may be it nevertheless expresses in the best possible approach for this type of research practice. Kellner is

interested in multi-perspectival work within the context of critical research inquiry. In this respect he describes multi-perspectival cultural studies as drawing 'on a wide range of textual and critical strategies to interpret, criticize, and deconstruct the artefact under scrutiny' (Kellner, 1995, p.98). Kellner's multi-perspectivism is founded upon Nietzsche's notion of 'perspectivism', which refers to the inevitable mediation of one's perspectives – and therefore, biases and limitations – in all forms of interpretation. In this case the deployment of different perspectives is regarded as a strategy for minimising one-sidedness as well as opening up the possibility for more complete interpretations, since according to Nietzsche, 'every elevation of man brings with it the overcoming of narrower interpretations' (Nietzsche, 1968, p.330 cited in Kellner, 1995, p.98). Kellner highlights that no matter how multi-perspectival an interpretation may be it is still generated from the researcher's point of view and is therefore related to his relevant positioning. Furthermore, he suggests that allowing the various perspectives 'to inform and mould each other' is particularly useful although this should not signify a 'mere liberal eclecticism or merely a hotchpotch of different points of view' (Kellner, 1995, p.99).

In light of Kellner's remarks, the deployment of different analytical frameworks does not adopt an 'anything goes' approach in my study. In other words, I keep a distance from theoretical eclecticism. Eclecticism comes from the Greek word *ec legein* and the Latin *eligere*, which mean to select, only choosing the best. Theodoridis (1997) defines eclecticism as an approach to thought that does not hold rigidly to a single paradigm or set of assumptions or conclusions, but instead draws upon multiple theories to gain complementary insights into phenomena, or applies only certain theories in particular cases (Theodoridis, 1997). Hjorland and Nicolaisen (2005) refer to eclecticism in social science as the tendency to use many, perhaps conflicting, theories in one's work (Hjorland & Nicolaisen, 2005) and describe it as a point of view that stands against homological truths and single-sided descriptions.

Reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of eclecticism, Hjorland and Nicolaisen (2005) suggest that an eclectic approach allows the critical consideration of perspectives by examining their limitations. A basic feature of this is the avoidance of theoretical prejudices or one-sided attitudes towards different perspectives. In some cases, the authors argue, eclecticism enables the illumination of richer, more detailed

descriptions of social realities. Nevertheless, as Hjorland and Nicolaisen (2005) put it, an eclectic point of view declares the need to stand outside all the various theoretical positions in the field and take all views equally seriously. This implies a neutral position from which several theories are deployed and appreciated. As the authors comment, this is the point where eclecticism seems to slip into assumptions about objectivity, which in principle it intends to challenge. Failing to acknowledge or problematise the ground from which different theories are appropriated, eclecticism leads to contradictory outcomes; that is, it succumbs to claims of objectivity, which in principle it sets out to undermine. Another point for critical consideration is related to the neglect of the epistemological foundations of different perspectives. Eclectic approaches often tend to ignore the underpinnings of different perspectives and hence fail to take seriously subsequent effects. This can end up as what Dale (1983) and Slee (1995) refer to as a light-hearted (Dale, 1983; Slee, 1995), pick-and-mix attitude that fails to grasp epistemological differences and their implications for analytical work.

Considering the critical points referred to above I need to make it clear that my study keeps its distance from theoretical eclecticism. Deploying concepts from different frameworks neither intends to blend them and create new amalgamations, nor to compare them in the strict sense of the term. My aim is to make operational the concepts employed in my analysis and discuss them in a parallel way. Throughout this process I explore the interpretive possibilities that they open, as well as experimenting with their analytical limitations. I consider the concepts as deriving from broader generic frameworks and therefore entailing and bringing into play certain epistemological assumptions. I introduce the concepts of habitus, technologies of the self and identification as part of broader theoretical models and I navigate my analytical work accordingly. In Ball's terms I treat the concepts as 'distinctive lenses' (Ball, 2006) and I work 'with, without and against' each concept. I will further elaborate on my project by discussing the epistemological underpinnings of the method.

## Epistemological Considerations

The task I undertake in the context of this study, namely, experimenting with the analytical possibilities of different concepts and exploring the diversity of youth, is founded upon Bourdieu's epistemological contributions and more specifically, his concern with reconsidering dualisms in the social sciences. Below I discuss Bourdieu's work on overcoming the division between subjectivism and objectivism, as well as his conceptualisation of the role of theory in sociological research. I elaborate on both aspects of Bourdieu's epistemological remarks. In particular, I refer to the rethinking of the subjectivism and objectivism divide and regard it as putting forward a quest for critical engagement within the limits of theoretical knowledge. I also present the division between theory and research as involving a certain conceptualisation of theory and its use. Both themes in Bourdieu's writings entail new critical thinking for sociological practice and set epistemic reflexivity at the core of research practice. Throughout this discussion my aim is to foreground the epistemological field in which my study is positioned.

### Rethinking the Objectivism-Subjectivism Divide: Reflexive Awareness of the Limits of Sociological Knowledge

In his work *The Logic of Practice*, Bourdieu (1990a) provides a detailed critical account of both subjectivism and objectivism. In particular, he understands both types of knowledge as distanced from a 'practical mode of knowledge' and articulates the principles that they have in common (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.25). In particular, Bourdieu discusses and criticises the perception of primary experience as it is constructed within each of the aforementioned frameworks. He argues that while subjectivist perspectives point out the primary experience of the social world they regard it as equal to an apprehension of the social world. In this respect the meaning of an experience is considered to be self-evident. In other words, the social world is deemed to manifest itself in immediate subjective experience and to be apprehended in a direct way. Bourdieu stresses that subjectivism 'excludes any inquiry as to its own conditions of possibility' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.26). Therefore, the social conditions

that make it possible for certain subjects to have particular types of experience are not examined. Similarities or coincidences are not traced to their origins, namely, the conditions that generate or make possible their existence. Hence Bourdieu suggests that subjectivism refers to a kind of experience that 'by definition, doesn't reflect itself' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.25). The primary experiential meaning is considered valid without recognising the need for further questioning.

Objectivism, on the other hand, disguises dimensions of primary experience since it 'takes no account of what is inscribed in the distance and externality with respect to primary experience' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.26). In as much as it does not take into critical consideration the space in between immediate experience and objective meaning it fails to grasp and provide an account of the objectifying process in operation. In other words, there is no consideration for or analysis of the conditions that make possible the construction and reproduction of objectified meaning (which is then taken for granted). Furthermore, while objectivism establishes 'objective regularities independent of individual consciousness and wills, it introduces a radical discontinuity between theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge' (ibid, p.26). As a consequence, theoretical knowledge is deemed to be located at a higher level of abstraction and distanced from the level of primary experience and practice.

While pointing out the aspects that each of these two forms of knowledge exclude, Bourdieu also builds up an argument in relation to the inherent limitations. Bourdieu goes on to argue for the development of a scientific 'gaze' (see also Bourdieu, 1988) that entails 'both a reflexive return to the subjective experience of the world and also the objectification of the objective conditions of that experience' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.25). This constitutes a third 'mode of knowledge', one that is generated through a scientific procedure that is 'epistemologically challenged by the systematic reflexivity' (Robbins, 1998, p.46). Reflexivity signifies for Bourdieu the objectifying of the objectification processes (Bourdieu, 1993). It constitutes a gaze that is turned upon subjective pre-dispositions as well as the objective conditions that are active during sociological research from the very moment of the specification of the research object. Bourdieu's scheme does not consist of two poles, that of the the researcher and the object of research. Rather, his interest is to focus and critically consider their interconnection, namely, the subject's form of engagement with the

object of research; he suggests a reflexive awareness of their interconnections and an acknowledgement of the limits of knowledge that is produced throughout this relationship.

For Bourdieu, reflexivity goes beyond the relativisation of the author's position and the relativisation of the produced knowledge by stressing its specific contextual characteristics. Epistemic reflexivity refers to the acknowledgment and explication of the bias that researchers bring into play in the research procedure. Reflexivity entails three dimensions (see Bourdieu 1988; 1993; Kennway, 2005). First, it is related to individual bias, which in turn relates to a researcher's social origins, values and position within a social space. The second axis involves the acknowledgement of one's position within the academic field, within the structures of power and the symbolic struggles that occur there. Finally, the third area for reflexive thinking refers to 'intellectualist bias' (Bourdieu, 1990a). This is a call for constantly keeping a critical eye on the 'presuppositions inscribed in the fact of thinking the world' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.382).

**Theory and Research: Conceptualisation of Theory and its Use**

> I could paraphrase Kant and say that research without theory is blind,
> and theory without research is empty.
>
> (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.162)

The second long-established dualism that has been constructed in the tradition of the social sciences is the division between theory and research. Bourdieu delivers a strident critique of what he calls 'theoretical theory'. With this term he refers to a type of theory that is disentangled from empirical research. Such as theory is produced through a process of pure theorising and does not relate to the field of empirical exploration. Bourdieu defines his position as follows: 'I have never resigned myself to producing a general discourse on the social world, and even less, a universal meta-discourse on knowledge of this world; I hold indeed that discourse on scientific practice is quite disastrous when it takes the place of scientific practice' (Bourdieu & Wacquent, 1992, p.159).

Although Bourdieu is interested in developing a theoretical model as well as crystallising a sociological method throughout his work, from this point of view he does so through his continuous engagement with research. In other words, he projects his sociological tools through his constant involvement with empirical research and analytical work. From Bourdieu's standpoint the logic of research is 'inseparably empirical and theoretical' (Bourdieu, 1992, p.160). According to Wacquant, 'Just as he rehabilitates the practical dimension of practice as an object of knowledge, Bourdieu wishes to recover the practical side of theory as a knowledge producing activity' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.30). In this respect Bourdieu turns his gaze and focuses his interest on the actual sociological practice. Therefore, he explores the theoretical principles that pervade practices and in order to do so he makes operational theory in the course of his research activity. In such a way he overcomes the traditional dualism and aims to abstract from empirical research a particular 'logic of research' rather than a theory, in the sense of a generalised system of abstract propositions.

Throughout his work Bourdieu develops a certain conceptualisation of theory and its use. Above I refer to the interconnections between theory and research. From the discussion it follows that theory is crafted through research and its final aim is to facilitate empirical research. According to Bourdieu, theory 'emerges as a program of perception and of action – a scientific habitus, if you wish – which is disclosed only in the empirical work that actualizes it. It is a temporary construct which takes shape for and by empirical work' (Bourdieu & Wacuquant, 1992, p.161). In this respect theory is to be valued not for its own sake but in terms of its applicability. Importance is not placed on the theory as such, but rather on what can be achieved out of its application in order to analyse social realities. As Robbins puts it, Bourdieu's theoretical propositions are 'pragmatically valuable rather than necessary truths' (Robbins, 1998, p.43). Accordingly, theory does not have an autonomous value but acquires value in a pragmatic fashion through its practical application in sociological analyses.

This approach to theory in terms of a practical form of knowledge also encompasses certain limitations. Derek Robbins (1998) points out that 'Bourdieu's methodological endeavour has always been to offer his particular analyses as potentially rather than actually universal' (Robbins, 1998, p.38). Bourdieu's

theoretical constructs, while closely connected to the context of research and while regarded as facilitators of analytical procedures, do not claim universal status. They are offered as devices to be transferred to and tried out in several different contexts of research. Their potential for generalisation is related to their possible applicability and utilisation within different contexts. Additionally, Bourdieu's theoretical constructs are not purely defined and neatly reified (Ball, 2006). Since they are moulded in the course of empirical research they carry within them the complexity, fuzziness and contradictions of the real world (ibid). In Robbins' words, as propositions of a 'contingent, synthetic type' (Robbins, 1998, p.43) they are characterised by an 'irreducible arbitrariness' (ibid.) characteristic of the context within which they are generated.

**Reflexive Methods and Relational Knowledge**

Bourdieu's work on different types of knowledge and his critical account of objectivism and subjectivism problematise the limits of theoretical knowledge. With regard to subjectivism he demonstrates how celebrating the primacy of immediate experience and experiential meaning undermines a reflective awareness of the conditions of their production. On the other hand, objectivism, according to Bourdieu, takes for granted the objectification of subjective experience and fails to consider individual will. Hence it is a form of knowledge that in principle yields a divergence between theoretical and practical knowledge. By problematising objectivism and subjectivism Bourdieu indicates how all forms of knowledge are relational and thus bound to the conditions of their production. While challenging dominant epistemologies Bourdieu counterposes a form of knowledge that is produced alongside a reflexive gaze to the 'presuppositions inscribed in the fact of thinking the world' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.382).

A concern with the limits of theoretical knowledge has been highlighted by several academics in social and educational research. Throughout her work on subjectivity and social change Irwin (2006) emphasises that theoretical propositions 'can hide as much as they reveal' (Irwin, 2006, p.20). In a similar manner, Slee (1995) suggests that 'by their very nature, paradigms, theories and disciplinary perspectives

are merely ways of seeing that simultaneously reveal and conceal' (Skirt, 1991, p.124 quoted by Slee, 1995, p.2). As referred to earlier, Kellner (1995) understands theoretical frameworks as optics with their own strengths and limitations, insights and blind spots. According to Kellner, a perspective 'spotlights, or illuminates, some features of a text while ignoring others' (1995, p.98). In all of the above cases the authors challenge understandings of theoretical knowledge as catholic, unbounded and universal, and reflexively engage with its limitations.

Following Bourdieu's epistemological challenge I will utilise Bourdieu's concept of habitus, Foucault's technologies of the self and Hall's identifications and experiment with the interpretive possibilities that each concept offers for understanding youth identities. The task I am involved in is neither easy nor simple. Since I am not following a ready-made method there cannot be any certain assumptions and given procedures. As a result, there are not any fixed steps and given rules for carrying out my research. I therefore place myself in a rather uncomfortable, demanding and challenging position. Experimenting with a method that is not already defined and totally fixed also entails the danger of coming up with a fragmented and incoherent project. I need to be particularly vigilant and maintain a great degree of reflexivity throughout the whole project to ensure consistency within and across the different parts of the research project.

**Introducing the Theoretical Tools**

I am now going to introduce the three main concepts that make up my 'theoretical toolbox' (Ball, 1994) for exploring identities and forms of youth experience. Throughout this process I will take seriously Bourdieu's suggestion 'against the fetishism of concepts and of "theory", born of the propensity to consider "theoretical" instruments [...] in themselves and for themselves, rather than to put them in motion and to make them work' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.22). I will consider the three frameworks in general and the three concepts in particular as working concepts. Hence, instead of deploying them habitually, as Reay (2004) describes it, I will treat them as analytical tools. In other words, instead of using the concepts 'as signposts

where there is one signifier and the rest are implied' (Reay, 2004), I will work with the concepts to interrogate the data.

*Pierre Bourdieu: Habitus*

The first standpoint for conceptualising the formation of youth subjectivities, and a respective strand for analysis, is derived from the work of Pierre Bourdieu. The starting point of Bourdieu's analytical model is individuals' hierarchical social positioning, along with the material and symbolic conditions that social positions involve. Throughout his work Bourdieu suggests that the early socialisation of individuals – the principles that pervade their material and symbolic surroundings – are inscribed on their bodies as well as becoming engraved in their cognitive development. The process of an individual's internalisation of these principles formulates their habitus.

According to Bourdieu, habitus functions as a mechanism that predisposes subjects towards particular practices. Bourdieu (1977b) suggests that habitus 'by integrating past experiences functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks, thanks to analogical transfers of schemes' (Bourdieu, 1977b, p.83). Therefore, habitus provides the schemes according to which subjects perceive and recognise the new situations and orientate themselves in them. While incorporating elements of past experience, habitus operates like an internal self-stirring mechanism that guides the social practice of individuals. In this sense, habitus is both a structured and a structuring structure (Bourdieu, 1977b, p. 82).

In Bourdieu's work habitus is related to class dispositions (Bourdieu, 1986). It is also related to class origins and entails the symbolic principles of social positioning. Furthermore, Bourdieu (1977b; 1986) asserts that habitus also entails embodied marks of social distance between objective positions. As he puts it, habitus encompasses 'reminders of this distance and of the conduct required in order to "keep one's distance" or to manipulate it strategically, whether symbolically or actually, to reduce it, increase it, or simply maintain it' (1977b, p.82). Therefore, habitus as a structured structure entails traces of social class and social distance. On the other hand, as a

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structuring structure habitus relates to a modus operandi, an ability that can be deployed in the struggles for distinction.

Here it must be taken into account that 'one of the declared functions of habitus is to mediate between structure and agency' (Nash, 1999, p.176). It is a crucial point that individual subjects are actively engaged in the structuring of their positions. Moreover, Bourdieu stresses that habitus is not merely reproductive and that it 'is something powerfully generative' (Bourdieu, 1993, p.87). Habitus tends to reproduce the principles that structure the social conditions that have generated it, while also transforming them at the same time (Bourdieu, 1993). Therefore, it does not work towards direct reproduction but holds dynamic potential, although it tends to reproduce the logic of the conditions that produce it.

Bourdieu (1993) refers to the 'assimilatory capacities of habitus' while also pointing to habitus as 'a power of adaptation' since 'it constantly performs an adaptation to the external world that only exceptionally takes the form of radical conversion' (Bourdieu, 1993, p.88). Reay (2004) speaks about a complex interplay between past and future in the character of habitus and sees them as 'permeable and responsive to what is going on around them,' as well as 'continually re-structured by individuals' (Reay, 2004, p.434). As she puts it, 'while habitus reflects the social position in which it was constructed it also carries within it the genesis of new creative responses that are capable of transcending the social conditions in which it was produced' (ibid, p. 434-35). She also indicates the need to examine the workings of habitus along with its connection to capital and the field in order to understand the dynamics that the concept entails (ibid, p. 435). I both discuss and further elaborate upon this point in Chapter 3.

*Michel Foucault: Technologies of the Self*

The concept of technologies of the self is developed in the work of Michel Foucault. While providing a reflexive account of his work on the history of sexuality Foucault (1987) speaks about three different shifts and three respective concerns that mark each phase. In the first phase he studies the fields of knowledge that are connected to sexuality. During the second he focuses on the systems of rules and norms and in the

third phase he is concerned with 'the forms within which individuals are able, are obliged to recognise themselves as subjects of sexuality' (Foucault, 1987, p.4) in Western societies. In order to understand the process of subjectification Foucault directs his attention towards the analysis of 'the practices by which individuals were led to focus their attention on themselves, to decipher, recognize and acknowledge themselves as subjects' (Foucault, 1987, p.5). Foucault is interested in the techniques, instruments and ascetics (in the broad sense of the term) that individuals adopt in order to turn themselves into subjects of a kind. In order to grasp these practices Foucault (1988b) uses technologies of the self. Technologies 'permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and the way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immorality' (Foucault, 1988b, p.18).

The process according to which individuals establish a relation with themselves involves the play of particular 'games of truth and error through which being is historically constituted as experience; that is, as something that can and must be thought. We are the 'games of truth by which man proposes to think of his own nature when he perceives himself to be' (Foucault, 1987, p.7) a subject of a kind. Moreover, following Foucault the process of subjectification is inextricably connected with the workings of power. While seeing power in dispersed and diffused forms Foucault (1982) suggests that each time a form of power is necessarily present in the making of subjects. He refers to the meaning of the notion of subject itself as either 'subject to someone else by control and dependence' or 'tied to his own identity by a conscience of self-knowledge,' commenting that 'both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to' (Foucault, 1982, p.12). Youdell (2006) refers to this dual process through which the person is constituted 'in and by' discourse as bounding individuals although allowing space for 'doing otherwise'. Youdell comments that in Foucault's work individuals are 'subject by and subject to discursive relations of disciplinary power, but being such a subject s/he can also engage self-consciously in practices that might make her/him differently. The subject acts, but s/he acts within the limits of subjectivation' (2006, p.42). She thus indicates how Foucault's tools allow an understanding of transformative possibilities along

with attending the tentative constraints embedded in the process of subjectification and in forms of selfhood.

For Foucault the subject is not a substance, it is rather a form that is constituted 'through a certain number of practices which were games of truth, applications of power etc.' (Foucault, 1994, p.10). Foucault is not interested in developing a theory of the subject. Seeing the subject in terms of a form where games of truth, regimes of knowledge and applications of power are articulated he focuses on the 'analysis of the relationships which can exist between the constitution of the subject or different forms of the subject and games of truth, practices of power and so forth' (Foucault, 1994, p.10). Only in his later work (1987; 1988) does he become involved in the study of technologies of the self. Although the problematic of the subject and the question of how the subject enters games of truth is evident throughout the course of his work, it is only in his late works that he becomes interested in subjectification, 'no longer, through the divisions [...] but rather, through the putting in the place and the transformations in our culture, of the "relations with oneself", with their technical armature and their knowledge effects' (Foucault, 1982, p.88).

Overall, the concept of technologies provides access to 'reflections on modes of living, on choices of existence, on the way to regulate one's behaviour, to attach oneself to ends and means' (Foucault, 2000, p.89). Technologies enable us to think about the process of subjectification as one where games of truth, applications of power and techniques of living are articulated. Therefore, it makes it possible to think of 'the government of the self by oneself in its articulation with relation with others' (Foucault, 2000, p.88). Furthermore, technologies enable us to grasp subjectification in a positive fashion, through individuals' practices; practices that are related to care for the self, techniques of living, desire and pleasure. Nevertheless, it has to be stressed that these practices are not 'something invented by the individual himself. They are models that he finds in his culture, his society and are proposed, imposed, upon him by his culture, his society, and his social group' (Foucault, 1994, p.11). These practices are to be found in immediate everyday practices. Tamboukou (1999) comments that technologies of the self are 'integrated with various types of attitudes'

and are therefore 'difficult to recognize and set apart from everyday experiences' (Tamboukou 1999, p.136).

*Stuart Hall: Identification*

Hall traces the journey of the concept of identity through time and across different disciplines. The main division that he makes is between what he calls the 'old logics of identity' and new ones. The latter refers to a rediscovery and repositioning of the notion, which points towards thinking of it in a 'new decentred and displaced position' (Hall, 2000, p.16). Below, I briefly refer to the old conceptualisations of identity as a starting point in order to present how its logics, according to Hall, have been altered and repositioned.

Following Hall (1991) philosophy and psychology constitute fields where such 'old logics of identity' have primarily been developed. In philosophical terms such perspectives saw the subject as 'the origin of being itself, the ground of action' (Hall, 1991, p.42). According to this view there is an internal, stable origin of identity, a core self which is played out in different contexts. This internal core works as a force of stability since it stands above change and maintains the internal balance and unity of the self. The psychological perspectives supplementing such a philosophical position make sense of the subject as a 'continuous, self-sufficient, developmental, unfolding, inner dialectic of selfhood' (ibid, p.42). In both cases the individual is approached as stable and unified.

According to Hall (1991), these conceptions of identity became fragile as their ground became challenged by the rise of perspectives that directed their focus upon social contexts. As a result there has been a decentring of thought in the conceptualisation of subjects through highlighting the socially constructed aspects of subjectivity. Hall (1991) indicates the Marxist gaze as highlighting the importance of the broader economic and social processes, Sigmund Freud as questioning and exploring the function of the unconscious, and Saussure as showing the culturally-historically mediated character of language which is spoken by the subject as well as speaking them (by positioning and defining subjects). The development of such perspectives was followed by broader paradigm shifts that questioned not only

identity but also key features of modernity itself. Hall (2000) talks about the deconstructive approach and its contribution to problematising the concept of identity, while also arguing for the necessity of keeping the concept within the vocabulary of the social sciences.

For Hall, identity is one of those notions that has 'not been suspended dialectically and there are no other entirely different concepts with which to replace them' (Hall, 2000, p.15). Furthermore, identity is considered to be central in allowing us to pose important research questions. Hall (2000) explains that the irreducibility of the concept rests on the fact that it constitutes the site that links the individual and the social and points to 'its centrality to the question of agency and politics' (p.16). Even though it is essential to keep the notion of identity in the theoretical vocabulary of the social sciences Hall (2000) stresses that it is equally necessary to think of it in a deconstructed and de-totalised way (p.15-16).

Along with discussing the formation of new theoretical spaces within which identity is approached Hall (1991) also refers to changing economic and political processes. In particular, he suggests that the workings of globalisation and the re-alignment of global and local forces bring about a weakening of grand social identities as unified and unifying totalities, as 'large-scale, all-encompassing, homogenous, unified collective identities' (Hall, 1991, p.42). In his understanding, contemporary identities are not simply given, they are not simply to be taken up, but require the active engagement of individuals in their making. Additionally, according to the new logics, identity is an open-ended and continuous process of construction (Hall, 2000, p.16). In other words, identity is not an object that individuals possess which turns them into a social subject. It constitutes a never-ending process since individuals are involved in a continuous process of constructing and reconstructing their identity. Hall uses the term identification in order to highlight such continuity.

**Research Design**

So far I have discussed the object of my research as well as elaborating upon the broader inquiry of my study. I have presented the 'method' that I am experimenting with and elucidated the epistemological principles on which I draw in order to

develop my project. I have presented and talked about method in Pierre Bourdieu's terms, that is, considering it as a lot more than a set of techniques. I regard method as all-encompassing, as a gaze, a manner, a certain type of predisposition. After framing the epistemological ground of my study I introduced the main frameworks that I deploy as analytical lenses: Bourdieu's habitus, Foucault's technologies of the self and Hall's identification. These are working concepts as well as distinctive lenses (Ball, 1994) through which I will explore the data. Below I develop further my discussion of method by specifying the scope of my research, as well as outlining the design of the project, the instruments and the research techniques employed.

I describe my project as comprising two dimensions. First, I carry out a kind of multi-perspectival research by drawing on three frameworks and working with multiple analytical spectacles. I describe this task as experimentation with method, which involves experimenting with the use of theory in research as well as experimenting with the interpretive horizons that different concepts allow in the exploration of a set of data. All these elements are driven by Bourdieu's reflexive sociological practice. Second, I describe my study as exploratory research into youth identities and forms of youth experience. While considering youth as an internally differentiated group, I focus on what has been constructed in youth research as the 'silenced majority' of 'ordinary kids'. The quest here is to explore subjective experiences of youth along with capturing their 'struggles for subjectivity' (MacDonald, 1999).

Throughout the literature review I sketch an approach to youth by drawing on contemporary theorisations and redefinitions. I therefore illustrate a conceptualisation of youth as a phase that is currently extended in terms of time and is often divided into different sub-phases, such as early adolescence, post-adolescence, young adulthood and so on. I also refer to youth by understanding it less in terms of a transitional phase, that is, a phase that mediates childhood and adulthood, and see it rather as an autonomous phase that has progressively acquired autonomous status. I describe youth as a phase of ambiguous dependency that involves mixed patterns of education and employment and different forms of housing and living arrangements. Alongside current redefinitions of youth I also discus research that challenges the unity of youth as a social group and highlights the class-defined, gendered and

ethnically, as well as spatially and temporally, diversified forms of youth experience. I refer to voices that point out the usefulness of researching youth as a social group for certain types of enquiry, for example, the social policy research agenda. While acknowledging the usefulness of the term I ally myself with approaches that argue for setting the term youth in brackets and highlight its internal diversity. As already noted, this definition also indicates a certain direction for my research by signifying the need to unpack and explore youth.

Following Bourdieu, the appropriate research method is the one that 'fits the problem at hand' and is, at the same time, 'constantly reflected upon'. The starting point of my enquiry is to 'document the world from the point of view of the people studied' (Hammersley, 1992, p.165). I am interested in mapping out 'ordinary youth' experiences and capturing moments in the on-going process of identity formation. At the same time, I treat these qualitative documentations as raw materials through which the habituses, identifications and technologies of the self may be glimpsed and interrogated. It must be emphasised that this kind of work is far from what Dale calls 'theoretical painting by numbers' (Dale, 1992). Dale refers to a process of evocation whereby researchers call forth certain theories, concepts or perspectives. This attitude consists of prompting concepts and seeking to reaffirm theories within the data. Here I will be particularly cautious of what Dale (1992) describes as 'theory by numbers' and will not reduce my task to seeking to spot and prompt habituses, technologies of the self or identifications.

My research elicits youth narratives of the self, thus providing the kind of research material that allows me to accommodate the dual focus of my study and deal with my enquiries. Bamberg and McCabe (1998) suggest that 'with narrative[s], people strive to configure space and time, deploy cohesive devices, reveal identity of actors and relatedness of action across scenes. They create themes, plots, and drama. In so doing narrators make sense of themselves, social situations, and history' (Bamberg & McCabe, 1998, p.iii). Following Bamberg and McCabe (1998), such narratives grant me access to young people's practices and accounts of practice. Here I make sense of narratives in a rather loose sense, considering them as conveying pragmatic accounts of young people's lived experiences constructed through and with familiar tropes, clichés and genres. Moreover, considering Somers' (1994) narrative

approach to identity 'it is through narratives and narrativity that we constitute our social identities [...] all of us come to be who we are (however ephemeral, multiple and changing) by being located or locating ourselves in social narratives' (p.606). Even so, I expect that narratives will allow me to glimpse young people's 'struggles for subjectivity' (MacDonald, 1999), as well as providing me with some sense of their subjective experiences of youth. Young people's narratives form the kinds of data that will provide me with qualitative and detailed insights appropriate to the purposes of the present research.

As indicated, I consider individual narratives of the self as illustrative or explicative of broader social workings. Here I draw on Andrews' (2006) discussion of narratives as being apt for the exploration of broader social workings and of elements of social change. Andrews (2006) particularly refers to C. W. Mills' suggestion that social researchers need to 'continually work out and revise' their 'views of the problems of history, the problems of biography and the problems of social structure in which biography and history intersect' (Mills, 1959, p.225 cited in Andrews, 2006, p.491). In a similar view, Apfelbaum (2000) claims that 'the singularity of experience offers one of the possible ways to confront the universal' (2000, p.174 cited in Andrews, 2006, p.491). Bourdieu has also argued that 'narratives about the most "personal" difficulties, the apparently most strictly subjective tensions and contradictions, frequently articulate the deepest structures of the social world and their contradictions' (Bourdieu, 1999, p.511). In this light I regard youth narratives of the self as sites where the personal and the social intersect. Thus, I understand young people's stories as incorporating wider social workings as well as being illustrative of more widely shared types of youth experience.

In the review of youth literature I refer to voices that challenge certain representations of youth while highlighting their implications within public discourse. I discuss Kelly's (2000) work which problematises constructions of youth by pointing out their regulating power, their normalisation effects and their work towards cultivating more acceptable behaviours and constructing more 'appropriate' discursive subject positions. I conclude with the need to be constantly mindful of the effects of representation, as well as incorporating this concern in all the phases of the research process. In terms of method, such problematisations indicate the need to

adopt more democratic and participatory research techniques. Taking seriously these critical remarks also signals the need to make explicit the relations between the voices of the research participant and the interpretation of the researcher, as well as reflect on the implications of research for young people.

Since the focus of my research is upon individual experiences and subjective accounts of practice, young people's narratives are elicited via individual semi-structured interviews. According to Seale (1998), semi-structured interviews offer greater power to the interviewee and allow her/him to co-formulate the topics, to define what is relevant and to influence the sequence. It is a technique that leaves more space for the determination of the agenda by the participant (p.205). Bryman (2001) suggests, perhaps rather too blithely, that semi-structured interviews 'allow genuine access to the world-views of members of a social setting or of people sharing common attributes' (p.317). Cohen, et al. (2000) see it as a useful method in order to 'view situations through the eyes of the participants, to catch their intentionality and their interpretations and their meaning systems of frequently complex situations' (p.291). I regard semi-structured interviews as a technique that is directive and purposeful but which also leaves space for young people to voice their concerns and individual experiences.

Beyond the consideration of the interview as a research technique I also consider the interview as an event in itself. I see it as a social encounter and a social interaction with its own inherent dynamics. I draw on Mishler's (1986) account of the interview as a conversation during which two parties are engaged in an on-going negotiation of meaning, or as Reissman (1993) puts it, a relational world of 'telling and listening'. From such a standpoint an interview is a social interaction that takes place within the context of a certain space and time. Fontana and Fray (2003) suggest that it is time for social researchers to understand interviews in terms of 'practical production, the meaning of which is accomplished as the intersection of the interviewer and respondent' (p.92). This introduces a dynamic character to the process. It also entails a degree of unpredictability since interviews involve constant negotiation, uncertain balances and unpredictable outcomes. From this standpoint interviewees are seen and acknowledged as active participants. This in turn indicates that the interviewer needs to be ready to negotiate and stand back from her initial

plans, to adopt a more open, flexible and less controlling or imposing attitude. Here I am also aware of the tentative limits of this approach as these are questioned and problematised by Parkes (2010). Parkes (2010) critically discusses how a hands-off approach might not be the best strategy for all types of youth research. She suggests that in some types of enquiry the sanitisation of the research relationship might not be the best strategy and allowing and contesting the occurrence of symbolic violence could prove a more ethical stance. Nevertheless in the context of my research, such an approach to interviewing crystallises more horizontal forms of communication and involves the 'establishment of a human-to-human relation with the respondent and the desire to understand rather than to explain' (ibid, p.75), as Fontana and Fray (2003) describe it.

Nevertheless, interviewing is a purposefully designated process and signifies a given form of interaction, which is far from the ordinary, everyday practice of young people. In this sense young people narrate themselves in purposive ways that are constructed as valid and meaningful responses to the particular research inquiry. The outcomes of the interview are not only co-constructed, mutually negotiated and therefore relational constructs, but they are also teleological. In this respect youth narratives of the self that are generated through the interviews have to be read as offering partial, context-specific and arbitrary insights into forms of youth experience. Accordingly, youth narratives are only likely to capture one single moment in a dynamic, open-ended and on-going process of identity formation. I understand young people's narrative accounts of youth as a set of stills, that is, as transient and temporary articulations that are open to change.

There are several ethical issues to be considered and reflected upon in the research design. Since the object of enquiry, through interviews, is to elicit young people's narratives of the self there is a high degree of involvement in personal issues and an 'intimate engagement with private lives' (Silverman, 1998, p.201). The process of interviewing involves young people's exposure to the stranger-researcher. On the one hand, this indicates a need to be highly sensitive to issues of anonymity and confidentiality, as well as obtaining young people's informed consent before proceeding with the interviews. On the other hand, it requires an awareness of the 'asymmetry of power' (Kvale, 1996, p.20) that marks the process of in-depth

interviewing. Dealing with this entails increased vigilance, the careful management of my reactions and responses to what is being said, as well as cautiousness with respect to the language I use during interviews. My aim is to make the interviews productive and constructive for the research purposes while at the same time ensuring that they are enjoyable experiences for the interviewees.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2008) suggest that providing information about a study involves a careful balance between giving too much detailed information and leaving out aspects of the design that may be significant to the participants (p.71). In the case of this study things are relatively straightforward with respect to the design and aims of the research project. My aim is to elicit youth narratives of the self. Therefore, the primary aim of the data collection process is to make young people feel comfortable enough to open up and talk freely and unhesitatingly about their lived experiences of youth. It is necessary to provide the young participants with as much information as possible about the research project, its aim and scope, as well as the interview process and the use of the data. Informed consent applies to both young people's participation in the research project and my access to their contact details. Issues of anonymity and confidentiality are also particularly relevant and should be given consideration here. I have ensured that the data will remain anonymous and that personal information will not be disclosed and that it will only be accessible to me. Considering Parker (2005), anonymity can protect the participants, but it can also deny them 'the very voice in the research that might originally have been claimed as its aim (Parker 2005, p.17). In the case of my study I will need to explain to young people how I am going to use the data, that is to say, how I will go about analysing and publishing the data. I will also have to clarify the ways in which I intend to use anonymous extracts from their interview transcripts and details from their background information.

The interview process is expected to be an unusual experience for young Greeks since qualitative educational research is not well established and does not have a long tradition in Greece. The dominance of quantitative methods in educational research has established common-sense notions in relation to the techniques that are employed, such as surveys and questionnaires. Therefore, in the design of the research it must be taken into consideration that young people are not familiar with being interviewed for research purposes. This can work as a factor of discomfort and

hesitation or it can attract young people's curiosity and interest. In any case, this is an issue that should not be ignored and which signifies a need to familiarise people with a particular process and make them feel comfortable enough to open up and enjoy it. The space and the setting of the interview can also play a catalytic role in this process. Riessman (2008) discusses how the interview context influences the process of telling and listening, suggesting that 'physical spaces can open up or close down discursive spaces' (p.154). Consequently, the interview setting must be neutral and the interviewee must feel as secure and comfortable as possible.

Regarding the possible effects of the interview process I will take into account Denzin's suggestion that these interactional moments 'leave marks on people's lives [and] have the potential for creating transformational experiences for the person' (Denzin, 1989, p.15 cited in Fontana & Fray, 2003, p.81). All of the above information, along with the approach of the interview-as-event delineated earlier, signifies to me the need to develop a form of interaction based on a more mutual relationship. In other words, one that leaves space and power for the interviewee to control the process and one that is less exploitative in nature and feels more like a friendly encounter. Taking these remarks seriously, my aim has been to try and make the event a positive, pleasant and enjoyable experience for the participants.

**The Research Participants**

As noted earlier, the specific focus of my research, as much as the epistemological and methodological standing, frames my decisions regarding defining the research design and making choices in terms of research techniques. In the literature review I explain my decision to focus my interest upon what has been constructed in the field of youth studies as 'mainstream youth' or 'ordinary kids' (Brown, 1987). Therefore, the participants of my research are young people who participate in post-compulsory education. In particular, I will focus on young people in their last year of post-compulsory secondary education. This constitutes a transitional point in young people's lives where they are possibly asked to think of themselves and their lives or invited to make choices. Consequently, I anticipate that issues around the formation of identity or their 'struggles for subjectivity', as MacDonald (1999) puts it, will

possibly be more relevant or discernible at this transitional point in young people's lives.

The other big decision that I had to make in relation to research design was the geographical and spatial framing of my sample. I decided to interview young people who reside in my country of origin, namely, Greece. This has to do with the specific requirements of my research inquiry and my concern with enhancing the 'telling and hearing' of the interview process. On the one hand, a well-engaged interview event requires establishing excellent relationships, developing links and opening up channels of communication with young people. In this case a language barrier could work as a disabling or limiting force acting against effective communication. Moreover, an enhanced 'hearing' of young people's stories requires a prior and deep understanding of the particularities of the cultural context, in particular its historical development, everyday lifestyle habits, popular culture and both avant-garde trends and local cultural features. Therefore, the sampling choice is related to my endeavour to achieve a wider horizon for meaning making; in other words, my effort to increase possibilities for working on more sound interpretations.

In my research design unpacking and researching 'ordinary kids' (Brown, 1987) translates into including in the sample young people who are in the last year of post-compulsory secondary education. Education in Greece is compulsory for five to fifteen year olds. Compulsory secondary education includes *Gymnasio* (lower secondary general education) for young people of twelve to fifteen years of age. Post-compulsory secondary education includes Unified Lyceum, what has an academic orientation and offers general upper secondary education, and Technical/Vocational Lyceum, which offers vocational training. There are also evening secondary schools that offer lower and upper secondary education to meet the needs of young people who are already in paid employment. Secondary education is provided by both the public and private sectors. In the last year of Lyceum young people are asked to follow one of the following directions: the theoretical direction, the science direction or the technological direction. Each direction is related to certain study areas and allows students to access relevant university departments. Entrance to higher education institutions is based upon young people's results in the Panhellenic exams.

In my sample I include young people who attend state schools as well as young people who attend private schools. Moreover, the research participants come from both types of secondary educational institutions. That is, they are in the last year of the Unified Lyceum, which is academically oriented, or the Technical Vocational Lyceum, which has a vocational orientation. Finally, participants come from Athens, the capital of Greece, as well as from Corinth, a small town to the south of Athens. These two areas were chosen on the basis of feasibility since I have strong personal networks in both places, which I used in order to recruit my research participants. I will refer to some background details regarding the education system as well as the characteristics of the geographical areas where my participants reside later on in the analytical chapters.

For the recruitment of research participants I adopted a snowball method. I started by first identifying a small number of young people who I could easily access via friends, relatives and other acquaintances. At the same time, these young people met the criteria of my research. These initial participants were then 'used to bring me in contact others who qualified for inclusion and these identified others – hence the term snowball sampling' (Cohen, et al., 2000, p.104). The constitution of the sample is presented in the tables below:

Table 1. The Research Participants

**Athens**

|  | Unified Lyceum (State School) | Technical Lyceum (State School) | Unified Lyceum (Private School) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Girls | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| Boys | 4 | 2 | 1 |

**Corinth**

|  | Unified Lyceum (State School) | Technical Lyceum (State School) | Unified Lyceum (Private School) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Girls | 9 | 2 | 5 |
| Boys | 7 | 5 | 4 |

## Data Collection

The interviews were based on an interview schedule in the form of a topic guide (Appendix I). According to Seale (1998), the logic that informs such a technique is that each interviewee is encouraged to talk about relatively similar topics. It works as a facilitator for the interviewer since it includes a list of topics that the researcher can refer to as the interview proceeds (Seale, 1998, p.206). The topic guide that I developed for the needs of the interview was very broad and included a wide range of themes since my intention was to offer young people the opportunity to talk about as many aspects of their lives as possible. The interviewees were asked to introduce themselves, talk about a typical day in their lives, about their school and more broadly, about education, their family and friends, as well as intimate relationships and leisure. I deployed the interview guide in a very loose way and only referred to it to start the conversations or whenever I felt that the interview was waning. I was particularly conscious of what Riessman has described as an effort 'to give-up communicative power and follow participants down their diverse trails' (Riessman, 2003, p.332). As I will discuss later on, conducting a pilot study proved particularly useful in familiarising me with the interview guide and allowing me to develop confidence in working with it 'in the field'. During the main data collection process I was therefore confident in using the topic guide only loosely and was more responsive to the flow of the conversation as it developed in each specific case. All of the conversations were recorded.

The data collection was conducted in two phases. The first included a pilot study and the second formed the main data collection process. Conducting a pilot study was a significant part of my research in that it allowed me to improve the research tools deployed, as well as helping me to enhance my own 'talking and listening' skills and reduce the 'gap between the theory and practice of qualitative inquiries' (Wiesenfeld, 2000). My quest was to maximise an interviewee's space for defining the content of our interactions in order to allow their actual concerns to be expressed and voices to be heard. I expected that having the opportunity to try out the interview schedule would offer me insights into the ways in which young people engage with themes and afford me the opportunity to make observations as to whether

these are relevant to them. I hoped it would allow me to explore how comfortable they would feel with the process, whether it would trigger their interest and if it would work well in terms of eliciting a rounded view of their experiences. On the other hand, carrying out a pilot study was particularly useful in allowing me to reflect on my own research skills and throughout this process to try and incorporate reflexivity into my intuitive research practice. It was also an opportunity for me to obtain experience in engaging with young people, thus establishing relationships of trust and opening up spaces of mutual understanding.

The pilot study was conducted during January and February of 2005. The interviewees were three boys and three girls in the last year of secondary education. They were all between 17 and 18 years old and all lived in Corinth, a small town south of Athens. Four of them attended a General Unified Lyceum and two of them went to the Technical Vocational Lyceum. One was from a private school while the rest were all state-school educated. The sample did not fully meet all the inclusion criteria and therefore cannot be considered as fully representative. The basic criterion according to which I chose the research participants for the pilot study was formed in terms of access. All the interviews lasted approximately one hour and were recorded.

My initial involvement in fieldwork proved to be a particularly exciting and useful experience. Not only did I have the opportunity to put into practice my research tools and develop my interviewing technique, but I was also introduced to what Parker (2005) refers to as the 'interactional troubles' of qualitative research interviewing. Throughout the pilot I familiarised myself with the unexpected particulars of the field. Each interview was a different event, entailing different dynamics and a fresh negotiation of meanings, or in Mishler's terms, it was a unique 'relational world of telling and listening' (Mishler, 1986). Overall, the pilot offered me the opportunity to gather feedback on the interview guide as well as allowing me to reflect on my 'listening and telling' skills. In relation to the former after the first few interviews I found out that the interview schedule was effective for eliciting young people's rounded descriptions of everyday lives, habits, school experiences and leisure but that it was less adequate in obtaining insights on their reflections. Here I was aware that young people's descriptions of practice are nothing but already interpreted experiences and therefore constitute interpretations of practice.

Nevertheless, I wanted to obtain further details on their accounts of practice. To this end I slightly modified the interview guide and, more specifically, I modified my tactics. To be precise, I used the schedule in a more flexible way to allow the flow of narration to flourish rather than intervening in order to stir the conversation and ensure that all the topics were covered. Additionally, at the beginning of the pilot study I arranged two interviews in a row and allowed 1 hour and 30 minutes for each. I realised that young people wanted to have some time to talk freely before and after the interview, in order to get to know more about my project and familiarise themselves with the interview setting. I found that having a time limit appeared to set certain restrictions on this type of interaction. From that point onwards I ensured that I allow plenty of time before and after the interview, as well as between different interviews.

The main data collection process was conducted in the period between March and July 2005. I interviewed 49 young people in total, 26 girls and 23 boys, as presented in Table 1. As already noted, I followed a snowball method by starting off with young people that I had easy access to. At the end of each interview I would ask the interviewee to provide me with more contacts when possible. In most of the cases I would ask young people to make the first contact and introduce me to the other potential interviewees before I contacted them directly. After making sure that the young people were positively inclined towards participating in the research I would contact them myself and give them the full information about the project and the particulars of the interview process, as well as elaborating upon my role and background. I also explained how they could contribute to the research, as well as reassuring them as to the anonymity and confidentiality of the data. Before asking young people to volunteer I made sure I had answered any questions they had. One basic concern at this stage was ensuring that I was not putting too much pressure on them. Each time I made sure that I allowed enough time for them to think about the project, as well as allowing them space to turn down my call.

All the interviews lasted for an hour or more and were recorded. I was careful to make sure that the setting of the interview was comfortable, friendly and relaxed. Since the synonym of catching up with friends for young Greeks is going 'for coffee at the local square' in most of the cases I arranged for the interviews to be held around

local cafes at their local square. Here interviews were conducted over coffee and (most of the time) cigarettes. In all of the cases I made sure the young people would not incur travel expenses or the costs of beverages. During the pilot interviews I found that usually the conversation would go on after the end of the interview 'off the record'. The young people would ask more questions about me, my research project, my studies, life in London and so on. I therefore found it useful during the main data collection process to allow some time for discussion before and after the actual interview. This gave me the opportunity to talk to the young people freely and to allow them time to ask questions and raise issues, as well as getting them to meet me and spend some time together off the record so as to familiarise themselves with the idea of the interview. At the end of the interviews I always asked for their reflections and ideas as to how I could modify and improve the whole process. Before each interview I explained to the young people how I intended to work with their interview transcripts and publish the data. They all appeared to be happy about it. The fact that the publications would address mainly academic audiences predominantly outside of Greece seemed to ease any reservations they may have had in terms of being identifiable through the data published.

Throughout the interviews I was very conscious of the way I presented myself as a researcher to the research participants in addition to the ways in which I entered our conversations and interactions. I tried to present myself in the least possible assertive and authoritative manner, allowing young people the space to define and position me in the interactional event. Some young participants saw me as a student struggling to carry out my doctoral study and felt like offering me their help. Others seemed to project themselves into my position some years from now. In several cases they went on asking me details about the course and the funding opportunities available and so on. Others saw the interview as an opportunity to talk to an adult person about their lives and plans, and in some cases they asked for feedback or my opinion on their stories. Overall, although the different participants seemed to understand the interview event in different ways they all engaged well and opened up throughout our conversations. The presence of a tape recorder seemed to put some of the participants off at first sight. Some participants expressed their discomfort at the sight of the device despite being reassured of the anonymity and confidentiality of the

data. In these cases I offered them the alternative of either taking notes or trying to leave the recorder somewhere not directly visible; I would then check if that would work better for them. In all the cases the initial reservation with respect to the tape recorder was over after the first couple of minutes of the interview.

**Working with the Data: Transcribing, Coding Analysing**

> Qualitative data analysis is a process of organizing and sorting data in light of your increasingly sophisticated judgments, that is, of the meaning – finding interpretations that you are learning to make about the shape of your study.
>
> (Glesne and Pershkin, 1992, p.128)

According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992) data analysis includes all the phases of the research project after the data collection. The process of data analysis involves converting data from one form into another, making choices and decisions as to what to include and what to leave aside, identifying the links between the data and the object of enquiry. Upon the completion of the interviews I gathered my research material and started transcribing the recorded conversations. Cohen, et al. (2000) emphasise that transcription is a medium between interview-as-event and a text, so it is a lot more than a technical process of transforming information from oral to written form. In principle it is a process for the reduction of a social encounter into an analytic text. Cohen, et al. (2000) stress that the process of transcription entails a loss of data and signifies their change in terms of state; hence it cannot but be selective. From this point of view the authors see the transcripts as 'anything but already interpreted data' (p.281). I carried out all the transcriptions myself, which allowed me to have greater control over what is excluded as well as ensuring that there are no omissions in the transcripts. Along with transcribing I also made side notes on each transcribed interview stating my impressions and highlighting information that I obtained prior to the interview or after it.

I started off by transcribing the first ten randomly chosen interviews. I worked with those ten transcripts in my first attempts to code the data. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that

> The field site emits a continuous stream of leads, mysteries, themes and contradictions that need to be pursued which never fit perfectly into a coding scheme [...]. Coding is a way of forcing you to understand what is still unclear, by putting names to incidents and events trying to cluster them, communicating enveloping concepts against another wave of observation and conversations. (p. 63)

Miles and Huberman (1994) stress the complex and sometimes fuzzy and contradictory character of the collected data and see coding in terms of an attempt to pin down and order this complicated amount of information by developing categories and thematic units. This then is a process of clarifying and understanding, of making sense of the data and articulating meanings and connections. Furthermore, Glesne and Peshkin (1992) illustrate the process of coding as a 'progressive process of sorting and defining and sorting the (various elements of the) collected data that are applicable to the purpose of the research. By putting like-minded pieces together into data clumps we create an organisational framework' (p.133). The authors point out how a coding frame is progressively developed, that is, starting from wider categories within which, progressively, several sub-categories and thematic units are formed. These are brought together and set 'in a meaningful sequence that contributes to the chapters or sections of our manuscript' (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p.133).

Out of the initial coding I expected to develop a loose and flexible set of codes and obtain some insights into the material that would further help me in 'choosing analytical emphasis' (Carspecken, 1996, p.151). With this providing me with a broad, although raw, view of the data I expected to start developing orientations and ideas regarding the organisation of my analysis. I did the coding in a traditional way, that is, by hand and using coloured pens. I practised what Bryman (2001) calls 'open coding' (Bryman, 2001, p.392) since the codes were developed through readings and re-readings of the transcripts. In the process of coding I was interested in both the 'whats' and the 'hows', as Seale (1998) describes it. In other words, I focused on the issues that young people talk about in their narratives, as well as the ways in which

they narrate themselves. Consequently, I ended up with a set of codes or more specifically, a set of 'labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during the study' (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.56). This frame or set of codes is regarded as being 'in a constant state of potential fluidity and revision' (Bryman, 2001, p.392).

After coding the first ten interviews and developing a loose coding framework I obtained an initial and broad, albeit raw, view of the data. This guided me in making decisions about the way I organised and structured the analysis of the main study. I ended up with a map presenting a raw preliminary structure of the analysis (Preliminary Map of Analysis). In particular, the analysis of the main study was organised around my key concepts (habitus, technologies and identification) and the analytical areas that I saw opening up as I explored the data. While working on the data to formulate a coding frame I distanced myself from practising what Dale (1992) describes as 'theory by numbers'. As Ball (1995) comments, such an attitude involves no more than 'a mantric reaffirmation of belief', a mere 'naming of the spaces', a colouring in of the map rather than an exploration and research of it (Ball, 1995, p.269). Conscious of Ball's (1995) and Dale's remarks I worked with the concepts to interrogate young narratives of the self. After an initial open coding of the data I started off by reading the coded data along with the concept of habitus in order to identify the interpretive possibilities that it allowed. I would then shift towards reading the coded data alongside Foucault's technologies of the self and finally I moved onto Hall's standpoint in order to read the coded data in light of the concept of identifications.

Throughout this process I developed analytical maps, thus illustrating the form and structure in which data could be analysed and systematised. These maps were changed and shifted throughout my engagement with the data. Indicatively, I present the first map below (Preliminary Map of Analysis), which I developed out of reading and coding the first ten transcripts. I then include the map representing the final form of my analysis. Each of these three concepts allows me to dig into different aspects of the data. For example, working with Foucault's technologies of the self allows me to throw light on the division between public and private life. It also directs me towards exploring the temporal dimensions of youth selfhood, which I finally decided to

follow up. I have chosen to include these cases and respective extracts in the analytical chapters which, in my opinion, illustrate in clear ways the points I want to make, as well as providing a fair representation of the diversity of the data.

According to Denzin (1995) and Kvale (1996) transcripts, as all other forms of text, are open to multiple alternative readings and reinterpretations with every fresh reading. In the following page I include the preliminary map of analysis, which was based on the transcription and coding of the first ten interviews. I also present the map of the final analysis (Final Map of Analysis) in order to allow the reader a glimpse of the different possibilities that each of the concepts offers, as well as the ways in which my work with these concepts and the data has evolved.

My analysis, which is laid out in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, draws on 13 youth narratives of the self. The choice of these particular narratives out of the total sample was another step in the process of ordering the data and hence another step in reducing their multiplicity and complexity. The dual object of my study, as I have described it so far, further complicated my decision. My aim was to present the data and put together my arguments in a way that reflected my endeavour to produce a multi-perspectival account of youth experience, as well as providing some initial insights on what it means to be young in Greece in the 2000s. I therefore tried to organise the discussion in a way that indicated openness to the experiences constructed throughout youth narratives, while also identifying interconnections with Bourdieu's, Foucault's and Hall's concepts. In choosing these 13 narratives I tried to balance between presenting emerging aspects of 'ordinary' youth experience and discussing the analytical horizons of the different analytical concepts. I therefore decided to include those narratives that vividly illustrated interconnections with these concepts, while also conveying shared experiences, that is, forms of youth experience that were also identified in other interviews.

**Preliminary Map for the Analysis**
**Based on the transcription and coding of the first 10 interviews**

**Habitus**

- Young people's career aspirations and imagined futures

- Being positioned within/ outside the logic of practice

- Reflexivity and threads of habitus

**Technologies**

Private sphere (the private self): *Family life*: young people experiences of parenting technologies and forms of governmentality

*Personal/private life*: subjects of love and sexuality

Public sphere: *social life*: leisure activities, forms of freedom/ forms of regulation/ visibility-invisibility in the public domain

*School life:* last year of secondary education, plans, preparations, care for the self as a subject in transition

**Identification**

- Forms of engagement/ relations with others

- Making up the self, points of reference/ frames of reference. Issues of identification/ distance, cognition/ norms etc.

- Narratives of the self: sources/ horizons/worlds represented. Issues of coherence/disruption etc,

**Final Map of Analysis**
**Based on all the coded interview transcripts**

| Bourdieu – Habitus |
|---|

Habitual inclinations in accordance with field
➢ Reflexive biographies
➢ Loose engagement with pathways/'un-reflexive narrative'

Interrupted Habitus
➢ In search for the self
➢ Increased reflexivity – socio-analysis – divided habitus

| Foucault – Technologies of the self |
|---|

Temporisation of youth self – social time
      1) Future focused temporalities
          Maximising time
          Accumulative time

      2) Present focused temporalities
          Extended resent
          Routinized/habitualised time

| Hall – Identification |
|---|

Multiple positioning – multiple identifications: intersections – ambiguities
      1) Young females' narratives of the self
          Gender – class – ethnicity – age identifications

      2) Young males' narratives of the self
          Class – gender – age identifications

## Summary

I describe my project primarily in terms of experimentation with theory and method and also as exploratory research into 'ordinary youth'. Following Bourdieu's epistemological problematisations of the limits of theoretical knowledge, my object is first and foremost the implementation of a certain method that draws upon Bourdieu's reflexive sociological practice. My task is to work with different concepts and experiment with the different interpretive possibilities each of these concepts to open up the exploration of youth narratives. In addition, I aim to unpack and explore the diversity of 'ordinary' youth experience. I have introduced the three frameworks that I draw upon and presented Bourdieu's concept of habitus, Foucault's concept of technologies of the self and Hall's concept of identification. I discuss each concept as emanating from a wider framework or model and clarify some of the ways in which I utilise them as analytical tools. The method I practice throughout this study is distanced from theoretical eclecticism and stands against claims to neutrality. As highlighted, I refer to method in Bourdieu's terms, that is, in terms of a manner and a certain form of sociological practice. In this respect, methodological choices, theoretical leanings and research techniques are understood as interrelated and constitutive of one another.

Taking on board those voices that problematise youth research in terms of normalising effects and their implications for regulating youth, this also indicates the need to develop a highly reflexive attitude towards research. This concern is also reflected in my decisions with respect to research techniques and has reinforced my aim to 'give-up communicative power to the interviewees' in order to allow their voices to be heard. Additionally, the decisions concerning the design of my research have been made on the basis of accommodating the dual focus of my project. I regard youth narratives of the self as forming the types of data that will offer me insights into the diversity of youth experience, as well as allowing me to identify the workings of habitual dispositions, technologies of the self or identification processes. I elicit youth narratives of the self via in-depth individual interviews and consider them to be potentially illuminative of 'individual and collective action and meanings, as well as

the processes by which social life and human relationships are made and changed' (Laslett, 1999, p.392).

In the following chapters the analysis of the data is organised around the three main concepts that I deploy. While deploying the concept of habitus I will discuss young people's narratives of imagined futures. I will then shift to explore technologies of the self along with perceptions of social time. In doing so I will observe discursive temporalities, as well as exploring the temporal constitution of youth subjectivities. Finally, I will work with the concept of identification to look into multiple positionings by discussing identifications of gender, age, class and/or ethnicity. Following Rosaldo (1989), interpretations are provisional and therefore open to evolution and change with every fresh reading (p.8). Therefore, as I have already stressed, the analyses included in the next three chapters have to be read as comprising one of the possible forms that this study could potentially take.

# CHAPTER 3. HABITUS AND IMAGINED FUTURES

## Introduction

In this first analytical chapter focus is placed upon what Ball, et al. (2000) refer to as young people's imagined futures. I explore youth narratives of the self, deploying Bourdieu's concept of habitus, and look at young people's forms of engagement with issues of present and future pathways in education and/or employment. In particular, I explore the workings of habitus, considering it as part of Bourdieu's analytical model; I explore habitus in relation to field.

Besides Bourdieu's tools, in this analysis I also utilise Beck's and Giddens' reflexive modernisation theories. I particularly refer to their understanding of subjectivities and the formation of life pathways in this context. As I will explain, I understand late modern theorisations and Bourdieu's model as two sides of the same coin. I see the two approaches as sharing common concerns despite highlighting opposing social forces in their understanding of subjectification (among other themes). In this respect using Beck's and Giddens' theories as a counterpoint allows me to illustrate my argument in a more sophisticated way. In other words, I use theories of late modernity as a background against which I develop my analyses. This also allows me to think of individuals and the ways they are related to structural forces and their workings vis-à-vis the contextual specificities of their social positioning.

## Embodiment, Embeddedness and the Concept of Habitus

In the previous chapter I discuss Bourdieu's approach to the formation of subjectivity within the broader context of his work on the structuring of inequality and his model of cultural and symbolic reproduction. I refer to the concept of habitus as central to Bourdieu's epistemological problematisations, as well as his concern with thinking beyond fixed, given dualisms and focusing on interrelations. In Bourdieu's framework, which he describes as 'generative structuralism', the subject is an active

agent and the analytical focus is placed upon individuals' practices within the context of everyday life. Central to the constitution of subjectivity and the transcending of dualism between structure and agency lies the concept of habitus. It is through habitus that structure is embodied by individuals and becomes embedded in their practice.

Bourdieu's 'critical relation to intellectualism' and theoretical theory (Bourdieu, 1990b, p.22), as well as the close proximity of his concepts to the data, may possibly explain why one cannot find consistent and strict definitions of his conceptual artefacts throughout his writings (Ball, 2006). In his earlier works Bourdieu describes habitus as 'systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.53). There are several constitutive features of habitus brought together in the description above: its structured nature and structuring function, its unconscious workings, its endurance and constancy, its manifestation in practice. I will elaborate upon these points later on. Bourdieu's main focus is placed upon 'the homogeneity of habitus [...] what causes practices and works to be immediately intelligible and foreseeable, and hence taken for granted' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.58). In his later research Bourdieu (1999) placed much more emphasis on the role of improvisations in habitual dispositions. I will also pick up on this issue in the discussion below.

In Bourdieu's model social practice has an inherent logic that is related to processes of cultural reproduction. Social subjects have a 'sense' for acting within everyday life and this sense involves the manifestation and expression of habitus (Bourdieu, 1986). Habitus refers to principles associated with the material and symbolic conditions of existence that are embodied by individuals. These generate pre-dispositions and inclinations reconciled with the social conditions of their structuring (Bourdieu, 1986). In this sense habitus offers schemes of perception and works as a guiding force that stimulates and directs practice in embodied and unconscious ways. Bourdieu refers to habitus in terms of the 'un-chosen principle of so many choices' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p.14), as well as 'a spontaneity without

consciousness' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 56). Nevertheless, habitus is neither biological nor cognitive. As Leledakis (2006) highlights, habitus is prior to rules and norms and its workings are beyond intentions and conscious directions. That is, habitus is neither generated through genetic mechanisms nor is it the outcome of the assimilation of certain rules, that is, the harmonisation of practice with certain norms. The problematic of habitus directs analytical attention to the social level of social subjects' everyday practice and accounts of practice (Savage, 2000).

Throughout my analysis I will consider habitus as part of Bourdieu's broader interpretative scheme. In other words, although I will mainly work with the concept of habitus I will not extract it from the broader conceptual context in which it has been constructed, namely, the threefold construction *capital x field = habitus*. In the 'Rules of Art', Bourdieu (1996) describes the field as a 'domain of structured relations in social space with its own history and rules'. Furthermore, as Allan Warde (2004) highlights, the field constitutes an arena in which the capital is generated and strategies of distinction are developed (Bourdieu, 1996; Allan Warde, 2004).

In Bourdieu's framework habitus and field are mutually constitutive and closely interrelated. According to Bourdieu,

> The dispositions constituting the cultivated habitus are only formed, only function and are only valid in a field, in the relationship with a field which [...] is itself a 'field of possible forces', a 'dynamic situation', in which forces are only manifested in their relationship with certain dispositions. This is why the same practices may receive opposite meanings and values in different fields, in different configurations or in opposing sectors of the same field. (Bourdieu, 1986, p.94)

Following the above, habitus is relational. It is locally constructed within a certain field, entails the principles of this field and becomes meaningful within the specific conditions of this context. As Lawler puts it, habitus 'makes sense' only within the context of specific local contexts or 'fields' – the 'games' for which 'the rules of the game equip us' (Lawler, 2004, p.112). Movements of habitus to different fields through practice constitute 'dynamic situations' and they may produce, for example, the reinforcement, destabilisation or interruption of habitual inclinations (Reay, 2002).

Although Bourdieu's work pays more attention to the ways in which habitus matches with the field to reproduce classifications, in his later work he looks into the occupants' 'precarious positions' and explores the ways through which they develop reflexivity and become 'extraordinary practical analysts' (Bourdieu, 1999, p.511). While exploring social subjects occupying contradictory positions within social space he describes the ways that they obtain access to 'the objective contradictions which have them in grasp, and to the objective structures expressed in and by these contradictions' (Bourdieu, 1999, p.511). In this sense, in his later research Bourdieu (1999; 2005) pays close attention to different instances and forms of connection between habitus and field and explores the implications of such encounters for practice.

In the analysis of my data I attempt to deploy habitus both tightly and faithfully with respect to Bourdieu's broader framework, although loosely in relation to his own research focus. On the one hand, I regard habitus as linked to social hierarchies, as emerging out of strategies of capital accumulation and as defined in constant interaction with fields. On the other hand, I analyse youth narratives considering Bourdieu's latest suggestion that 'a true socio-genesis of the dispositions that constitute the habitus should be concerned with understanding how the social order collects, channels, reinforces or counteracts psychological processes depending on whether there is a homology, redundancy, and reinforcement between the two systems or, to the contrary, contradiction and tension' (Bourdieu, 1999, p.512). Drawing on Bourdieu's (1999; 2005) later research and on feminist research exploring the dynamics of habitus (Lawler, 2004; Reay, 2004; 2005) I explore young people's habitual encounters with a number of different fields.

**Theorisations of Late Modernity and Self-Identity: Reflexivity and Disembedding**

Throughout the analysis of imagined futures I mainly deploy the concept of habitus, regarding it as an integral part of Bourdieu's model of cultural reproduction. Nevertheless, I lay out the discussion of my data over and against Beck's and Giddens' theorisations of late modernity and self-identity. I consider the two approaches as sharing common enquiries although differing significantly in their

understanding of social workings. Bourdieu's set of analytical tools and Beck's and Giddens' theorisations of identity in late modern times are two different, albeit particularly influential, frameworks for the conceptualisation of subjectivity. As I discuss below, both accounts foreground a re-conceptualisation of subjectivity in the context of overcoming the dualism between structure and agency. In this sense they evolve around parallel objectives, although occupying opposing standpoints in their understanding of structural forces, their workings and their implications in the construction of contemporary identities and life pathways.

In some ways Bourdieu's framework and late modernity theories signify two sides of the same coin. Following Vandenberghe's (1999) suggestion that one should 'twist the stick in the other direction' (p.49), I seek to read Bourdieu through the spectacles of Giddens, that is, I intend to look into the points of youth narratives where the two standpoints come into opposition and explore them in detail. Therefore, using Beck's and Giddens' theorisations as my background my aim is to highlight and elucidate the points made through the deployment of Bourdieu's perspective. Below I introduce Beck's and Giddens' theorisations and subsequently discuss them in parallel with Bourdieu's respective concepts.

In the existing literature Beck's and Giddens' theories are very often discussed jointly and regarded as complementary. Beck and Giddens are thus referred to as 'late modernity' or 'third way' theorists. Beck's and Giddens' theorises share common features not only in the way that they perceive and describe social change but also in the way that they go about developing their theories. They both produce theories concerning social change that identify broad social tendencies and describe social phenomena in universal terms. As Savage (2000) puts it, they develop theories that intend to persuade at the level rhetorical battle. For the purposes of the analysis that follows I use their ideas on the formation of self-identity and the reflexive self as analytical tools and consider them as a background to my analyses. I am therefore aware that I perform something akin to a misuse here since I use their ideas for analytical purposes that they were not made for or intended to serve.

According to Giddens' theorisation of social change late modernity constitutes a distinctive phase marked by the weakening of tradition and structural forces within the broader context of globalisation and the realignment of the global and the local

dimensions that result from it. Within these conditions individuals project and mobilise themselves reflexively. While an 'indefinite range of potential courses of action (with their attendant risks) is at any given moment open to individuals and collectivities' (Giddens, 1991, p.28), individuals are asked to make choices for themselves on a day-to-day basis and decide on their trajectories. In this way individuals are involved in a continuous structuring and restructuring of themselves and their biographies. In this perspective 'we are, not what we are, but what we make of ourselves [...] what the individual becomes is dependent on the reconstructive endeavours in which she or he engages' (Giddens, 1991, p.75). Two crucial constitutive elements of this process are individual choice and reflexivity. These are also regarded as part of the ontology of late modernity.

In alignment with Giddens, Beck suggests that we live in a distinct phase that is framed by the fall of communist regimes and the globalisation of the economy. According to Beck, these social phenomena signify an 'increasing fragility of such categories as class and social status, gender roles, family, neighbourhood, etc.' (Beck, 1996, p.24). While traditional authorities lose their power, and the traditional frames of reference collapse, old restrictions and prohibitions are blurred and dissolved. Subsequently, individuals are fully responsible for making up their biographies and projecting their own lives. For Beck, these social changes generate sources of freedom and, at the same time, sources of risk and uncertainty. Individualisation and the spread of risk across all social settings are two basic elements that make up the new social scenery. Under these conditions individual pathways are no longer normal and predictable; they are becoming 'elective', 'reflexive', 'do-it-yourself biographies' (Beck, 1996, p.25). The central unit of this biography is the individual, who has to be 'able to plan for the long term and adapt to change; they must organize and improvise, set goals, recognize obstacles, accept defeats and attempt new starts. They need initiative, tenacity, flexibility, tolerance of frustration' (Beck, 1996, p.27).

In theories of late modernity self-reflexivity is regarded as a side effect of institutional reflexivity and is therefore described as universal and all embracing. Self-reflexivity is generated within the context of reflexive modernisation and reflects this rupture within modernity. In the economic field reflexive modernisation is characterised by globalisation and the development and spread of information and

communication technologies. In the social field tradition is dissolved along with traditional frames of reference and the norms and ethics that are attached to them. This process is accompanied by the side effects of modernisation and the spread of risk and uncertainty. A space is opened up that has to be filled through the active involvement of individuals. While in previous periods there existed a set of community-based ethics and norms followed by a set of institutional obligations, a defined set of freedoms and prohibitions, rules and expectations to which individuals had to respond and organise their practice respectively, in late modernity individuals have the responsibility to fill in these spaces on their own through choice and management. Within the above context self-reflexivity is an 'unconscious, unintended reflexivity in the sense of self-application, self-dissolution, and the self-endangerment' (Beck 1994, p.176).

From the point of view of late modernity theorists the distinctive qualitative feature of reflexivity is that 'it can take place without reflection, beyond knowledge and consciousness' (Beck, 1994, p. 176), while reflection and reflective thinking are strongly connected to early modernity and constitute presuppositions for the formation of individuality and subjectivity (see Charles Taylor, 1989). Reflection, according to Beck and Giddens, is an intentional process. Beck defines reflection as a type of knowledge, a form of capacity for self-examination and autoscopy, as well as an ability to think critically, appraise and 'reflect on the social conditions of their existence and to change them in that way' (Beck, 1994, p.176). In other words, for Beck reflection is a capacity and a way of thinking that involves self-referentially, self-relatedness, self-justification and/or self-critique (Beck, 1994, p.176).

In Bourdieu's model reflexivity also plays a central role in an understanding of the ways in which structure and agency interweave, but in a significantly different way. According to Bourdieu, reflexivity refers to the 'uncovering of the unthought categories which themselves are preconditions of our more self-conscious practices' (Lash, 1994, p.154). These un-thought categories take the form of classificatory categories and schemata that mediate forms of perception and both orientate and predispose subjects towards certain forms of practice. Nevertheless, reflexivity is not merely a medium through which subjects are related to the objects of the social world. It is itself made by the materials of the social world; it is generated within the material

and symbolic conditions where subjects are positioned and is developed through their biographical experiences. Then the roots of reflexivity are traced back to the threefold configurations of *capital x field = habitus*. From the above it can be concluded that for Bourdieu 'unlike late modernity theorists, reflexivity is linked to position and relations within the field' (Kenway & McLeod, 2004, p.535). That is, unlike Beck's and Giddens' understanding of reflexivity as an ontological feature of modern societies arising out of the demise of structural forces and the collapse of tradition, for Bourdieu it is strongly connected to contextual conditions and embodied predispositions.

## Young People and Imagined Futures: Habitual Inclinations and Reflexive Engagement with Life Pathways

Here I present and discuss extracts from young people's narratives about their imagined futures and do so while working with Bourdieu's concept of habitus. The discussion is organised in a case-centred way and focuses on seven youth narratives. I chose these seven cases after reading and re-reading all the coded transcripts alongside the concept of habitus. I regard them as representing in the best possible way the diversity of the data, as well as vividly illustrating the workings of habitus within diverse contexts. I start by referring to two cases of future-focused and highly reflexive narratives (Marianna, Anais). I then discuss two cases that construct a loose engagement with the future, although from different positions and in very different ways (Angeliki, Giannis). Finally, I present two narratives of what Bourdieu would describe as 'divided habitus' and explore the display of reflexivity in such cases. I discuss each case and narrative separately and I then bring these together and discuss them in parallel. Appendix II includes a list containing the details of the young people whose narratives I am referring to.

*Marianna: 'I want to achieve a social position... money comes out of it, I think; not the other way around.'*

Marianna lives in northwest Athens with her mother and grandmother. Her parents separated when she was very young and she does not have any siblings. Her mother

attended a college of further education and was trained as a nurse. She was employed as a nurse in the public sector for almost twenty years and then moved into the private sector where she still works as a health professional doing mainly office work. Marianna's father graduated from a Greek university and went on to complete his postgraduate studies in London and Paris. The Ministry of Education employed him for long time but at the time of the interview he worked for the Ministry of Culture. Marianna emphasises that he frequently travels to Brussels for work and often attends training courses there.

The largest part of Marianna's narrative of the self focuses mainly on two topics. On the one hand she talks extensively about the micro-politics of her school and her year group, while on the other hand she narrates her future plans in great detail. Marianna is the elected student representative for her year group. She discusses extensively particular events and incidents that have occurred at school and describes the ways in which she went about managing them; she refers to different 'camps' that have formed within her year group and talks about 'her' camp, the camp of her 'supporters' and the 'others', the latter being those who dispute her actions and create obstacles. Marianna also refers to her strategies for getting most of the tutors to support her actions and reside in her camp.

Another significant part of Marianna's narrative involves her future plans in education and her future career. Futurity, strategic planning and rational decision-making comprise the elements observed in these parts of Marianna's narrative. When asked if she thinks about the future at all and whether she has any ideas about it she talks extensively and explains in details how she thinks of her future. Among other things she replies:

> I am thinking of working in a cafe at the beginning to make some money, to have something in order to be able to move... I will be studying... I will start searching. I will search for a temporary job in an accountancy office at first, then I will search in companies and these kind of things... I will find somewhere... okay, it's impossible not to... I will find something, I will go somewhere and then I will write a dissertation and I will graduate. I will go to London to do an MA, I will also do some other things... I will start learning Italian, Spanish, I will start from the next year, so I want... within the next

five years to be done with university, to have done Italian and Spanish, to have the 'Proficiency' certificate in English... so I will have something. I will do my MA afterwards... so in around seven years I want to be done with what I want. And then... yes... after all these degrees, I will find something, I will go somewhere... Well, what I want to achieve is a social position not an economic position. Because I think that if you manage to achieve a certain social position then money comes out of it, not the other way around.

With respect to the above Marianna might be seen as embodying elements of Beck's and Giddens' reflexive individual. She has a clear view of her goals outside of education and she has clear plans in relation to her career. She makes up a plan for her life and within this framework she sets priorities, makes strategic decisions and guides her choices. Marianna therefore narrates herself as developing a life project and being the manager of it. Her narrative is future oriented and she is in a position in which she can have a view of what she will be doing for the next few years. She displays a great degree of awareness of the steps she has to follow in order to reach her goals. Her reflexivity is manifested in the awareness of what she wants from her future and why; she narrates herself as proactive and strategic. She is clear that she wants to build a career and achieve a certain social position. According to Beck (1996), 'for modern social advantages, one has to do something, to make an active effort. One has to win, know how to assert oneself in the competition for limited resources – and not only once but day after day' (Beck, 1996, p. 25). Marianna seems to be aware of the above and she also seems to be conscious about the difficulties that such a project entails. Once again, her reflexivity manifests itself in the form of her proactive thinking. While being aware of the 'competition for limited resources' she plans to obtain credentials as well as to start collecting work experience from early on so that she will be competent enough to get a job in the near future.

Later on in her narrative Marianna elaborates upon her plans to continue on to do postgraduate studies and go abroad to study for an MA degree:

My father studied abroad too. I told you. He has this style; very cultivated, you know what I mean, into culture and things like that. So if I tell him that I want to go to London for an MA he will definitely

pay for it, I'm sure. I'll get him to pay easily, he doesn't say no to this kind of stuff; on the contrary, he would be very happy about it.

When looking into Marianna's reflexive engagement with an imagined future through Bourdieu's lenses some different insights emerge. Marianna narrates her imagined educational pathway with reference to a set of practices that are familiar to her. In particular, she narrates her imagined future in education by tracing parallels with her father's educational past. A journey towards higher education is narrated not only as a common sense option consistent with her familial practices but also as feasible, in both practical and material terms. In their study of young people's further education choices Ball, et al. (2000) suggest that 'horizons of action' (Hodkinson, et al., 1996) are shaped both in perceptual and material terms (Ball, et al., 2000, p.22). In a similar manner, Vryonides (2007) argues that parental perceptions of higher education, as well as their willingness to invest available forms of capital (real and symbolic), shape habituses of success or compromise accordingly (p.104). In Marianna's case familial support is narrated with reference to available financial resources, as well as her parents' willingness to encourage and support a long-term journey towards and through higher education. Considering Vryonides' point, Marianna's narrative might be regarded as displaying a predisposition towards academic success.

Marianna narrates her future in higher education as taken for granted and refers to postgraduate studies as a common sense way forward. In fact, she narrates her imagined future pathway using affirmative terms. She uses phrases such as, 'I will search', 'I will find', 'I will graduate' and 'I will get'. Marianna's narrative for developing a self-project is framed by decisiveness, self-confidence and a sense of certainty and independence while conveying an optimism of will. Moreover, while narrating herself in affirmative terms Marianna also conveys a sense of entitlement in relation to higher education. Throughout her research into class inequality and educational pathways Reay (1998) highlights the sense of entitlement that middle classes possess in their interactions with schooling. According to the findings of Reay's research on choice, 'middle class young people were engaging with higher education choice in a context of certainty' (Reay 1998, p.526). Crozier (2008) has also highlighted middle class students' sense of entitlement about going to university,

as opposed to working class students for whom attending higher education involves 'more serendipity than planning'. Similarly to Reay's and Crozier's remarks, Marianna's certainty and self-confidence can be thought of along with her embodied dispositions, thus rendering a sense of normality and commonplaceness to an extended journey into higher education.

Nevertheless, the above portrays only one side of Marianna's emotional geography. Later on in her narrative she talks about the complex and tiring work and the subsequent emotional fatigue involved in the management of her life plans.

> I get tired, I get really tired. It's all these lessons now... and it's all this pressure you have. Let alone that now I feel that my mind changes, I think a lot... I now develop a perspective on things, in general. And only these things that I am thinking of and all these that I feel... I get tired... do you know what I mean? [...] With my boyfriend, well in general with boyfriends, I think that I have them more in order to go and relax; to go there and stop thinking of things. And that's why I cannot have arguments with them. When we are having a fight I am like 'oh, shit now! What's this! Cut it off immediately!' Because I can't, you know? I need peace, affection.

Above, Marianna refers to the emotional costs of reflexivity. Developing a self-project seems to require a preoccupation with the self through constant thinking and monitoring. The results are narrated in terms of emotional strain and exhaustion where little emotional power is left available for intimacy. Nevertheless, Marianna's emotional fatigue doesn't seem to obstruct her plans or work as an obstacle. However, the fact that Marianna is what Beck would call a 'reflexivity winner' can be questioned and further examined from a Bourdieuian point of view.

Through the narrative of her everyday practices Marianna seems to take up an economic attitude towards emotions. Not only she is able to maintain a certain distance from negative emotions so that they will not work as obstacles, she tries to minimise emotional expenditures by minimising her exposure to emotionally demanding situations. Therefore, Marianna seems to be equipped or have access to the 'right' type of emotional stock that allows her to manage in parallel emotional proximities and distances while developing her self-project. Here Illouz (1997, p.56)

can be taken into consideration, arguing that 'the ability to distance oneself from one's immediate emotional experience is the prerogative of those who have readily available a range of emotional options, who are not overwhelmed by emotional necessity and intensity, and can therefore approach their own self and emotions with the same detached mode that comes from accumulated emotional competencies'. She views such dispositions as class oriented and in particular, as a skill associated with the 'new middle classes' (Reay, 2005, p.63). A reflexive engagement with the self is narrated as entailing a significant emotional cost; nevertheless, this is not experienced as overwhelming and destabilising for Marianna as she narrates herself as capable of maintaining a certain distance from negative emotions and their effects. Following Illouz (1997), a certain distance from material necessity is, in Marianna's case, coupled by distance from emotional necessity. In other words, there is a certain emotional comfort that allows Marianna to be involved in a self-projecting process and become a reflexive subject.

*Anais: 'Different from the typical ones.'*

Anais lives in Athens with her father and her younger brother. Her mother died two months prior to the interview after a long-term battle with cancer. During the interview Anais initiates the discussion about her mother's death and talks about it extensively and unhesitatingly. Anais' father is employed in a private company as a warehouse administrator. Her mother used to work at the same place as a cashier and customer services assistant. Anais' parents did not attend university, although they were planning to, due to their active involvement with a Greek left-wing party and the anti-dictatorship movement. Anais describes her parents as highly educated and cultivated. She explains that they were both devoted to and absorbed by their political actions and this is the reason why they did not manage to continue their studies. Nevertheless, they both attended seminars and workshops on accountancy and computing and gained skills that allowed them to obtain their jobs.

Anais goes to a state school. She attends a Unified Lyceum and also dances ballet at professional level. She speaks about ballet as occupying a very significant part of her life and talks in great detail about the difficulties, efforts and commitment

it requires. At the same time, Anais plans to continue her education and go to university. Along with rehearsing for ballet performances Anais works hard at preparing for the Panhellenic exams. She talks about her future plans as follows:

> ANAIS. I am thinking of pedagogy, because that is the only subject compatible with ballet. They both have to do with kids. I mean, in the ballet, apart from a dancer, you can be a teacher later. And it is something where you don't have workshops, I mean in this department, so I will be able to do it in parallel with ballet. I wanted to go to the physics department in order to do an MA in astrophysics but this is not possible, at least not for the time being.
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> E. STAMOU. So how would you imagine your life in one to two years from now? Have you got any ideas about it?
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> ANAIS. In one to two years from now… here to finish… I believe that I will get into the School of Pedagogy next year, and I will be in the professional department of ballet, the 'Anotera', which is like a proper university with proper exams and books… as it is in university… So I will be going to two universities in parallel, which means that I will be overloaded throughout the whole day.

Anais' narrative of her future education and employment contains a strong sense of agency. From Giddens' and Beck's points of view, Anais could be seen in some ways as exemplifying a reflexive individual developing a project of the self. She tries to find a profession that 'is compatible with' her career as a ballet dancer and thus abandons her plans for the physics department. While pointing out the uncertainty that ballet dancing at a professional level can bring later on in her life she decides to go to the university given that she is a good student and she does well at school. Therefore, she plans to follow a dual route that she expects will offer her greater fulfilment and certainty at the same time. Anais seems to deal with uncertainty in a proactive and rational way. She adopts a 'calculative attitude to the open possibilities of action, positive or negative' with which, according to Giddens (1991), 'as individuals and

globally, we are confronted in a continuous way in our contemporary social existence' (p.28). Moreover, she has a clear plan of the steps she has to follow in order to make her plan happen. Interestingly enough, she has a clear view of how she will distribute her time in the following two to three years. This is, in Giddens' terms, a 'colonization of the future' (ibid, p.86). In this respect Anais can be regarded as narrating herself as a reflexive individual engaged in the crafting of her own biography.

While late modernity theories reinforce the agentic aspects of Anais' narrative, bringing Bourdieu's tools into the discussion might allow a further understanding of Anais' narrative by equally considering the broader sociocultural landscape within which her decisions are formed. Bourdieu's notion of habitus indicates a need to look at the conditions under which Anais' decisions are made, as well as looking at the ways her life history enters the game of her present choices. Below I will try to do this alongside mapping the emotions constructed throughout the narrative of imagined futures. I will also discuss relationships between the two, that is, between contextual conditions and affective configurations.

When it comes to her imagined future in education Anais conveys a high degree of confidence, optimism and decisiveness in relation to her future plans. She talks about her plans in positive and assertive terms, using expressions such as, 'I believe that I will get into the School of Pedagogy next year', 'I will be in the professional department of ballet', and 'I will be going to two universities in parallel, which means that I will be overloaded throughout the whole day.'

There is, therefore, a sense of confidence and certainty delivered throughout her narrative of future education. Furthermore, Anais appears to be confident in moving across different subjects and study areas. That is, instead of being fixed in a particular direction she narrates herself as confident enough to follow and gain achievement in a wide range of areas. Furthermore, her final decision to select a theoretical direction is partially defined by practical reasons. Anais talks about physics in the same way as maths and classics. In other words, she is not only able to see herself in higher education but she can also see herself in the department of physics as much as she can see herself studying mathematics or classics. In Bourdieu's terms, Anais narrates herself as being placed within the logic of academic

practice, as obtaining a kind of academic know-how. Here Anais echoes Bourdieu's and Wacquant's (1992) argument that 'when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a "fish in water" [...] it takes the world about itself for granted' (p.127). While narrating her future in higher education as taken for granted, as well as displaying a 'feel' for the academic 'game', Anais appears to be habitually predisposed towards academic practice.

During the interview Anais is asked to talk a bit about her parents and their family life. She talks about it as follows:

> My father is very open minded and very sociable, very diplomatic and logical. He has a great *legein* [talking/debating ability]. Since from when I can remember he sat me down and initiated discussions on social issues. He would initiate these never-ending discussions. We still discuss a lot. We do sociological analyses on things and we philosophise a lot! Because he has studied this stuff on his own. Well, not officially in a university but he is very well read. Both of them actually, our house is full of books! And a conversation may start from something that happened, a social event, something from the news and we end up talking about historical events and we move on to discuss things more abstractly, in more general terms, we philosophise about things [...].
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> With my mother, we used to be like friends, I mean she would advise me but I would also advise her. She did ask for my opinion and my advice on issues happening in her life, issues to do with Dad or her work. We were discussing everything. It was a very mutual relationship. And in general, in my family we were – we are actually – very close to each other, we have very strong bonds. It was always the four of us discussing and making decisions about things and we were always very different from other families around. We didn't have this typical husband-wife and parents-children relationship. And they thought of us as something weird. Like, 'where do you live? Are you on your own planet? Where did you come from? From Aries?' You know they thought of us as if we were a bit like UFOs [laughs]. We were definitely different from other typical families around.

While talking about her parents and their relationship Anais narrates the conditions of her socialisation as rich in cultural and symbolic capital. She refers to a familiar set of cultural practices as well as referring to a series of cultural and symbolic artefacts.

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Family relations are narrated as democratic as well as containing dialogue and conversation as a central and integral part. Family practices are narrated as featuring less hierarchical and more mutual principles in which all family members have a valid opinion and are entitled to express it. Furthermore, analysing events and discussing in abstract terms things that start from random daily events is narrated as a usual practice in Anais' everyday life. Above all, the cultural practices that are familiar to Anais from since she can remember are narrated as markers of cultural and symbolic distinction. Therefore, Anais constructs herself and her family as 'non-typical', as different and distinct from the other ones around.

Considering Basil Bernstein's work, Anais narrates herself as growing up in what he describes as a 'person-oriented' family. Bernstein (1971) particularly refers to two types of family: positional and person-oriented. In positional families each member is defined by the position he/she occupies in the family hierarchy. Communication systems are closed and control is exerted in explicit and imperative forms. In person-oriented families members are judged by their personal qualities and are encouraged to communicate on an equal basis irrespective of their position. Communication is therefore open and meanings are realised in more complex ways, while control is exercised in a personalised manner, requiring the rational persuasion of family members. While these two types of family connote what Bernstein (1971) refers to as elaborated and restricted codes of communication, Anais seems to be familiar with a code of communication that is predominantly deployed and favoured in school.

Although positive about her imagined future Anais also emphasises the difficulties that her 'project of the self' entails. She points out the adventures and ambivalences, the frustrations as well as the physical and emotional fatigue involved. Anais talks of the above issues as follows:

> ANAIS. I have rehearsals for ballet every single day; the average is around two and a half hours but it also depends. When we have a show the rehearsal can even last three to four hours during the weekdays. On Saturdays I start at 10:30 a.m. and finish at 6:30 p.m. in the afternoon...
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> So when I finish school I go to ballet and then go back home, I have a shower, I have dinner and then I study for

school; and then, the next day the same thing, all over again. During weekdays I don't have any time to go out, etc. Sometimes I go out on Fridays, sometimes on Saturdays, but not every weekend.

I like it, I enjoy going out but I don't have time. I miss it sometimes... because my friends go out and complain, they keep on telling me off... they keep on saying: 'you get on our nerves with your bloody ballet, we don't get to see you at all' and I'm like 'okay, okay I will come, I will come to see you.'

E. STAMOU. And what about your parents? Are they alight with you going out, etc.?

ANAIS. Actually, my parents tell me off as well. They try to push me to go out like all my friends, like all the other kids. My mum used to tell me, 'Go out now, enough, come on my girl leave the books now and go out, go out with your friends, close the books!' [Laughs] Strange isn't it? All my friends have problems with their parents and keep on trying to find ways to go out more often, but for me, no. This is not the case at all.

Anais talks about her strict schedule and limited leisure time. Once again, she compares herself with her other friends and points out their differences. While her peers have time for going out and their problems are centred on parental control, things for Anais are the opposite. She does not have to negotiate with her parents but with her own self by questioning her priorities. Anais generally conveys a sense of being in control of her life and her time. Nevertheless, being in control is not narrated as an easy and always joyful business.

Below Anais refers to the complexities and emotional adventures that the development of a 'non typical' life project entails, as well as the self-questioning and self-doubt involved.

At some point you get confused, and you don't know if what you believe... eeehm... whether your priorities are correct, because they start... oscillating, and you start wondering... is what I am doing now, correct? Am I exaggerating perhaps? Am I leaving things back perhaps?... Do I leave back friendships... perhaps?... I leave back my personal life in general... perhaps... and what is it worth, what isn't worth it... and... at some point you get messy. You are getting

confused, your values are confused.

Anais' high degree of reflexivity, as well as her self-scrutiny and self-doubt, might be regarded as illustrating what Giddens (1991) terms the 'practiced art of self-observation'. Following Giddens (1991), this increased reflexivity is part of the responsibility for projecting the self and thus part of the process of subjectivity formation in late modern times. According to Giddens, 'the reflexivity of the self is continuous, as well as all pervasive. At each moment, or at least at regular intervals, the individual is asked to conduct a self-interrogation in terms of what is happening' (Giddens, 1991, p.76). In this sense, late modern self-making involves a great deal of emotional work since it requires a constant monitoring and interrogation of the self. Furthermore, Anais, from the point of view of late modernity theorists, might be seen as developing a project of the self; in fact, this process is narrated as a do-it-yourself project. Anais indeed narrates herself as crafting a pathway for herself, one that has limited commonalities with the pathways of her school friends. Anais seems to develop this pathway on her own, without following a given 'typical' route, and deploys a highly sensitive form of reflexivity. In this respect Anais might be regarded as illustrating Beck's suggestion that 'opportunities, dangers, biographical uncertainties... must now be perceived, interpreted, decided and processed by individuals themselves' (Beck, 1996, p.27).

From Bourdieu's point of view, Anais' self-interrogation, and the seemingly individualised form of engagement with her life pathway, can be approached by considering the diverse ways that habitual inclinations match different fields. As mentioned previously, habitus entails the principles engraved in the conditions of social positioning. Anais narrates the conditions of her early socialisation as rich in cultural capital and inclusive of non-typical cultural practices, although not particularly rich in economic capital. Anais' habitual inclinations seem to match well with the field of education and therefore reinforce a sense of comfort, security and self-confidence. For Anais, school seems to constitute a familiar site in which she feels at ease. Therefore, a successful future in an academic setting is constructed in terms of a continuation and extension of who she is at present, which in turn may be regarded as generating an optimistic and positive outlook for the future.

Angeliki lives in Athens with her mother, father and younger sister. Both her parents studied economics in France. Her father is an economist and works for a private company and her mother runs her own business in the tourism sector. More specifically, she owns and runs a campsite and is involved with various tourism associations. Angeliki and her sister attend a private French-speaking secondary school located in a different borough from the one in which they live. When asked about this choice she explains:

> Well actually, the discussion about that was done, as far as I remember, at primary school, when I was about to start primary school. My parents took me to a state school one day and showed me around and then the next day they took me to a private school. And basically they asked me to choose which one I preferred at that point. And of course I went for the private one. Well, then, after that, I mean after the primary school, the transition, that is, continuing to a private secondary school was kind of a common sense thing to do… because I was used to going to a private school so… so it wasn't even an issue for discussion, as far as I remember nobody brought it up as an issue that needed to be discussed… you know?

> … … …

> In general, that was not really discussed much. That is… that was… I got used to… there was nothing strange about it.

In relation to the choice of this particular French-speaking school she explains:

> E. STAMOU. How come your school is in a different borough?

> ANGELIKI. I went to a different primary school… eh… as I told you it was also private but was closer to my home. And then, as usual, when I was in the last year of primary school we asked these people there, and they suggested that I go to Leontio. So I sat to their French language exams and I passed. And they accepted me.

Angeliki narrates her journey in schooling along with a set of common-sense practices and obvious decisions. The fact that she preferred the private rather than the state school, the fact that continuing to a private secondary school was not even considered an issue for discussion and the way she went about choosing her secondary school are all surrounded by a certain common-sense approach; what Angeliki refers to as 'the usual' practices and the 'of course' decisions. This type of sensibility indicates what is to be discussed and what is to be taken for granted. For example, going to a private secondary school is taken for granted whereas the choice of the particular private secondary school is an issue to be discussed and further researched.

In Bourdieu's terms there is a certain logic underlying Angeliki's educational trajectory that seems to be consistent across time and attuned to the familial logic of practice. Below Angeliki is asked to talk about her parents and her relationship with them. She highlights their smooth relationship and refers to school and studying as the main issue she and her sister receive pressure about.

> ANGELIKI. They moan... especially my mom, she moans about the school... and studying... Well, it is not that we do not sit down to study, and all this stuff, we do but... you know... they [her parents] are like 'a bit more, and then a little bit more because the only thing that you are going to have in your life is your knowledge and whatever you are going to obtain, degrees and all this stuff, eeem... these are your weapons so you should obtain them in the best possible way. Usually we don't have fights about whether I will go out, if I will do this or that. In fact, that's what the whole pressure is about. Or some other minor different views on small issues.
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> E. STAMOU. Do they value education?
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> ANGELIKI. Yes, a lot. They give great value to education. Especially my mom, because I am telling you all these things she keeps talking about... they have become a routine for me.
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> E. STAMOU. So what does she tell you?

ANGELIKI. Oh... the usual. That is... that 'you have to learn to rely on yourself and no-one else and... that the weapon that you must have is your knowledge. And now that we are able to provide them to you, make the most out of it'. This kind of thing; the usual, all-time classic.

A great concern with education as well as its significant valuation sits at the core of Angeliki's family. In Angeliki's familial logic education seems to be perceived as an asset and seems to constitute a durable focus for parental concern and the children's responsibilities. Angeliki narrates her mother's ideas on education as well as the pressure for making the most out of it, as 'usual', 'all-time classic' and 'routine'. In Bourdieu's framework the above provide insights into the 'objective cultural and symbolic conditions' that Angeliki finds herself in, which according to Bourdieu (1990a) 'generate dispositions objectively compatible with these conditions and in a sense pre-adapted to their demands' (p. 54). Aspects of these conditions do seem to be incorporated into Angeliki's narrative of her educational trajectory and her views of the future, which were discussed previously. In other words, habitual inclinations seem to be in agreement with her present practices and imagined futures; and therefore Angeliki's habitual inclinations may be thought of as a 'present past that tends to perpetuate itself into the future' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.54).

According to Bourdieu (1990a), the homogeneity of habitus is 'what causes practices and works to be immediately intelligible and foreseeable, and hence taken for granted' (p.58). Angeliki's narrated educational trajectory may be regarded as illustrative of Bourdieu's point. Her educational past seems to be manifested within present practices as well as echoing future plans. Furthermore, the transitions between the different steps taken in education appear to be smooth and continuity characterises Angeliki's movement across educational settings. Continuity through time and across educational settings in Bourdieu's framework is viewed as underpinning taken-for-granted pathways as well as marking social proximities and distances in terms of expected futures. From this point of view habitual homogeneity and continuity might be regarded as likely to fuel a sense of certainty and a more relaxed and positive outlook towards future destinations. This is further elaborated in the extracts below:

E. STAMOU. Are you doing well at school?

ANGELIKI. Now, I don't know… Well in general I don't like labels such as 'good student' etc.,… okay I get good marks… I get 17, 17½ out of 20 so, okay, it is not bad. But you know what? Sometimes I feel that I do not give a 100% of my ability, competence and… this is not really, clearly my own choice. What do I mean by that? That… I don't have to prove something to somebody at the moment. I see that there is competition in school now and this kind of stuff… but I don't really care about that, so, you know… I study… simply and only… up to the point that I want to. Because I feel I can do better but I do not attempt it, I don't know why… I haven't found the reason yet… I don't know. That's it.

During her interview Angeliki also refers to her ideas about future education, explaining that she does not have a very specific target and instead considers several possibilities.

ANGELIKI. At the beginning of the year I wanted to go to the School of Law but now I see it as a bit distanced. So…

E. STAMOU. Does it have to do with the degree of difficulty?

ANGELIKI. It has to do with it and at the same time… at the end of the day, I don't know whether I do like it that much… I don't know… I will apply for the School of Media, International and European Studies and then I will apply… for Philosophy… and School of Pedagogy… several schools. And we'll see; we'll see what happens.

Later on, Angeliki talks about the possibility of taking over her mother's business:

ANGELIKI. In general, I intend to help her out later… but I mean later later on, maybe this is the reason why… well the School of Law would be helpful… you know… it would help if I knew the legislation and have such a point of view for the issues that come up… But… Okay, she said she would prefer it… but she didn't bring any objection to the rest of the possibilities.

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E. STAMOU. So do you have any thoughts about getting involved with
your mother's business?

ANGELIKI. Well this thought exists, but... well, you never know...
yes, I would like to but... whatever comes up then.

Angeliki refers to a variety of schools that she would like to go to. She certainly sees herself in higher education but she narrates herself as leaving open the possibilities and eventual scenarios. From this point of view she appears to retain a loose amount of control and adopt a rather relaxed attitude in relation to her future destinations. Returning to the discussion of Beck's and Giddens' reflexivity, Angeliki is a rather un-reflexive individual. She seems to be far away from having, as Webb (2004) describes it, an 'individualized sense of responsibility for personal achievements, which in turn encourages a risk-taking and calculative orientation to life' (p.722). Nevertheless, Angeliki illustrates her future horizon as one with several possibilities. In this case possibilities are conceptualised in terms of opportunities rather than risks, dangers or uncertainties. Fluidity, openness and a loose sense of urgency are mostly constructed throughout her narrative. Her narrative is characterised by confidence, optimism and conveys a positive, unagitated outlook about the future and a respective and similar form of engagement with her present.

Angeliki's narrative may be regarded as embodying some aspects of Du-Bois Raymond's (1998) 'being flexible-professional future life-project' (p.71). This refers to the plans of a group of post-adolescents that 'have opted for a lifestyle that is not definite', that 'keeps the path open' and at the same time 'they are optimistic and prepare themselves for all eventualities' (ibid,p.71). Du-bois Raymond (1998) indicates that their loose kind of involvement in planning and managing their lives is not an incidental one; 'This flexible attitude among post-adolescents also demonstrates a certain nonchalance brought about by their social origin: they know that they are backed up by their parents' financial and cultural resources' (ibid, p.71). Therefore, such an attitude is related to the material and symbolic conditions within which these young people find themselves. This rests on a key recognition that risk and uncertainty are unequally distributed across different social positions (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997; Ball, et al., 2000) and signifies the effects of the continuing workings

of structural forces in the spread of insecurity. According to the above, reflexivity and the formation of a life pathway is generated not only as a side effect of institutional reflexivity but also through the subjective perceptions of necessity and need.

*Giannis: Being 'Lost' and 'Still Searching Myself.'*

Giannis lives with his mother, his stepfather and his younger sister. His stepfather is a dental technician and his mother works as a secretary in the private sector. His biological father is a sailor. Giannis refers to his relationship with his biological father as a rather adventurous one and explains that he has not had any kind of contact with him during the last few years. Giannis goes to Technical Vocational School and is following the health and care division. During the interview he talks about his future education as follows:

> GIANNIS. He [referring to his stepfather] told me, that if I go to TEE. to become a dental technician... well, he said, I have the workshop, so I will leave it to you later on... you know what I mean... and he said now I see you as my son... and... so... I went there.

> E. STAMOU. So that's where it came from...

> GIANNIS. Yes, yes.

> E. STAMOU. Do you like it?

> GIANNIS. No.

> E. STAMOU. Is there something in particular that you don't like about it?

> GIANNIS. I am... from the morning to the evening... I mean... my father for instance, is from the morning to the evening in one room. I want to be seeing people, to be talking... to talk... anyway, well... to be seeing people, at least.

> E. STAMOU. Have you got anything else in mind?

GIANNIS. No... I have... I am lost...

E. STAMOU. Yeah? Hmm...

GIANNIS. I don't know what I want. I like several things... I like
public hygiene for example... I like the idea of being in the
public sector later... or as a social worker for example... I like
that one as well... but... you see... all these require being
talkative... knowing how to talk to others... you know what I
mean... And I don't know, I'm not that good at that, I hesitate
when I speak... I don't know, I am still searching myself; I
don't know what to do in my life.

Giannis' narrative is not indicative of what Beck and Giddens would term a 'reflexive
individual'. He is neither strategic nor proactive. His narrative delivers no sense of
being in control of the self or developing a self-project. Nevertheless, this is different
from Angeliki's narrative discussed earlier. Angeliki's loose engagement with future
plans is narrated in positive terms, as something not so urgent as to resolve the issue
now and is accompanied by a relaxed and optimistic outlook. In Giannis' narrative
imagining and articulating a future horizon is impossible, not because of a choice to
focus on the present but due to a sense of puzzlement and confusion. The fact that he
is not able to articulate imagined futures is narrated in negative terms and constructed
in terms of incompetence, while also being accompanied by a sense of stagnation,
inadequacy and low confidence. In Bourdieu's terms Giannis can be seen as being
caught in a mismatch between habitus and field, with the latter referring to
predominant urban socioeconomic configurations.

Here Turner's notion of liminality might also provide some insights into this
state of being lost, as well as emotions such as puzzlement and confusion. Bettis
(1996) uses the notion of liminality to describe a transitional period of de-
industrialisation marked by the coexistence of elements from the old social and
economic order along with elements from new social orders. Within this context new
urban complexities emerge, having as their main features 'fragmentation, loss of
community, and de-industrialization of cities, along with the post-industrial plethora
of images, focus on consumption, and changes in types of employment' (Bettis, 1996,
p.107). Bettis (1996) finds that young people with little guidance from their parents

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and teachers when confronting uncertain, unknown and unfamiliar futures are reluctant to envision and articulate career ambitions and, in broader terms, to articulate their future.

From such a standpoint Giannis might be seen as being lost within the perplexities of such a liminal stage. Here, the features of the economy and the labour market of Athens can be taken into account. The changing economy of Athens is marked by the expansion of the service sector, the collapse of a wide range of industrial sectors, the development of information and communication technologies and the expansion of higher education along with new types of requirements for an upskilled workforce. Within such changing conditions Giannis might be understood as finding it tricky to orientate himself in relation to future education and work. According to Bourdieu (1990a), 'as an acquired system of generative schemes, the habitus makes possible the free production of all the thoughts, perceptions and actions inherent in the particular conditions of its production – and only those' (p.55). Following this line of thought, Giannis' familial logic of practice in relation to education and future employment is centred on employability, security and stability. On the other hand, while the labour market in Athens changes the features of employment and perceptions of work shift along with redefinitions of expectations of employment. For example, the quest for fulfilment from one's profession or the pursuit of a job that fits well with one's character may be regarded as shared across larger numbers of people within the context of the expansion of higher education.

In this way the 'logic of practice' that is embedded in Giannis' socialisation seems to have lost a degree of relevance, while his unconscious predispositions do not sit comfortably with contemporary changing perceptions and experiences of employment. It may therefore be the case that Giannis' habitual inclinations, along with the choices that they have nourished, do not fully fit with the changing field of the labour market in Athens or the features of new types of employment. If habitus can generate practices according to the principles of its production 'and only those' then Giannis might be seen as being caught in this precise mismatch between habitual inclinations and the field. The emotions articulated throughout his narrative of future employment, that is, a sense of low confidence and a high degree of hesitation, may be regarded as generated by this disparity and implicated with a state of 'being lost'.

Such an emotional landscape may possibly work towards limiting the possibilities of exposing habitus in other fields and thus impede transformative possibilities while reinforcing stability within the social space.

*Anna: 'Becoming Something.'*

Anna is originally from Albania. She moved to Greece when she was in the first year of primary school and since then she has lived in Athens with her mother, father and older brother. Her father works as a builder and her mother is employed as a cleaner. Anna is in the last year of secondary education, is preparing for the Panhellenic exams and aiming to continue onto higher education. Anna attends the Technical Vocational School (TEE) and is following the division of Health and Care. During the interview she speaks about her decision to go to the TEE as follows:

> E. STAMOU. You are going to the Technical Vocational Lyceum... Where did this come from? How did you go about making this decision?
>
> ANNA. How I decided it... Actually, I was afraid to go to the Unified Lyceum. Because I was not so much... I was a student of 12, 13 and I thought well, if I have 13 now why go to Unified Lyceum, what am I going to do there? So I thought I'd better go to the TEE. And perhaps I can get a degree... maybe I will learn a craft, I will get some skills or something, I don't know. But since I went it's been completely different. Since I started at TEE I have improved a lot as a student... perhaps because I decided to do something... to become something in my life. I don't know if it has to do with age and things... I mean the fact that I took it more seriously... Before, I was younger and wanted games... you know what I mean?... I didn't care, I thought who gives a... come on now, I was only thinking of boys... you know how it goes... truanting and stuff... Now I take it more seriously. And I want to continue to higher education, you know... I want to continue; not just graduate and get a job.

Later on in her narrative Anna speaks extensively about her decision to go to TEE and elaborates on changing her mind and regretting this choice.

ANNA. I have regretted not going to the Unified Lyceum.

E. STAMOU. Oh really?

ANNA. Yes... it was because of fear... like a kind of phobia... I don't know how to explain it.

E. STAMOU. Did you discuss it with anyone at that point?

ANNA. Yes, with my parents. Hmm... I don't think that they had any kind of phobia but they rather thought of it in terms of my interests. They thought... they could see me more at the Vocational Technical Lyceum. They thought, 'there you will get a particular specialisation, you will get some skills, you will get a degree for a certain vocation. And you will come out as something, you will be able to use it and make a living. While at the Unified Lyceum... you don't get something out of it. You graduate from a Unified Lyceum, you have a degree. So what? What do you get out of it?'

Words like 'fear' and 'phobia' are frequently mentioned in this part of Anna's narrative. Feelings of fear, a lack of confidence and a sense of inadequacy seem to accompany her earlier choices. TEE was thought of as a place that was more suitable for her, in essence a choice that corresponds with her perceived capabilities and attainment level. The Unified Lyceum – along with the academically oriented institutional culture that characterises it – feels like an unknown and grey area. Here Ball's (2006) argument that 'schools are classed spaces within which some students feel at home and others can be distinctly uncomfortable' (p.5) can be taken into consideration. Ball (2006) suggests that in more general terms 'education is a trajectory through spaces of learning, and our movement through these spaces can be reaffirming of who we are or be part of becoming different' (p.5). For Anna, Unified Lyceum is a cultural site distanced from her familial culture, which in turn triggers hesitation and a sense of discomfort. In Reay's (2001) terms it a site where Anna loses rather than finds herself.

On the other hand, the choice of TEE sits more comfortably with the familial cultural and symbolic conditions within which Anna finds herself and the logic of practice stemming from it (Bourdieu, 1990a). It is a choice that, according to her parents, is closer to Anna's interests; or in Bourdieu's terms, a practice that corresponds to the 'universe of meaning' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.87) of Anna's family. Within the framework of Anna's parents education is thought of as closely connected with the acquisition of skills that can be directly transferable to the job market and exchangeable in order to secure a living. What is regarded as valuable and relevant to her interests is a concrete set of skills that she can obtain from TEE, in contrasted with the seemingly vague body of academic knowledge that she would obtain from a Unified Lyceum.

At this stage in her development Anna appears to be at a point of rupture marked by the decision to 'do something with her life', to 'become something', and the confidence that she has gained from doing well at school. Although Anna's initial plan was, in accordance to her family's logic of practice, to graduate from TEE and enter the labour market to practice her vocation, at the point of the interview she speaks extensively about changing her mind, having regretted the choice to go to TEE, and about her aim to get into a higher education institution. She no longer wants to work after finishing school and instead plans to continue her studies. For this reason she works hard in preparation for the Panhellenic exams. Anna has decided to 'become something' by continuing her education and at the point of the interview she is working hard to achieve it.

Anna speaks about the experience of preparing for the exams as follows:

E. STAMOU. How is this experience… the preparation for the Panhellenic exams?

ANNA. Well it is pure stress… I have it all the time; I have stress inside me all the time. That's why I was telling you that it's been three years now since I started being stressed about these exams… so much stress and insecurity… will I make it or not… uncertainty… and then what am I going to do?… and such stuff.

… … …

E. STAMOU. And what would be the best-case scenario for your life in
a year's time?

ANNA. To be at university, in one of the specialisations I mentioned
earlier... and to be away... to go somewhere else... in another
city, outside Athens. Yes, I would really like that. It would be a
different kind of experience. Because I would like to try out
myself and my life... away from my parents. To see how it
feels like... you know what I mean? Now for instance, I have
everything ready from my parents. It is a little bit like... I want
to try to see if I can make it on my own.

Striving for success is described as a significantly heavy process and echoes aspects
of the findings in Diane Reay's study of children as consumers. Reay (2005) observes
that white working-class girls agonise about whether they will become 'a nothing' and
suggest that 'these girls, in the context of schooling, inhabit a psychic economy of
class defined by fear, anxiety and unease where failure looms large and success is
elusive' (Reay, 2005, p.917).

*Costas: 'Becoming Different.'*

Costas lives with his parents and his two older brothers in Athens. Costas' father is a
bus driver and his mother works as a school bus monitor. Costas is in the last year of
secondary education. Unlike Anna, he attends the Unified Lyceum and is following
the theoretical direction. At the time of the interview Costas is working hard in
preparation for the Panhellenic exams. In particular, he explains that his target is to
study either literature and classics or pedagogy. Costas talks extensively about this
decision as well as about the efforts he puts in preparing for the exams.

E. STAMOU. This decision you're talking about, the decision to follow
the theoretical direction and study classics, where did it come
from? Did you discuss it with anyone?

COSTAS. No, it was my decision. Hmm... well, to be honest... what
was significant and really helped me decisively was... well I
have to start a long story now... Do you want to listen?

E. STAMOU. Sure.

COSTAS. So, I live in Nisida. Right next to my house is a house... 'the cave of literature', that's how I call it. My friend Kimonas lives there. He is a very good friend of mine; we've known each other since we were little kids.

E. STAMOU. Why do you call it the 'cave of literature'?

COSTAS. His mother is a teacher of literature and classics. His father, well he is the exception, he is a professor of astronomy at the university. His aunt is a teacher of classics and his grandmother used to be a teacher; she is retired now. And these people are precisely the reason why I love these lessons. Do you believe that? It's true. That's where it came from. We live next door and as a kid I used to spend quite a lot of time at their place. Kimonas' aunt realised that my parents didn't have much time to help me out with my school lessons etc., so she said well why not spend some time with the kid to help him out? So I partly grew up in their house. She was a very good teacher and she gave me a sound background in Ancient Greek language and literature and Modern Greek literature. And that was the point at which I actually started studying properly. Before that I was a bit lazy... I couldn't be bothered.

E. STAMOU. So you think that these people influenced you...

COSTAS. They were significant really. Absolutely. On the one hand they introduced me to these subjects. But also it has to do with... how to express it... an inspiration. These people were civilised. That's what I like. For instance, my parents didn't have the time to go to the theatre or to the cinema... and I was going with Kimonas' family. We were going to the theatre, sometimes we were going to music concerts, or to exhibitions... Wherever they would go, I would go with them. And all these things are so nice... I don't know how to describe it... they gave me such a beautiful perspective... It's like a way of life that is beyond common, ordinary patterns. I don't really know how to explain it to you. Even my first contact with books happened when I was very small from Kimonas' grandmother. She was looking after us... when my

mum was at work and my grandmother was away I would go
next door and stay with them, study there, etc.

In his narrative Costas illustrates a detailed view of two distinct types of cultural capital; one that is related to and inherited by him from his family and one associated with the next-door neighbours' 'cave of literature'. Although physically located next to one another these two houses are described as distanced in terms of social space and differing in terms of the type of cultural and symbolic capital they obtain.

Costas talks about the habitual elements that make the next-door family different from the members of his own family. He points to embodied forms of the neighbours' culture; he refers to their habits, the ways they spend their time and their leisure activities, such as reading, going to the cinema and the theatre, going to concerts and exhibitions. He speaks about objectified forms of culture such as the number of books they have, the decoration of their house, the low, soft lighting. These embodied and objectified aspects of the neighbours' culture constitute their habitual dispositions and are narrated as symbols of cultural distinction. Finally, Costas expresses clear symbolic evaluations by attributing higher value to the cultural capital that these people possess. He describes them as inspirational, 'civilised', and sees their lifestyle as being 'beyond common, ordinary patterns'.

Costas' narrative entails a description of the experience of being exposed to a type of cultural capital that is distinct from that which has been inherited. It constitutes coherent reflection upon his contact with two different modes of capital. This contact with a different form of cultural capital is described as a force generative of career aspirations and ambitions, a force that motivates him to adopt a different stance towards education. Contact with the 'cave of literature' reveals a different possibility of existence. Costas embodies what Skeggs (1997) describes as 'having a clear knowledge about their "place" but [...] trying to leave it' (p.81), in reference to the women she studied.

Costas narrates himself as shifting away from the cultural position he finds himself in and moving towards a higher valued position. Higher education is expected to provide him with the strategic means for mobilising himself, entering into a different cultural universe and thus achieving distinction. In Reay's (2001) terms he

seeks to 'find himself' in the university. In Costas' case, inherited habitual dispositions have to be 'worked over' (Lucey, 2003) and converted. This conversion strategy entails the accumulation of educational capital and its exchange for cultural and symbolic capital. In other words, exchanging educational capital with cultural capital is expected to enable him to mobilise himself and achieve distinction.

Costas, while drawing on representations of the cultural capital possessed by the 'cave of literature', narrates himself as being different in terms of taste and preferences from the other members of his family.

> You see, such a big difference between us! I can't understand it. And when my brothers heard that I would follow the theoretical direction they were looking at me... somehow... But I had made my mind up and my decision was fixed. I don't know if they think of this direction as something inaccessible... something... how can I explain that?... Something that they would never think of doing in their lives because they wouldn't want to.

Along with tracing the lines of distance between the neighbours' and his own family's social and cultural standing, Costas provides examples of two different types of everyday perceptions, common-sense judgements and schemes of thought. In the above extract Costas refers to his decision to follow the theoretical direction generated under the influence of the neighbours' culture, which is perfectly justifiable within this cultural frame. On the other hand, in the logic of practice of Costas' brothers following the theoretical direction – which involves studying the classics, humanities and so on – is a strange, unfamiliar and culturally distanced practice. In Bourdieu's terms these habitual judgements and negative predispositions towards the theoretical direction may be seen as manifesting the objective cultural conditions of Costas' familial social positioning. Following Bourdieu's writings the possibilities and impossibilities, freedoms and necessities, opportunities and prohibitions inscribed in the objective conditions are activated and enacted through dispositions (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.54). They therefore work towards generating compatible practices. As Bourdieu puts it, 'the most improbable practices are therefore excluded, as unthinkable, by a kind of immediate submission to an order that inclines agents to make a virtue of necessity, that is, to refuse what is anyway denied and to will the

inevitable (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 54). Costas' narrative illustrates what is 'unthinkable' and 'inaccessible' in terms of a strange look, a gesture, a sense that is difficult to explain. Costas refers to a kind of manifestation of habitus in embodiment that goes beyond rational consciousness. Throughout Bourdieu's lenses he refers to practices that lay beyond the given practical sense and that consequently generate a sense of awkwardness and discomfort.

The case of Costas' familial 'universe of meaning', manifested through his brothers' sensibility and common sense, seems to illustrate Bourdieu's case that the principles of the objective conditions of social existence are embodied and translated into certain forms of perception and practice. Nevertheless, Costas' narrative of the self is indicative of an interruption of this continuity and compatibility; in Costas' narrative of the self, 'inclinations to make virtue out of necessity' seem to be disrupted by his contact with a different logic of practice. Accordingly, Costas narrates himself as an inhabitant of two different logics or, more precisely, as an inhabitant of a logic that he has to leave behind. In Bourdieu's terms, Costas embodies a habitus divided against itself. Similarly, with Shaun's story, as analysed by Reay (2002), this discontinuity allows Costas to objectify his subjective experience, develop increased reflexivity and carry out a 'socio-analysis' of his social position and life pathway.

**Parallel Discussion and Final Remarks**

Above I present the different cases of a number of young people at the end of their school careers and look at the ways they deal with transitions. I present extracts from the young people's narratives of the self and discuss the different ways they go about reading, understanding and managing their future pathways. I deploy Bourdieu's concepts to make sense of young people's narratives of imagined futures and mainly work with his concepts of habitus and field. To illustrate my points in a clearer way I use theorisations of late modernity as a framework for organising my analysis. As I explain at the beginning of the chapter, I consider Bourdieu's model and late modernity theories to be two sides of the same coin. Both approaches have been particularly influential in contemporary social sciences and they have both

demonstrated a way of out of the structure and agency dualism. I particularly refer to and discuss in parallel the conceptualisation of reflexivity through these perspectives as a concept central to overcoming the divide between structure and agency. For Bourdieu, reflexivity is context specific and entails the principles of the objective conditions within which it has been generated. For Beck and Giddens reflexivity is engendered by the meltdown of what Bourdieu calls fields, along with the dissolution of their workings and implications for the formation of subjectivity. Reflexivity and individualization fill in this gap at the institutional level as well as at the individual level. Below I summarise and bring together the main points of my analyses. It must be highlighted that the young people's narratives have been constructed within the context of an interview process, so the stances discussed were therefore adopted for the purposes of the interview. In other words, the imagined futures constructed have to be read as young people's preferred narratives.

Anais and Marianna are seen to exemplify what late modernity theories would identify and understand as individuals who develop a project of themselves and craft their self-identities reflexively. Both girls narrate themselves as being in control of their biographies and life trajectories, as well as being aware of where they want to find themselves in the future and how to achieve this. Their narratives deliver a proactive and rather individualised form of engagement with their life projects. Costas and Anna also indicate a certain degree of reflexivity, although not entirely of the kind that late modernity theorists describe. In Beck's and Giddens' framework the cases of Costas and Anna capture instances of individuals' disembedding of themselves from structural contexts and their workings. Although not strategic and proactive in the same way as Anais and Marianna, Costas and Anna might be depicted as youth subjects who are actively involved in crafting their life trajectories.

From the perspective of late modernity theories, Angeliki's and Giannis' narratives of imagined futures may, in contrast, be understood as unreflexive; particularly Giannis' narrative, which can be considered in relation to the idea of 'reflexivity losers'. While suggesting the demise of structural workings in the formation of self-identities and life pathways, commentators who study inequality (Lash & Urry, 1994; Lash, 1994) refer to different 'life chances' and therefore 'reflexivity chances' that depend on access to information and communication

configurations. Lash (1994) argues that 'life chances in reflexive modernity are a question of access not to productive capital or production structures but instead, of access to and place in the new information and communication' (p.121). Angeliki on the other hand, narrates herself as adopting a loose engagement with the future while considering it as positively entailing several possibilities, none of which she wishes to rule out yet.

The differentiation that I map out, that is, the diversity in young people's perceptions and forms of engagement with future pathways, raises a question mark as to the universalism that late modernity theories claim. Reflexivity does not appear to be an equally shared feature in all youth narratives since different understandings and responses and different degrees and forms of reflexivity emerge in my analysis. Therefore, throughout the analysis of the data I have found that while the social world declared in Beck's and Giddens' theories obliterates structure, their framework leaves little possibility for explaining such differences and understanding social context in a more localised sense. Bourdieu's set of concepts allows room for exploring such differences and understanding different forms of reflexive engagement with the self by conceptualising young people's responses as context specific. Using Bourdieu's concepts – in particular his concept of habitus and field – I look further into youth narratives of imagined futures.

Marianna and Anais narrate themselves as 'knowing what they're doing' and 'being in control' of their pathways. I refer to Marianna's narrative as indicative of a strategic, proactive, future-oriented and calculative attitude towards the formation of her life pathway. Marianna's narrative is constructed along with certainty, decisiveness and assertiveness. Developing a do-it-yourself project towards academic and professional success is narrated as a highly demanding, individualised and emotionally draining process. I consider all of the above along with Marianna's narrative of family support. Referring to her father's large volume of cultural capital and educational qualifications she constructs higher education as a common-sense way forward and conveys a sense of entitlement towards graduate and postgraduate studies both within Greece and abroad. Marianna constructs her future plans by counting on the financial and practical support of her parents and assuming their moral encouragement and reassurance. Accordingly, Marianna's reflexive

engagement with a pathway towards professional success involves a certain distance from material and emotional necessity, both of which offer her access to a range of cultural and emotional resources. Furthermore, they allow the possibility of forming valid responses and avoiding the overwhelming effects that such a self-project may entail.

Anais narrates the process of crafting a complex future-oriented pathway through aiming to combine professional ballet dancing with higher education. She constructs an imagined future in terms of a do-it-yourself self-project and narrates herself as dealing with it in individualised ways. On the one hand, she conveys a sense of confidence, optimism and certainty with respect to academic success. On the other hand, while articulating a highly reflexive narrative of herself she demonstrates the dark side of reflexivity and individualisation, by highlighting the psychological pressure, the physical fatigue, the emotional demands and their implications for raising dilemmas, ambivalence and contradictions within oneself. Setting up such a future pathway and coping with the demands involved is understood within the context of Anais' personal history. In particular, through working with Bourdieu's tools I take into consideration the rich cultural capital possessed by Anais' parents and her lived experience of cultural distinction, although this is not accompanied by economic distinction. Growing up in a person-oriented family and growing up in a way that is very different from that of her peers and traditions within the local dominant culture is also related to Anais' possession of academic 'know-how', her predisposition towards academic success and her ability to cope with complex life plans in individualised ways.

Angeliki's narrative delivers a positive outlook for the future and manifests a relaxed and loose engagement with this matter by leaving several possible scenarios open. I make sense of her narrative in terms of resistance and negation to plan or articulate a specific view of future education and/or employment. In other words, Angeliki constructs herself as avoiding and resisting reflexivity. Drawing on Du-Bois Reymond's (1998) research I discuss Angeliki's nonchalance as sharing similar features with the youth subjects of Reymond's research. I therefore go about understanding it as developing within the context of material and cultural security provided by Angeliki's familial background. In Bourdieu's terms, both Angeliki and

Reymond's subjects might be understood as being equipped with a valid and highly classified habitus that can be valued and exchanged across a broad range of fields. In other words, a type of habitus that can generate practices of distinction in a wide range of fields and thus minimise risk and offer a safety net for the trajectories of these young people.

Conversely, Giannis' narrative echoes a group of young people studied by Ball, et al. (2000) whose futures appear to be 'vague, postponed – difficult to think about' (p.110). Furthermore, Ball et al. (2000) discuss these young people as feeling safer 'in the here and now, in "getting by"' (p.110). In a similar way, Giannis conveys a sense of puzzlement and narrates himself as being 'lost' and 'still in search' of a desired self. Using Bourdieu's tools I elaborate on Giannis' case, regarding him as being caught at a point of mismatch between habitus and field. In other words, I observe an asymmetry between his habitual inclinations and career anticipations. The lived experience of this mismatch is narrated as implicating immobilisation in the social field. In order to understand further Giannis' narrative as a case of disrupted habitus I draw on Bettis (1996) and her appropriation of the notion of liminality. I therefore suggest that the economic and social landscape of Athens can be understood as featuring a liminal state. Giannis' inherited predispositions are discussed as containing limited strength for orientating him within this changing field.

Costas and Anna narrate themselves as developing strategies for mobilising themselves within social space and moving away from their 'given place' in the social world. For Anna this involves a strategy for escaping the cultural conditions that accompany the familial social positioning by broadening the horizon of the subject positions available. For Costa it constitutes a strategy for 'working over' habitus and dispositions in order to gain access to better valued forms of capital. In both cases education is perceived as offering the means for social mobilisation; hence Costas and Anna narrate their struggles for accumulating educational qualifications aimed at achieving cultural distinction.

Using Bourdieu's concepts, in both cases I depict a mismatch between habitual inclinations and future aspirations. Costas' close contact with the 'cave of literature' is narrated as introducing him into a type of cultural capital that is distinctively different from his familial and inherited capital. This experience inspires

him towards developing certain anticipations with respect to his future career, as well as stimulating a reflexive awareness of the objective conditions that define his social position. In Anna's case the experience of migration is narrated as familiarising her with a different culture, stimulating certain aspirations for future education and lifestyle, as well as triggering increasing anxiety and discomfort. I discuss Costas' narrative in terms of a 'divided habitus' and Anna's case in terms of Bourdieu's 'fish out of water'. In these cases I understand reflexivity as being developed within the context of contextual contradictions, that is, young people's contact with unfamiliar fields, whereas individualisation is generated due to a lack of valid parental support and limited relevant resources being directly available to them.

Using Bourdieu's tools to explore young people's narratives of imagined futures I point out on the relationships between different forms of youth experience, the contextual features of social positioning and the individuals' life histories. In the cases of Marianna and Anais I understand reflexivity in terms of a disposition. I identify the constitutive elements of a reflexive form of engagement with the self along with the material, cultural and symbolic conditions of their narrated life histories. In Angeliki's case I find that although the cultural and symbolic conditions of the development of reflexivity seem to be present, reflexivity is resisted and negated. In this respect my case demonstrates that the presence of conditions that might potentially activate reflexivity, that is, the objective conditions that people find themselves in, are not directly translated into reflexive practices. I capture young people's narrated practices as allowing or undermining the activation of such elements and thus developing or escaping reflexivity. Nevertheless, I do not see this as signifying the freeing of subjects from structural workings; on the contrary, I relate it to the unequal distribution of uncertainty and risk. My point here is that some forms of social positioning allow flexibility and the emergence of a diverse range of responses whereas others involve a stronger binding of young people's practices.

Overall, all of the above narratives as they were presented and discussed illustrate a view of the different forms of youth experience. For Marianna and Anais, like Zinneker's (1991) post-adolescence, youth is a phase marked by preparation for adult life and a shifting of responsibilities from youth to adulthood. For the two girls youth is lived as an autonomous phase and involves the acquisition of qualifications

for achieving the desired adult self. It is a phase during which decisions regarding future directions are made and the present activity is mainly invested in the future. In both cases youth is characterised by blurred boundaries with adulthood since the two girls narrate themselves as having responsibility for their lives and guiding their self-development project. For Costas and Anna youth is narrated as a phase of breaking through to the other side and is not definitively imagined or articulated. Youth for Costas and Anna is a phase of struggle in defining their desired subjectivity and accumulating the tools for achieving it with limited cultural and symbolic resources being available to them. It is a phase for gaining independence. For all of the four cases referred to so far youth is a phase in which subjectivity is narrated as a process of becoming and less in terms of being. In the cases of Angeliki and Giannis youth is a phase with a value in itself while subjectivity is narrated in terms of being. This is narrated as an issue to be resolved for Giannis, while for Angeliki it is narrated as a lived experience of a phase of enjoyment and the postponement of adulthood.

# CHAPTER 4. TECHNOLOGIES OF THE SELF AND SOCIAL TIME

## Introduction

In this piece of analysis I explore the temporal dimension of youth narratives of the self. I therefore work with a conceptualisation of time in terms of social time while also deploying Foucault's understanding of the formation of selfhood. Seeing time as part of individuals' conceptual framework and drawing on Tamboukou's (1999) work on 'technologies of space' I work closely with the concepts of technologies of the self and that of social time and try to analyse youth narratives from a 'technologies of time' perspective. This represents simply an initial attempt to grapple with an understanding and analysis of time as a tool through which young people engage with themselves. In particular, I experiment with identifying certain definitions of time and youth constructed through youth narratives and discuss their implications for the self-formation process.

## Time as Social Time

Manifestations of time are identifiable across youth narratives of the self. Young people narrate themselves in temporal terms in a number of different ways. They have 'stretched the self' (Adam, 2004) in the past and the future, that is to say that throughout their narratives they 'sketch' temporal horizons and position themselves within these. Their narratives entail different experiences of time and perceptions of time along with respective meanings and implications for the formation of the youth self.

To describe and make sense of the above aspects of youth narratives I deploy the concept of social time. Time as a common-sense concept embedded in all aspects of human practice cannot be easily abstracted and conceptualised. Tabboni (2001) stresses that the discussion of time regularly falls into two traps, 'the self-evidence trap and the mystery trap' (p.6), and hence indicates the need for sociological work to shift away from such traps and unravel temporal dimensions of practice not only in

terms of a collective norm but also as an individual's choice (ibid.). I will pick up again on this latter point later in the discussion of social time. But first, I briefly present the central axes around which the approach to time is developed. After illustrating an approach towards the concept of time I move on to use it along with the concept of technologies of the self in order to interrogate youth narratives.

I will make sense of time, considering it as social in nature and therefore conceptualising it in terms of social time. Such a conceptualisation stands over and against a Newtonian perspective in which time is deemed to be part of and a structural characteristic of the natural order. Distinguishing nature and culture is particularly tricky in the discussion of time since the social organisation of life draws on and utilises natural rhythms and cycles and, as a consequence, 'time has often appeared to be an inherent natural characteristic of these entities' (Brockmeier, 1995, p.104). But as Brockmeier (1995) puts it, 'it takes on meaningful form as a symbolic product *of* and *within* a cultural context' (ibid). Following this point of view, my understanding of time is articulated in terms of a culturally generated and culturally specific artefact. In other words, I deploy an understanding of time beyond natural terms, considering it primarily as culturally generated and culturally specific.

Furthermore, I do not approach time as a mere container of human practice. In other words, time is seen as being formulated and existing within the social organisation of life. In this sense, individuals live within certain constructions of time; they live via time. Beyond this and following Godsen (1994), 'people create time'. Moreover, Adam's (1990; 1995; 2004) work on time demonstrates the multiple dimensions of time, suggesting that 'time is lived, experienced, known, theorized, created, regulated, sold and controlled. It is contextual and historical, embodied and objectified, abstracted and constructed, represented and commodified. In these multiple expressions time is an inescapable fact of social life and cultural existence' (Adam, 2004, p.1). According to Adam, time in the context of human lives and lived realities cannot be but social in its nature. In other words, 'all time is social time'. Most importantly, time is part of the conceptual system through which individuals perceive the social world and think of themselves. Or, as Brockmeier (1995) puts it, it constitutes a socially constructed 'category of the mind'.

As part of the conceptual apparatuses through which individuals perceive and

make sense of the world, time exists both in terms of a collective representation and an individual perception related to processes of individual meaning-making. Adam (1990) argues that cultural practice creates time and, conversely, in their relationship with time human beings create culture and structure their social lives. Shared temporalities can be seen as a social way of pronouncing meaning, setting moral objectives and priorities for individuals' lives as well as 'connecting change to the meaning they intend to confer on collective works, history and individual life in general' (Tabboni, 2001, p.9). However, while discussing Elias' work Tabboni (2001) indicates the limitations of seeing time merely as a collective norm and suggests the different individual perceptions and responses to temporal norms. Hence conceptions of time (for example, bedtime) are also formed, resisted and negotiated by individuals themselves or struggled over with parents (for example, school time, home time and so on).

According to the above and following Adam, individual practices constitute the site of time formation. That is, time cannot be sufficiently understood at the level of theory as an abstract concept. In Adam's words, 'There is an additional need to ground knowledge of the social relations of time in particular practices and technologies. This entails that we recognize time as theory and practice, experience and explanation, lived orientation and material expression' (Adam, 2004). This signifies a turn of the gaze upon the actual practice to explore time as enacted. Similarly, Munn (1992) views time 'as a symbolic process continually being produced in everyday practices' (p.116).

Social theorists and researchers have gone further to suggest the multiple and different perceptions and definitions of time (James & Mills, 2005). Chowers (2002) discusses the 'multiplicity of temporal homes' that are made available to individuals at each moment and concludes that 'at each passing moment, individuals are presented with different and even contradictory conceptions of belonging and home. Under these conditions each person makes a different choice in respect to her temporal home, and some will insist on anchoring themselves to particular places after all' (p.246). In this respect different time conceptions coexist, contradict and confront individuals in their everyday practices (for example, youth time, adult time or school time).

Bringing together the above points and summarising their aspects of time conceptualisations, time can be seen as part of the conceptual system through which individuals perceive the world. It constitutes a social artefact that is culturally specific. Time manifests itself as collective representation as well as an individual construction. It is lived, enacted and produced in everyday life and thus it can be 'fractured, multiple, and discontinuous'. As such, time is interwoven with forms of the social organisation of life, entangled in institutional configurations and manifested in social practices.

Time is inextricably connected with narrative. Narrative is not only a site of time manifestations but through narrative time perceptions also take shape. Here I draw on Brockmeier (1995), according to whom 'narrative "fuses" different times' and constitutes 'the most adequate form for our most complex constructions of time' (p.110). Viewing language from a cultural study framework in terms of 'language in use' Brockmeier (1995) stresses the ability 'to tell time' as one of the main characteristics of narrative and goes even further to suggest a perspective on time that focuses on the form of narrative as 'it is only in narrative that our most complex constructions of temporality take form' (ibid). Narrative is the site where the most complex scenarios of time, manifold temporalities and time syntheses are formulated. In the analysis that follows time is identified in and through youth narratives of the self. Youth narratives are regarded not only as mirroring time but furthermore, through narrative the concepts of individual time are identified as being shaped and existing in the uses individuals put them to.

## Time, Space and Constitution of the Self

In his late work on ethics and in the last part of *The History of Sexuality* (1987; 1988a) Michel Foucault is interested in the constitution of subjectivities. Foucault does not provide any kind of theory for the subject as such, but offers a set of theoretical tools as well as certain approaches for working towards analysing and understanding the formation of the contemporary self. The key axes around which his approach is constructed are the concept of technologies of the self, the theory of power and the concept of ethics. Besley (2005) provides a useful and accurate

summary of Foucault's work on the constitution of the self. According to Besley, individuals are continually in the process of constituting themselves as subjects of different kinds, 'through both technologies of the self and ethical self-constitution, and a notion of power that is not simply based upon repression' (Besley, 2005, p.79). As Youdell (2010) puts it, 'as productive power circulates in discourse the person is subjected to relations of power and rendered, a subject' (p.27).

In order to understand the process of subjectification Foucault directs his attention towards the analysis of 'the practices by which individuals were led to focus their attention on themselves, to decipher, recognize and acknowledge themselves as subjects' (Foucault 1987, p.5). Foucault became interested in the techniques, the instruments and ascetics (in the broad sense of the term) that individuals adopt in order to turn themselves into subjects of a kind. In order to grasp these practices Foucault (1988b) uses the concept of technologies of the self. Technologies are seen as

> The various procedures and techniques employed by an individual in a self-formation process [that] permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and the way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality. (Foucault 1988b, p.18)

The process according to which individuals establish a relationship with themselves involves the play of particular 'games of truth and error through which being is historically constituted as experience; that is, as something that can and must be thought. We are the 'games of truth by which man proposes to think of his own nature when he perceives himself to be' (Foucault, 1987, p.7) a subject of a kind. Moreover, following Foucault the process of subjectification is inextricably connected with the workings of power. Foucault (1982), while seeing power in dispersed and diffused forms, suggests that a form of power is always and necessarily present in the making of subjects. He refers to the meaning of the notion of the subject itself as either 'subject to someone else by control and dependence' or 'tied to his own identity by a conscience of self-knowledge', commenting that 'both meanings suggest a form of

power which subjugates and makes subject to' (Foucault, 1982, p.12).

Foucault's conceptual tools and his latest work, as well as Tamboukou's (1999; 2000) studies of space and the making of the female self, offer me both inspiration and the routes needed to grapple with questions of temporality in the constitution of youth selfhoods. Tamboukou's (1999; 2000) genealogical study provides an exploration of written narratives of the self by female teachers alongside configurations of space. In her study, space is understood both in terms of a material formation as well as a symbolic artefact. In particular, she focuses on what she refers to as 'the unimportant' moments in women's everyday lives as these were presented in their autobiographical writings. Thus she explores physical spaces and spatial images together with the practices through which women teachers attach meaning to different spaces. In this way Tamboukou (1999; 2000) interrogates the ways female teachers negotiate or resist given masculine spaces and the restrictions embedded within them in addition to exploring how they are involved in the making of alternative spaces of their own. Drawing on Tamboukou (1999; 2000) I will make sense of time as a culturally specific artefact that is reworked and reconfigured by individuals in their everyday practices. I will seek to explore time as an instrument that mediates 'reflections on modes of living, on choices of existence, on the way to regulate ones behaviour, to attach oneself to ends and means' (Foucault, 2000) and will therefore attempt to analyse youth narratives from a technologies of time perspective.

Although my analysis is inspired by Foucault's work and draws on his understanding of the self-formation process, I deploy Foucault's tools in a rather loose way. On the one hand, my interest in time lies in opposition Foucault's own primary concern with space, that is, my focus on social time and the youth self is different from what Foucault identifies as the 'anxiety of our era having to do fundamentally with space' (Foucault, 1998, p.175). In his essay on heterotopias Foucault (1998) suggests that

> The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are
> in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the
> epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are
> at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of

a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein. (p. 175)

Nevertheless, I think that in this essay Foucault is not arguing for a mere neglect of time in light of the rising significance of space as such. My take is that time refers to notions of historical time that dominated the nineteenth century, that is, a certain form of collective temporality and one that is all-encompassing, singular, linear and developmental. In other words, my understanding is that Foucault describes social change and the primacy of space along with the demise of traditional social temporalities and their workings. From this perspective his analysis of space does open up questions of time alongside spatial reconfigurations. Therefore, changing arrangements and images of space implicate or come along with shifting social and individual temporalities. Although there are some remarkable analyses of space and selfhood by feminist researchers (Tamboukou, 1999; 2000; McDowell, 1999), time is relatively underexplored. There are very interesting theorisations of time and social change (Adam, 1995; 1998) available but there seems to be little empirical work in this area. However, the youth narratives in my study are infused with time and so I have tried to grapple with time and the youth self by exploring certain forms of time as they are constructed in young people's narratives. I have achieved this by way of employing the prism of Foucault's analytical tools in relation to the self-making process.

My analysis is laid out and organised in a way that is unfamiliar with Foucault's work and this is perhaps another aspect of my loose deployment of Foucault's lenses here. I have organised the analysis in a case-centred way, although I consider these cases as no more than a heuristic devise that is used to facilitate my analytical aims. I find this structure useful in that it allows me to identify and discuss certain forms of temporality alongside forms of self-care.

*Yorgos: Self constructed in the extended present, in and through socialised time.*

Yorgos lives in Athens with his parents. His father runs his own company in the field of pharmaceutics. His mother is a lawyer and used to work with pharmaceutical

companies. Both parents are educated to a high degree. Yorgos' mother had given up her job for a few years but at the time of the interview she was considering the possibility of getting back into the job market after receiving some jobs offers. Yorgos goes to the General Lyceum and is following the Technological Direction. When asked where this choice comes from he explains that this was the easiest option available. He also explains that during the previous year he failed some courses but that he took the exams again in September and thus avoided losing a year in school. His efforts are focused on finishing school on time, that is, without failing courses and experiencing delays due to resitting exams. He speaks about the school and his parents' views as follows:

> I am crap at school, really crap. I am not stupid I just don't study. I am a pupil of 10 and 9 and 8 [out of 20]… when I was in the first year of secondary school I used to study and then I was getting 17s. So I think I am not stupid, I simply can't be asked to study. I don't fancy it. And sometimes my parents pick up on that and have a go at me. They say the girl next door studied while at school and then got into a good university, she did this, did that… she is happy now and will progress in her life. What are you going to do? Have you thought of your future at all? You should be putting more effort into that.
>
> And then I tell them that I simply don't care what others do. I care about what I do and I don't care at all about what others do. And whoever doesn't like me can just walk away. And then they say, 'You got us wrong, we don't mean to compare you with others… it's not a comparison…' and I tell them, 'Well, I actually do take it as a comparison, so stop it. I am gonna do whatever I want to do. Not what others choose to do – full-stop'! But I think they understand it pisses me off and they have stopped doing it as often as they used to.

Yorgos' narrative is very present focused. Throughout his narrative he reads himself in terms of the present and avoids extending himself into the future and thinking accordingly. Yorgos talks extensively about his everyday habits. He enjoys getting up early every morning and going to school early to meet his mates, drink coffee together and smoke before the lessons start 'with the danger of being caught by the head teacher,' which 'makes it more fun'.

Yorgos refers to a set of daily activities that he is involved with. As he explains, he spends some time every day after school playing with his PlayStation.

Each day after school he meets up with his friends and they either go out to the local cafes and bars or they stay 'at their square'. When the weather does not allow them to stay out he brings his friends home where they smoke and listen to hard rock and heavy metal music. Yorgos talks about 'his mates' and 'his gang' extensively and describes in detail their life at their square or park: 'When we are lucky enough we may have a fight with the guys from the other square or park or with the skaters' or 'we may have some girls to keep us "good" company... you know what I mean [smiles and winks] I don't need to elaborate'. Yorgos describes in detail two particular incidents, two 'good fights', in his words, that they have had 'so far' with 'those BMX guys and those skaters that tell us off for paying to go out to cafes and bars and for smoking and drinking'. Moreover, Yorgos talks passionately about his hobby, karate, and is proud of having attained a black belt.

At the time of the interview the rest of Yorgos' classmates were on a five-day school excursion. Yorgos was punished and excluded from the excursion and talks about the incident that led to his exclusion. He talks about it as an unfair and exhibiting unequal treatment on the part of his teachers. He thinks that his teachers are negatively predisposed towards him and that this unfair treatment is due to the fact he is generally a bad student and disruptive and whenever something happens at school he becomes an easy target for them.

The frame of reference that Yorgos draws from in order to narrate his sense of self is mainly located outside education. In spatial terms his identity is mainly narrated and constructed outside and beyond the school and other educational spaces. In relation to his educational identity Yorgos states his aversion to studying. While speaking about education he uses expressions such as the following: 'I am lazy', 'I am smart but can't be bothered', 'it's boring', 'I can't be bothered', 'can't be asked', 'I am a rebel' and 'we were born lazy rebels in this world'. These discursive negations constitute a means for making sense of his self in education. In this sense, when it comes to education Yorgos constructs himself as a subject through a set of negativities. In other words, he reads and narrates himself as an anti-subject.

Moreover, Yorgos seems to discursively construct his male identity through 'forms of masculinities that are familiar in contemporary discourses of "doing boy" of "being loud and disruptive"' (Burke, 2007, p.420). Yorgos' narrative exemplifies

Burke's (2007) observations in relation to the discursive construction of a 'natural tendency' in males 'towards laziness and disorganization' (Burke, 2007, p.422). Burke finds that accounts of laziness by males have a dual function: 'first, they recuperate determinist discourses that construct boys/men as having a natural propensity to laziness, reminiscent of the cliché that "boys will be boys". Simultaneously, they claim an identity as naturally intelligent despite their laziness' (ibid, p.422). Such an approach and construction of laziness is illustrated in Yorgos' narrative. In the quotation presented earlier Yorgos explains that he is smart but lazy. To make his case strong Yorgos explains that when he did put some effort into studying he did very well.

In temporal terms the mode of masculine youth subjectification presented above is present-focused and involves a construction of the self through the repetition of a set of rituals. The temporality embedded in Yorgos' techniques of the self could be better described in terms of an extended present. King (1983) refers to the 'extended present' as a process, 'an episode which, if not "enduring", persists; it is a process in which we may be engaged, at the same time as we reflect upon and even produce accounts of it' (p.27). The extended present is a somewhat contradictory notion as it gives emphasis to the present and thus to instantaneity, while at the same time denotes persistence. King (1983) comments that the extended present differs from an instantaneous notion of the present as the latter challenges any notion of duration. In contrast to the instantaneous present, according to King (1983) the '"extended present" has "body": a display of body sufficient to enable one to "seize it", to produce an account simultaneous with one's experience of it' (p. 27). In Nowotny's (1996) work the extended present is understood as a form of temporality created within contemporary conditions of socio-political change, where the future is overshadowed by the problems that are opening up in the present. According to Nowotny (1996), in a context where a general faith in social progress is interrupted and a reservation in terms of envisaging the future emerges, 'a momentum of the present has been established which has to concentrate on itself. The scope of action is restricted because a part of the future is already being disposed of in the present' (Nowotny, 1996, p.50).

In Yorgos' narrative the temporal horizon of the self is the present. The self is

constructed in socialised time through the repetition of everyday habits. In this sense, although Yorgos resists narrating the self in future terms he still reads himself along a temporality that involves reiteration, reduplication and thus entails a sense of persistence. From this point of view, and following King (1983), Yorgos' self-temporality is best described in terms of an extended present. In Nowotny's terms an extended present captures Yorgos' ambiguity and his hesitation in envisaging the future; this is seen as a new form of experiencing time. Nevertheless, although Yorgos' self-temporality is described in terms of an extended present his experience of temporality is not an individualised one. Quite the contrary, Yorgos' 'temporal homes', as these are constructed in his narrative, involve times of social interaction; the self is constructed in collective time and stabilised through the repetition of collective practices. In this respect, the self is constructed in and through socialised time.

*Dimitris: Self-constructed in habitualised time through anadiplosis.*

Dimitris lives in a town outside Athens with his parents, his younger sister and his baby brother. His father has a lorry that distributes water. During the winter months Dimitris also works with his grandfather who is an electrician. His mother is not officially employed but helps his father with the water distribution. Dimitris attends an evening Technical Vocational Lyceum and is following the engineering division. He takes afternoon courses due to his daytime work obligations. Work seems to be a central aspect of Dimitris' self-narrative. During the interview he was asked to describe a typical day in his week.

> DIMITRIS. My day is like everyone's day. Work in the morning...

> E. STAMOU. Where do you work?

> DIMITRIS. Now I work with my grandfather, he is an electrician and I am helping him out. During the summer I work with my father, he has a water truck and sells and distributes water to houses, villas... you know. It's a kind of seasonal job. He gets really busy during the summer. So now my day starts at around 6:30

a.m./7:00 a.m. and finishes around 1:00 a.m./2.00 a.m. in the night. Time is really limited. After work I go back home, I have a shower, grab my school bag and go to school. Studying comes late in the evening. After school we're trying to live a bit, to enjoy ourselves, you know... going for a coffee, a drink, something. On Saturdays I work till 2.00 p.m., 2.30 p.m., then I get a good rest and then at 8.30 p.m. I work at a cafe-bar, as a bartender. Well, my best mate is the owner's daughter and I was going there often; and once they asked me for help and I got stuck ever since. On Sundays I wake up midday to catch up with the hours of sleep that I miss during the weekdays. And then for the rest of the day I am out with my girlfriend and my friends, for a coffee, a cinema, a few drinks... So yeah that's how I spend my time.

E. STAMOU. And how do you find it? Is it tiring... or...?

DIMITRIS. It was tiring at some point. Now I have put myself on a schedule and I don't care. I follow it as a habit, I am used to it and I don't even think about it. I mean... if I think back to the last two years, I cannot think of a day that I said 'damn when is it going to be 12:30 to go?' This day hasn't come yet. Because I like doing things and when I'm active time goes fast and you don't even realise it. What I like about myself is that I don't get tired easily. I do all these things and I've never felt like collapsing! I can always do more... and that's something I like. I can do more and more... so I have potential.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

E. STAMOU. Do you feel you have freedom from home and your parents?

DIMITRIS. Yes loads, since I was very young, since when I was 11, 12... but I've had loads of responsibilities since when I was 11 to 12 too. Okay, during the summers when everyone was going swimming I was working with my father. I ended up going swimming three times throughout the whole summer... but I don't regret it because I am independent... in terms of money... and also emotionally, I can't say I've missed that. I am the kind of person who likes to work because I like feeling independent. I don't like becoming an extra weight to anyone.

..... .....

> I started working with my father so that he wouldn't need to
> pay an assistant. He didn't particularly ask me to do so. I
> started doing it because I kind of liked it. I think you have to
> do it. It's good to start your life early. You see life from a
> different point of view... I think it's good. You learn to view
> life correctly, the way you have to view it. Because okay, life
> is not only... bed... coffee, drinks, beach and girlfriends and
> stuff. It requires work, above all.

In ways similar to Giorgos, Dimtiris narrates himself mainly outside of school. Work seems to be a central focus of Dimitris' self-narrative and a main source for constructing and conveying a sense of self. His narrative is one of weak boundaries between adulthood and youth and is markedly different from the experiences of extended youth discussed earlier. However, compared with Giorgos' relaxed engagement with time Dimitris' sense of time is one of well-defined intervals, strict sequences and standardised repetitions. And there is a particular self-temporality that is embedded in the process of crafting such a youth masculine self.

Dimitris' daily time is divided into work time, school time and time that is left for him 'to live', that is, to go for a coffee, a drink or go to the cinema with his friends or girlfriend. Dimitris is in a position to narrate his practice in terms of an enduring set of successive, scheduled activities. Using temporal terms he summarises and describes his practice from the age of eleven till now, that is, both in the past and present, in the summer and during winter, in the weekdays and during weekends, from the morning to the evening. In this context the boundaries between the past, present and future appear to be weak, while on the other hand the boundaries between his daily activities are strictly defined. Therefore, in this sense, the temporal organisation of practice is seen as an orderly scheduled and enduring continuum. This conception of time is interwoven with a sense of self that is read and narrated in terms of being rather than for example, a sense of self that is in a process of becoming.

A central focus of his self-narrative is that of the narration of the working self. Work appears to be the means through which the self is constructed as a financially and emotionally independent subject. In Dimitris' narrative being financially dependent is regarded as being 'an extra burden' to others. In contrast to this the

working self is deemed to be a self-sufficient, independent and a responsible subject. Following Dimitiris' account, starting work at an early age signifies 'starting your life early' as 'life is not only... bed... coffee, drinks, beach, girlfriends and stuff. It requires work, above all'. Thus, on the one hand work is considered a requirement, an obligation as well as a necessary condition of maturity, and so it is described in terms of 'real life'. On the other hand, the practices that are usually attributed to the youthful self, in Dimitris' narrative are regarded as an incomplete and partial view of life, as being distanced from the world of work and 'real life'. In this respect youth is approached as a phase of immaturity while in Dimitiris' narrative overall the boundaries between youth and adulthood are blurred.

The working self that is outlined above also involves the construction of a certain type of masculinity. Through work time Dimitirs reads himself as a hard-working, mature and independent subject with strength and stamina. Moreover, he constructs himself as a struggling masculine subject. Through work time he obtains a sense of self-usefulness and develops a sense of self-potential. In temporal terms the hard-working masculine self is constructed through a set of well-defined intervals, strict sequences and repetitive temporalities. Throughout Dimitris' narrative the self is read as being enacted across standardised practices and, in temporal terms, in routinised, habitualised temporalities. His 'temporal homes' (Chowers, 2002) are stable, well-defined and strictly scheduled. While referring to routinised practice Dimitris narrates himself along with a sense of persistence and endurance. The self appears to be constant throughout the past, present and future. While the boundaries between the past, present and future are weak there is an enduring sense of time constructed in his narrative. In other words, in Dimitirs' narrative time is repetitive.

Furthermore, routinised time is related to a certain kind of work that is carried out on the self. When Dimitris is asked to reflect on his daily schedule he explains, 'It was tiring at some point. Now I have put myself on a schedule and I don't care. I follow it as a habit, I am used to it and I don't even think of it'. Through uniform time the self is 'put on a schedule' and as such it is structured and mastered. Routinised time is referred to by Dimitris as becoming a habit; it involves practice without any need for motivation or reflection. In the relevant literature the 'routinisation of time' is discussed along with early modernity and a Fordist mode of production where the

social arrangement of life is marked by relatively standardised and repetitive practices (Bauman, 2000, p.116-17). Routinised time has also been discussed in relation to individual stability and security. Giddens refers to routine as 'psychologically linked to the minimizing of unconscious sources of anxiety, it is the predominant form of day-to-day social activity. Most daily practices are not directly motivated [...]. In the enactment of routines agents sustain a sense of ontological security' (Giddens, 1986, p.282). Following the above, routinised time has a stabilising effect on individuals. From this perspective Dimitris' self is enacted and stabilised through temporal repetition.

In Dimitris' narrative routinised time is related to a strategy of mastering the self and disciplining the body. The habitualisation of time is presented as a way of coping with his daily schedule. Dimitris explains it thus, 'when I'm active time goes fast and you don't even realise it. What I like about myself is that I don't get tired easily. I do all these things and I've never feel like collapsing! I can always do more... and that's something I like. I can do more and more... so I have potential'. In this extract work time is time that has to pass; it has to 'go fast'. Dimitris points out his ability to manage his workload without getting tired. The mastering of the body in routinised time constitutes a source of self-satisfaction. Disciplining the body and maximising stamina is related to self-realisation. In other words, the habitualisation of time becomes the means towards developing a strong capable body or, in Dimitris' words, a self with 'potential'.


*Damien: Shifting self-temporalities and the unfolding self.*


Damien lives in a small town outside Athens with his parents and his older sister. His mother is a public servant who works at the City Council and his father is an electrician. His father is involved in local politics and is an elected member of the group of local governors. Damien attends a Unified Lyceum and is in the final year. He has followed the Technological Direction and is preparing for the Panhellenic exams in order to get into university. Nevertheless, he explains that he only 'got serious' with studies at the beginning of the year. Before this he was often skiving and 'couldn't be bothered' with tuition and school homework.

E. STAMOU. Are you getting private tuition?

DAMIEN. Yes, I get private tuition for all the modules of my direction. Actually, I didn't used to go that often. I was registered but I couldn't be bothered going. I was going out with my mates for coffee and chat or we were just getting together and listen to our music... But I started going this year. Last year I was... well for a certain period of time, I was not going there at all. They were calling me 'the phantom'.

E. STAMOU. How did you choose these particular private tuition centres?

DAMIEN. I didn't choose them, my parents sent me. But well, even if it was all up to me I would have decided to go as well... because, it's impossible to manage otherwise, I mean without private tuition. The situation is really shit at school. And after school I want to get into university... I want to move on.

.... ... ...

E. STAMOU. And in relation to these issues... do you discuss this at all with your family, etc.?

DAMIEN. Yes, yes. They have given me loads of freedom, they have left it up to me; they have left me to choose freely, to do whatever I like... you know, they are very good at that. I have nothing bad to say. And in general we discuss these issues. They haven't put pressure on me in terms of what I will choose but okay, lately they put pressure on me in order to sit down and study. And okay, that's fair enough. They are totally right, they are doing well. I wouldn't sort out myself on my own, for sure. I mean, I had realised what's going on, I am aware of what's at stake but still I wouldn't sit down on my own, without having someone to put pressure on me.

... ... ...

Because I understand that I have to sit down now, pull myself together, sit down and study so that I will move on... I will go somewhere else, to meet new people and see other things, different from what I am used to until now... to develop as a personality. I will only develop if I live new things, if I have new experiences.

E. STAMOU. So in general are you thinking about the future?

DAMIEN. Yes, I mean now yes. I am thinking about it, well I started
    thinking about it with a bit of a delay but at least now I do.

Damien's narrative entails a rupture with a past self. Damien narrates his past self as one who skives private tuition and 'can't be bothered' with studying; one that is formed in socialised time, mainly constructed outside education and focused on the present. This part of his narrative has some common features with Yorgos. Nevertheless, at the beginning of his last year of school Damien narrates himself as deciding to 'get serious'. This point of rupture is marked by a temporal re-contextualisation of the self. More specifically, the self is extended into the future and this shifting temporal horizon signifies the need for a different form of engagement with the self. In other words, the temporal horizon of the self changes and along with it the type of work that is to be performed on the self. In this sense, shifting temporalities come along with a shift of self-understanding from being to becoming a subject of a kind, which is sometimes referred to as the 'labour of becoming' (Venn & Terranova, 2009).

The temporal re-contextualisation of the self is coupled with a re-framing of a set of relevant practices. Practices that in previous years were regarded as boring and unattractive are re-contextualised and acquire new and different meanings and value. Studying becomes meaningful while attending private tuition becomes necessary. Following Damien, after realising 'what is at stake' the self has to be 'sat down' and 'pulled together'. The decision to go to university and 'move on' signifies a shift from a loose engagement with time to a process of structuring the self through time. The extension of the self into the future requires taking control over the present self, disciplining the self and gaining a kind of temporal sovereignty. Damien finds this type of work over the self difficult and he refers to his parents' pressure as necessary for forcing the self to sit down and concentrate on studying. Hence the previously dispersed self is to be pulled together, to become focused and centred on a future goal.

Damien's shifting engagement with time involves the production of a certain

kind of self-knowledge along with the set of techniques directed towards the self that were previously discussed. In relation to the constitution of this self-knowledge Damien refers extensively to his discussions about the future with his friends.

E. STAMOU. In general, with friends, do you discuss these issues?

DAMIEN. Many times, yeah... Because I expect my friends to help me, to help me think of things, you know. I mean at some point we were discussing things a lot and we were going really in depth and this was really helpful.

... ... ...

Particularly with one guy... he is two years older than me and he sat me down and started explaining what I would gain out of studying. Not what I would gain if I went to university in terms of qualifications and bright careers and success and money and lifestyle and stuff... We were talking about the kinds of experiences I would gain as a person. And how I will be able to develop my critical thinking throughout it... you know what I mean? Like, even through physics... we were discussing about studying physics not for the sake of physics or for the sake of good marks but like, studying physics because you will be able to develop your critical thinking towards things... to think more clearly, to have... more open horizons and a more open mind.

... ... ...

Well the relatives and the adults around... well they say the typical stuff, 'you have to go to university to get educated'... and I am 'oh yeah? Really? Yeah, yeah... of course'. It goes in one ear and then goes out the other.

Damien considers as valid self-knowledge that is developed along with his peers while regarding as useless and stereotypical the knowledge about oneself provided by relatives and other adults in the form of advice. He talks about his long discussions with his friends as the means for configuring a certain kind of self-understanding and aiding a repositioning of the self. The future self becomes an object for discussion and entails questions, issues that have to be addressed in-depth and although collectively, that is, along with his good friends. Through this process a certain knowledge about the self is generated. For Damien this brings about a re-conceptualisation of education

and re-positioning of the self. The 'open-minded' self is to be achieved through studying, which then acquires a new meaning. School knowledge is now understood as a means for crafting critical thinking and an open-minded self. In this respect re-temporalising the self brings about a conceptualisation of present time in terms of an opportunity for building up the desired self.

Later on Damien is asked whether he thinks of the long-term future at all and he replies as follows:

> E. STAMOU. And what about the longer term future. Are you thinking of it at all?
>
> DAMIEN. Yes, yes I do. Sometimes I do think about it but then I get stressed and then I stop thinking about it.
>
> E. STAMOU. Oh really? Is there something in particular that stresses you?
>
> DAMIEN. Well yes, in general the possibility of stagnating as a person, you know. It really stresses me, very much. To be stuck in a routine, to do the same things again and again every single day. And I am stressed because you can be in this phase without realising it. It scares me.
>
> E. STAMOU. And does it have to do with a future job or in more general terms?
>
> DAMIEN. In general, with my mind, my way of life and the way of thinking. It's to do with my mindset really; being stuck, doing the same things again and again without being bothered or without freaking out [being aware/realising it]. Being stuck in a routine and doing something unconsciously again and again and being okay with it. I have examples in my mind, I know people like that around. That's why I'm telling you. If I think of the possibility of staying stagnated I feel really scared, I freak out about the idea.

Again, in this extract from Damien's narrative time and the constitution of the self appear to be inextricably connected. The long-term future becomes stressful when it entails the possibility of stagnation. Stagnation in Damien's narrative is perceived in

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terms of standardisation of activity and routinised time. Damien speaks about his fear of being 'stuck' in a routine, doing the same things 'again and again', 'unconsciously' 'without even realising it'. His fears about the future self are hence related to habitualised time as well as repetitive, non-motivated and non-reflective types of practice. When analysing Dimitris' narrative earlier in this study I refer to routinised time along with its workings towards stabilising and securing an individual's sense of self via repetition and regulation. Nevertheless, what is narrated as a source of security and stability for some, for others seems to involve a sense of stagnation and boredom. In Damien's narrative the desired self is one that is ever-experiencing, ever-changing and thus ever-developing through time and his narrative of the self involves movement towards an unimagined future.

*Katerina: The communitarian self – accumulative notions of time.*

Katerina lives in Athens with her parents and her younger sister. Her parents are educated up to secondary level. Her father owns a car components shop and her mother works a few hours a day there, helping out with the accounts. Katerina refers in detail to her relationship with her parents. She explains that they are very close to each other, talk a lot about things and make decisions about their family together. She also mentions that the only issue about which they may argue is finances. Katerina also explains that her father's shop is not going very well and as a result she has been asked to plan her spending carefully and ask her parents in advance when she wants to go out. She clarifies that she totally understands such a need but still finds it somewhat restricting.

Katerina attends a state school and is following the theoretical direction. She wants to become a teacher or a psychologist because she likes helping and supporting people. At several points in her narrative she demonstrates her concern for the future and speaks extensively about it. In the following extract Katerina speaks about her overall experience of being in the last year of school and preparing for exams:

> You have to sit down on your own and think. You have to explore yourself and think... you have to learn yourself as fast as possible and make decisions. And you have limited time for that... There are

people at my age that still don't know... they still haven't worked out what they want to do... I do know; well, more or less... but I do know what I want to do. There are others that don't even know... and they are not interested in figuring out. They don't care... is it a matter of character?... I don't know. I just don't understand them! When I see people like that... I feel so... What are they gonna do in their lives? I mean... what is gonna happen thereafter? If they don't make a decision now... their life may get destroyed... Okay, I may be exaggerating here... but their life may go wrong... and they may get a job that they don't like and end up being sad for the rest of their lives... I prefer to make my decisions and feel fine with myself later on in my life.

Throughout her narrative Katerina sketches a future horizon and reads her self as working towards it. The orientation of the self towards the future involves the development a certain kind of knowledge about the self. Katerina refers to the necessity for her to sit down on her own and think about the self, to 'learn herself as fast as possible' before making decisions. The self for Katerina, becomes an object of interrogation. One has to turn the gaze upon the self in order to extract a certain kind of self-knowledge. This practice of self-exploration is thought of in terms of a duty that one has towards oneself; it constitutes a necessary process so that the future self will attain a state of happiness.

Here, particular elements of Foucault's analyses can be taken into consideration. In Foucault's later work (1887; 1988a) 'care of the self', self-knowledge and ethics are all involved in the formation of the self and the establishment of a certain type of relationship with the self. Foucault refers to the study and practice of the relationship with oneself as 'ethics' and highlights the reflexive relationships that actors have with themselves. An 'ethical relationship' does not denote a relationship which is somehow 'good', but rather merely a relationship between an actor and him or herself. Katerina's self is narrated as being in a process of 'becoming' a certain type of subject. The present self is reworked and set under development in order for a desired form of subjectivity to emerge. Extracting some kind of knowledge and figuring out a kind of truth about oneself constitutes for Katerina a central requirement and pre-supposition for 'taking care' of and working

on the self.

Later on in the interview she speaks about the future and issues that make her worried:

> Yes, like unemployment... I get stressed about these things, you know... I want to do my things now and then I want to be able to give back to my parents and in general... to give back things... I don't know if you understand... to do things for others as they do for me now. And unemployment is an obstacle to that... so it stresses me out a bit.

Katerina also speaks about her concern with the future in terms of 'being able to give back'. She spends a considerable part of her narrative describing the kind of work carried out on the self, as well as the way she goes about extending the self into the future. While talking about her self she uses expressions like I enjoy 'the style of helping people, making things easier for them, making them happy' or I like 'helping others' and 'I want to give back'. Seen in Foucault's terms, Katerina's form of care of the self along with the 'ethical relationship' to herself involves the assimilation of certain truths.

In the context of his study of the emergence of subjectivity in Ancient Greece Foucault's observes that 'taking care of oneself requires knowing oneself [...] but also knowledge of a number of rules of acceptable conduct or of principles that are both truths and prescriptions. To take care of the self is to equip oneself with these truths: this is where ethics is linked to the game of truth' (Foucault, 1994, p.285). In Katerina's narrative the present self is equipped with certain truths derived from a process of self-observation and self-learning as well as certain principles related to attaining a desirable subjectivity. Katerina narrates herself in terms of 'helping others' and works towards developing a future self that will be in a position to 'give back'. In Foucault's work the relationship to oneself has four major aspects that are codified as ethical substance, mode of subjectification, ethical work and *telos* (Foucault, 1982, p.263). He analyses the process of the self-formation for an 'ethical subject' as one in which 'the individual delimits that part of himself that will form the object of his moral practice, defines his position relative to the percept that he will follow, and decides on a certain mode of being that will serve his moral goal' (Foucault, 1987,

p.26).

In Foucault's language Katerina's 'ethical substance' is the future self. Katerina narrates the work that has to be carried out on the self as a future educational and working subject. The care of the self is narrated in terms of a duty that one has towards the self in terms of a moral responsibility. In temporal terms this 'mode of subjectification' carries a certain concern with the future and subsequently a contextualisation and over determination of present time by a wider future prospect. The process of developing a caring self while aspiring to a communitarian mode of being involves accumulative notions of time. Time adds up and the self is developed in order to become a socially useful self that is in a position to offer back to the community. In this scheme time works in cumulative ways towards building up and equipping the present self.

*Marianna: Maximising notions of time, maximising notions of self.*

Parts of Marianna's narrative were also discussed in the previous chapter in which I analyse her reflexive engagement with the future in relation to education and/or career together with the emotional politics involved. I will now come back to her narrative to interrogate aspects of it using Foucault's tools and posing questions of time and self-formation. Marianna lives in Athens with her mother and grandmother. Her mother graduated from a Vocational College and works as a nurse and her father is educated to postgraduate level and works for the Ministry of Culture.

During the interview Marianna talks extensively about her future plans.

> I am thinking of working in a cafe at the beginning in order to make some money, to be able to be moving... I will be studying... and... I will start searching. I will search for a temporary job in an accountancy office at the beginning, then I will search in companies and these kinds of things... I will find something... okay, it's impossible not to find something. And then... I will write a dissertation, and I will graduate. I will go to London to do an MA, I also want to do a few other things... I will start learning Italian or Spanish from next year. So I want... within the next five years to be done with university, to have done Italian or Spanish, to have the 'Proficiency' certificate in English... so I will have something. I will

do my MA afterwards... so in around seven years from now I want to be done with what I want. And then... yes.... after all these degrees, I *will* find something good. I don't want to achieve a high economic position. I want to achieve a high social position. I think this comes first and money comes out of it. I think it works this way, not the other way around.

Marianna narrates herself by extending the self into the future. Future time is divided into stages and towards achieving a certain goal. Her overall sense of self seems to be described as in a process of becoming rather than being or more precisely, a certain form of self is to be achieved. This is a process similar to the one described in Foucault's later work on subjectivity. Within this framework present time is invested in the achievement of a future self. Marianna articulates a future-focused care of the self that is led by rational reasoning and an aspiration towards a marketable self. The mode of subjectivity desired by Marianna might be described in terms of a 'rational, enterprising and constantly strategizing entrepreneur' (Apple, 2001). A scheme of making the most out of the present time in order to invest the most in the future self is a fair representation of Marianna's technologies of time. Her ethical self-constitution involves both maximising notions of time as well as maximising notions of self (Rose, 1992).

Marianna narrates future time as regulated to fit her desired self. Time is divided and deployed according to needs: it is narrated as used, managed and manipulated. Marianna conveys a sense of the mastery of time. Within this framework all aspects of present time seem to be defined (or redefined). Socialised time, individual time and leisure time are seen as being framed within a temporal horizon of self-maximisation. Such a horizon also signifies a great intensification with present time. Marianna speaks about this tension as follows:

> My mom is fine. She doesn't bother me. When I tell her please don't disturb me... she simply does it, she won't say anything... I need time for myself. You know... because I get tired, I get really tired. It's all these lessons now... and it's all this pressure you have. Let alone that now I feel that my mind changes, I think a lot... I now develop a point of view on things, in general. And only these things that I think and all these things that I feel... I get tired... do you know what I mean?

Here Marianna's technology of the self is narrated as requiring the elaboration of the present self in order to reach a desired form of subject. She speaks with emphasis about being under pressure and getting tired and indicates the need to have 'time for her self'. Time is deployed as a tool for thinking about the self as well as taking care of the self. Spending time with herself and alone is narrated as a restorative kind of practice (Tamboukou, 1999; 2000). Unlike other narratives previously presented in Marianna's case the self is formed in private time and performed in social time.

During the interview Marianna is asked about her views on drug consumption:

> E. STAMOU. And what about drugs... Do you use or have you ever used at all?

> MARIANNA. Only with this friend I was telling you about, we used to smoke sometimes but again now... I'm not able, cause I'm busy... it's not possible... because of what I was telling you earlier. We are busy, we have things to do, we can't now... smoke... you know... We don't have time for this stuff... we are busy! No time!

She was also asked to talk about leisure time and her preferred activities:

> I used to go out all the time, dancing, drinking and stuff. Now... I don't know, I'm tired... and I can't be bothered. It's good if you have nothing better to do in your life but I don't have time. No time!

The desired future self in education and employment seems to provide the tempo for orchestrating present activities both in education and leisure. Marianna's narrative may be approached following Gee in terms of a 'self as portfolio', where experiences are utilised to build upon the self and improve marketability (Gee, 1999). From this standpoint Marianna cannot afford to spend time on activities that do not add value to the desired goal. Time is regarded in strategic terms as a resource and as such it is manipulated and channelled towards a certain goal. Its value is related to its potential to contribute to the marketability of the self. While time is considered in terms of its 'usefulness' aspects of socialised and leisure time are redefined and their value is

subject to question. O'Flynn and Petersen's (2007) research into the construction of marketable subjectivities highlights the reframing of leisure activities. Drawing on the narratives of two girls they demonstrate how activities are thought of in terms of what is useful and worthwhile and speak about leisure activities as a 'waste of time'. Leisure, pleasure and socialised time are losing credit and are thus squeezed in order to open up more useful and productive time for the self.

**Final Remarks**

In the above analysis I have tried to work with a definition of time as a social construct that is, a scheme that mediates individuals' engagement with the social world. As such, time is viewed as lived, enacted and constructed by individuals in their everyday practice. Seeing time is such a way entails bracketing its common-sense familiarity, which in turn opens a ground for sociological exploration. Viewing the data through Foucault's point of view and following such a working definition of time I consider time as a technique of the self that is, as a tool through which individuals make sense of their self and work on the self while attaching it to certain ends and means.

Along with a sociocultural definition of time, Foucault's technologies of the self are deployed as analytical tools. I therefore work towards mapping out particular time conceptions and relate them to the techniques employed in the formation of the self, in their articulation with the sets of ethics involved and the respective means and anticipated ends. I begin to develop a set of analytical categories, that is, technologies of time that involve particular self-temporalities, forms of care of the self and types of self-knowledge. Following Foucault, 'just as there are different sorts of care, there are different shorts of self'. From this point of view, while looking at the techniques of time I also glimpse the temporalities embedded in the selves to which young people aspire. All these are no more than heuristic analytical devices and a set of interpretations, all of which are mediated by subjective inclinations and dispositions. Bearing in mind the limitations below I summarise the discussion and point out the areas that Foucault's lenses open for the analysis of youth narratives of the self.

The narratives of Yorgos and Dimitris involve a temporal horizon that focuses

on the present, albeit in different ways. Throughout his narrative Yorgos constructs his self in an extended present. Although the concept of the extended present is often described in the literature as relating to conditions of late modernity, Yorgos constructs his self mainly in socialised time. Private and individualised time do not seem to be of significance and the self is mainly formed in and through time that is lived collectively. This 'modernist' form of self-formation involves resisting the temporalities embedded in the institutional configuration of school, as well as those assigned by parental advice. Opposition to institutional time is coupled with collective agency in crafting one's own self-temporalities through temporal reiteration. Dimitris narrates himself in routinised, habitualised time marked by endurance and blurred boundaries between the past, the present and the future. While the main frame of reference for his narrative of the self is work time he articulates a sense of self through the strict repetition of practices and a continuous, stable temporality. The quest for the self presented in Dimitirs' narrative is to fit in with work temporalities by developing strength, stamina and bodily discipline. In other words, the self is to be mastered through habitualised time in order to fit institutionalised temporalities. Agency is therefore limited and time is perceived in terms of a container of one's practices.

In the narratives of Damien, Katerina and Marianna the self is set within a broader temporal horizon characterised by an outlook for the future. A shared feature of the three narratives is that the self is read as being in a process of becoming. Damien refers to an experience of interrupted self-temporality and a subsequent shift of focus from the present to the future. Shifting temporal horizons involves a re-contextualisation of old practices by attaching them to different meanings. Activities that were deemed to be boring in the past are valued in the present since they are included in the future horizon. Damien's narrative of the self involves agency in active interaction with time; the desired self is ever changing and ever unfolding; involves new forms of experience throughout the passage of time. Within this context routinised time is narrated as a fear. It is considered in terms of stagnation and therefore regarded as a danger for the desired form of selfhood.

In both Katerina's and Marianna's narratives the self is extended into the future and the care of the self is narrated in terms of a work in progress. Both self-

narratives attribute a significant space to agency and entailed a sense of the mastery of time. Time is narrated as a resource to be used in the development of the aspired to self. Nevertheless, Katerina and Marianna attach their selves to different ends and means and deploy different kinds of self-knowledge and forms of self-care. Marianna's narrative involves a quest for maximising the self along with maximising notions of time. The desired self implicates a certain temporality according to which the practice of the present self is orchestrated. Building upon the self in order to maximise it brings about an intensification of present time along with a reframing of old activities. Time for recollection constitutes a necessity for the temporally intensified present self and the relationship between self and others is rational and eclectic. Katerina, on the other hand, aspires to a form of communitarian self and the work carried out on her self involves accumulative notions of time. In accordance with this her forms of engagement with others is characterised by a quest for cultivation and sustainability throughout time. The girls' different aspirations and forms of self-care involve different forms of engagement with the present. For Katerina this is marked by additive and thus enduring notions of time, while Marianna's strategic management of the self involves eclectic and temporary forms of engagement with the present.

In this discussion I try to maintain a distance from definitions of time as 'objectively given', 'naturally' ordered and 'measured' and instead work with definitions of time in terms of 'a symbolic product of and within a cultural context' (Brockmeier, 1995, p.5). Working with Foucault's tools enables me to glimpse individuals both as subjecting or mastering, as well as being subjected to, certain time conceptions. Considering Adam's critical remarks in my analysis I attempt to avoid predefined time in order to produce both 'in time' and 'time in' discussions (Adam, 1990; 1995). In this sense time, in some cases, appears to be a container of practice, that is, it is narrated as a boundary within which life is enacted. In other cases time is narrated as being constituted or it emerges as 'embedded in' desired forms of self, institutional configurations, practices and forms of self-care. In this way technologies of time allow space for the emergence of different conceptions of time and self-temporalities while also allowing the interrogation of both generative and oppressive workings of time.

CHAPTER 5. THE FORMATION OF YOUTH IDENTITIES AS A PROCESS OF IDENTIFICATION

**Introduction**

In an earlier chapter, Chapter 2, I introduce Stuart Hall's 'new logics of identity'. I refer to Hall's re-conceptualisation of identity and discuss it as having developed within the context of late modern sociocultural changes and disciplinary shifts that have challenged and destabilised 'old logics'. In his later writings Hall reflects back on his overall work on identity formation and positions it within the context of the broader project of his intellectual output, that is, 'the present conjuncture' (2007b). Hall's understanding of the present conjuncture is based on the multiplicity of determinations as well as the openness to the play of contingency. Nevertheless, he notes that the social forces at work 'are not random', 'without structure or pattern', but are 'determinate [...] and formed up out of history'. 'Thinking conjuncturally' signifies for Hall an analytical interest in social phenomena, regarding them not as single entities but instead focusing on their multiplicity and historical specificity and therefore seeking to identify the different forms they take in different historical phases. In this respect Hall declares his interest not in racism but in 'different racisms', not in capitalism but in 'different forms of capitalism' and so on (2007b).

Along these lines Hall's (re)conceptualisation of identity is concerned with unpacking its multiplicity and highlighting its contextual specificities. Against views that regard identity as a stable, enduring core that is enacted in different settings Hall sees identity formation as a continuous and open-ended process. To stress the procedural character of identity he terms it identification. From this perspective individuals are perceived as existing in a continuous process of constructing and re-constructing identities across different settings. As well as signifying 'a source of agency in action', as Hall puts it, identification is 'something that happens over time, that is never absolutely stable, that is subject to the play of history and the play of difference' (Hall, 1991b, p.5).

According to Hall, the 'new logics of identity' also involves greater fragmentation and complexity in the light of the fading power of collective identities.

Hall refers to socioeconomic changes underlined by globalisation forces and the realignment the global and local dimensions that have undermined the 'great social collectivities' that used to 'stabilize and stage out our sense of ourselves' (Hall, 1991b, p.12). Nevertheless, he highlights that collectivities have not entirely disappeared as they have not lost their effect on individual identities as constraining forces that operate via exclusion. He argues that 'there is a relatively greater degree of openness in the balance between the "givens" of an identity and the capacity to construct it or make it' (Hall, 2007a, p.282). In this sense, following Hall, identities are understood as considerably 'fractured, fragmented, undermined, dispersed' (Hall, 1991b, p. 13).

In Hall's framework identities entail the multiple positioning of individuals in the social arena along with the politics of location that these positions involve. As collective identities are no longer 'already-produced stabilities and totalities' (Hall 1991a, p.45), they 'do not any longer have the suturing, structuring or stabilising force, so that we can know what we are by adding up the sum of our positions in relation to them' (Hall, 1991a, p.45). The question here is to attend the 'inner differences, their inner contradictions, their segmentations and their fragmentations' (Hall, 1991a, p.45) as Hall puts it. In other words, the task for Hall is how to 'describe this play of "difference" within identity' (Hall, 1990c, p.396).

The process of constructing identities is described as one that 'operates across differences, it entails discursive work, the binding and marking of symbolic boundaries, the production of frontier effects' (Hall, 2000, p.17). From the above the notion of identity that is employed in Hall's approach is 'not an essentialist but a strategic and positional one', one that is 'never singular but multiple, constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions' (ibid, p.17). Identification is, within this framework, regarded as a 'meeting point, a point of suture' and signifies an individual's active 'attachment to subject positions which are constructed by discursive practices' (Hall, 1995). In this sense identification is seen as 'successful articulation or "chaining" of the subject into the flow of the discourse' (Hall, 2000, p.19).

**Dis-identifications and Intersections**

Hall's view of identity formation as a continuous, open-ended and historically specific process raises a range of problematisations for traditional conceptions of self-identity and introduces a new vocabulary for thinking, describing and understanding it. Hall's vocabulary was followed up and developed further – specifically, towards politically critical and analytically rich directions – in the field of gender studies as well as in the field of cultural studies. Here I am going to pick up and discuss further aspects of such developments with regard to gender studies.

Within the context of gender studies a range of research focuses on counter-hegemonic and under-legitimated forms of identification. By depicting responses to dominant discursive positions and forms of resistance this kind of research seeks to open spaces for their visibility, recognition and legitimacy. In these cases researchers pay close attention to the active involvement of individuals in meaning-making and ways of negotiating or resisting mainstream discursive positions, in addition to ways of bringing about discontinuities and change. When dealing with such types of research enquiry feminist research deploys the concept of identification along with 'dis-identifications' to point out on the ways that individuals de-legitimise, distance and disconnect themselves from certain discursive subject positions. Dis-identifications refer to points of rupture in what Hall describes as the 'successful articulation of individuals to positions'. Moreover, the concept of 'counter-identification' has been used to describe the process of shaping hybrid or alternative positions, drawing on the material and symbolic resources that are available to individuals within a particular context at a specific historical moment. Therefore, the concepts of dis-identification and counter-identification extend Hall's emphasis on the active engagement individuals in shaping self-identities by drawing on available discourses and practices. Consequently, they constitute a useful vocabulary for describing and elaborating upon the process of identity formation.

From a different angle the influence of Hall's intellectual work in the field of gender studies is identifiable in studies of social stratification and inequality. Critical accounts (Anthias, 2005; Wright 2001; Crompton & Scott, 2005) regarding the lines along which the research agenda in this field has been developed point out divisions

between class and gender analyses in the discipline's early years and their respective constitution of these two as antagonistic fields. Wright (2001) argues that 'a great deal of theoretical energy has been devoted to metatheoretical debates over the general priority to be given to one or the other of these clusters of causal processes' (Wright, 2001, p. 38). According to Anthias (2005), within class analysis gender and race were originally treated 'as epiphenomena, as super-structural elements built upon a real foundation, which was to do with class relations' (Anthias, 2005, p.33).

Nevertheless, in the course of research developments in both fields the gap has narrowed so that today, according to Crompton and Scott (2005), there is a consensus among class and gender researchers that 'gender relations are also constitutive of class relations themselves' (p.188). Research enquiries have also been transformed due to critiques demonstrated towards 'additive models of oppression of gender, race, class' (Anthias, 2005, p.33) that view inequality in terms of layers of burdens. The focus of this research is aimed equally upon unpacking categories of social inequality as well as exploring the complex ways in which these categories come together to position individuals in unequal positions. Anthias suggests that 'the ways in which these forms of social organisation and identification intersect in specific sites to produce forms of social asymmetry is undoubtedly the most central development in the social theorization of inequality' (Anthias, 2005, p.32).

Within this focus there has been a growing interest in 'intersectionality' (Anthias, 2005; Anthias & Yuval Davis, 1992), that is, towards exploring the interconnections and interrelations between and across different forms of social inequality and identification. In the study of gender and class Wright (2001) argues that the two types of inequality and identification are not interconnected merely through the ways the affect each other but also through their effects of social phenomena so that 'the causal processes represented by the concepts "class" and "gender" are intertwined rather than operating simply as independent mechanisms' (p.33). In the study of race, ethnicity and gender Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) focus on the exploration of young masculinities in London, aiming at understanding the ways young people 'construct "racialised" identities for themselves' as well as the ways in which 'these identities intersect with their positions as young men' (p.147). They illustrate a view of the various ways in which 'young masculinities are entwined

with racialised identities' (Frosh, et al., 2002, p.174) and conclude that 'racialised differences are taken up in many different ways to inform and generate a highly variegated structure of identity' (ibid, p.147) and masculinity. Moreover, Mac an Ghaill's (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2007) research into contemporary racisms and ethnicities also considers race and ethnicity along with the formation of gendered identities and finds that 'particular social relations of race, simultaneously "speak" gender and sexuality: to be a "Paki" also to be a "non-proper boy" (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2007, p. 40).

## Exploring Multiplicity in Youth Identifications

In this piece of analysis I utilise Hall's conceptualisation of identity. In order to do so I explore youth identities as processes of identification and look into their 'inner differences'. Following Hall, my quest here is to attend to 'inner differences, their inner contradictions, their segmentations and their fragmentations' (Hall, 1991a, p.45). In other words, my task, as I define it, involves deploying Hall's perspective to 'describe this play of "difference" within identity' (Hall, 1990c, p.396), as well as exploring the ways differences are stitched together to formulate the unity of an identity; a unity that in Hall's terms is made out of difference. The analysis that follows draws on four youth narratives of the self and is separated into two parts. In the first part I discuss the narratives of the self of two immigrant girls and explore their identifications in relation to gender, ethnicity, class and age. The second part draws on narratives of the self of two boys and looks into their class and gender identifications. In Appendix II I present a list that summarises the details of the research participants whose narratives I discuss. Since my analytical focus rests upon individual subjectivities and my aim is to explore the different dimensions of a single identity I tend to include, rather extended, extracts from young people's narratives.

## Social Positioning of Albanians in Greece in the 2000s

From the 1990s onwards Greece has witnessed a demographic as well as cultural and economic change as the result of waves of immigration mainly originating from former Soviet Union countries as well as from the Middle, the Far East and Africa (Baldwin-Edwards, 2004). As is often reported, Greece has turned from emigration country into a destination country for an immigrant population. As Carvounidis (2002) highlights, the main flows seem to come from one particular country, namely, Albania (p.45-46). Recent Albanian immigration into Greece has taken place in two main phases. The first occurred in 1991 after the fall of the communist regime and the breakdown of economic structures; this was accompanied by mass unemployment and political turbulence. The second happened in 1997 after the crisis of the banking system and the collapse of financial pyramid schemes. According to the 2001 census there were 797,091 ethnic minority immigrants living in Greece at that time, of which 55.6% (443,550) were Albanian (ESYE, 2001). When the estimations for illegal immigration are added the approximate number of immigrants sits over one million, of which over 600,000 are Albanian (Baldwin-Edwards, 2004; Hajdinjak, 2005).

Migration research identifies certain distinctive features of Albanian immigration to Greece. Hajdinjak (2005) highlights that an ethnic immigrant minority rarely represents such a high percentage of all immigrants in another country as Albanians do in Greece. Furthermore, according to Kokali (2007) the emigration of Albanians to Greece does not seem to follow the patterns of classic migrations since its diffusion within the national territory is rather balanced. In other words, although Athens is an appealing destination for Albanian immigrants they are nevertheless diffused throughout the Greek territory. Kokali argues that there are not any 'Albanian territories', that is, enclaves with shops, food and so on as is typical of other ethnic minorities and relates to the conscious efforts of Albanians to integrate and what she refers to as 'strategies of invisibilization'. Kokali's arguments are relevant to Psimmenos' (1995, p.186) remarks with respect to Albanian name changes, which is done either informally or formally though Baptism. Psimmenos (2001) argues that even when name changes are done voluntarily they still signify an

individual's rupture with the past and their personal histories since these are constructed by dominant discourses as a 'serious social drawback'.

As Vidali (1999) reports, the majority of Albanian men are employed as unskilled workers on building sites, in transportation and as transient agricultural workers. She comments that they do the jobs that Greeks do not want to do, that is, 'hard, badly paid, temporary jobs, without standard working hours or social security'. On the other hand, the majority of Albanian women are employed in middle-class houses as domestic cleaners (Kambouri, 2007). During the period 1991 to 1998 Albanian immigrants lived in what Vidali (1999) describes as a 'policy vacuum' marked by the absence of a concrete migration policy as well as a lack of specialist institutions, such as advice centres for the legal, social and economic orientation of immigrants (especially children). Vidali (1999) also highlights the dominance of xenophobic discourses towards Albanians, arguing that 'racism and fear against the "Balkan other", personified by the economically devastated and desperate Albanian immigrant, is an everyday reality for the Greek population'[4]. Among many researchers Vidali (1999) as well as Kapllani and Mai (2005), indicate that the Greek media played a vital role in relating crime to the presence of immigrants, therefore spreading fear and constructing stereotypical representations of Albanians as criminals (Vidali,1999; Kapllani & Mai, 2005).

Along with the existence of xenophobic and racist discourses, Kokali suggests the presence of what she describes as a localised 'everyday life tolerance' (Kokali, p.21). Based on her interviews with Greeks and Albanians she argues that the dominant xenophobic and hostile discourse in relation to Albanians in general is different from what Greeks say when they talk about 'their' Albanian in particular, of whom they think of in a very positive way. Moreover, Kokalis' Albanian respondents describe 'a personal relationship with the Greek "employer", for whom they have painted their house, fixed the roof, looked after the children or elderly relatives, etc.' (p.21). However, Kambouri's (2007) research into the everyday lives of female immigrants from Albania and Ukraine sheds more light onto the lived experiences and social relationships surrounding the domestic labour of Albanians. According to

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[4] See: http://www.cc-review.org/99/21/vidali21.html.

Kambouri (2007) the presence of immigrant domestic workers is constantly invoking and reinstating the higher social positioning of Greek female employers. Kambouri (2007) finds that very often the female employers admitted to having bad housekeeping skills and argues that such confessions work towards understating this type of work. Overall, the establishment and maintenance of good relations between the female employer and employee presumes an on-going process of symbolic affirmation of the boundaries, social distance and superiority of the employer's position.

In the field of education the mass immigration to Greece during recent decades has brought about ethnic diversity in the composition of the school population. According to Gogonas' (2007) research, during 2004 to 2005 approximately 110,000 migrants and repatriated Greek pupils were enrolled in Greek schools, which equals to almost 8 per cent of the overall school population (p.2). Several studies have examined the attitudes and approaches of Greek teachers to cultural diversity. According to the findings of a large-scale study conducted by UNICEF, almost 25 per cent of the Greek teachers believe that foreign pupils face behavioural and learning difficulties at school. In Gogonas' (2007) research survey the data indicate that 18 out of 30 teachers claim that foreign pupils have some language and adaptation problems at school. On the other hand, Evi Markou's (2010) recent empirical research with secondary schools in Greece presents findings that are particularly revealing of the persistent workings of racism and xenophobia. Markou finds that in several cases the school principals make decisions concerning the ethnic composition of the school population through informal channels by rejecting admissions from immigrant students and claiming that the school does not have any spaces available. The study also identifies and discusses the widely shared perceptions of a 'good school' in Greece as involving stereotypical ideas about the ethnic and cultural homogeneity of the school population. In this respect the decisions of parents to send their children to a 'good school', the desire of teachers to work in an 'easy' environment and the aims of school principals in managing a 'successful' school are also based on this idea of a 'good school' and all work towards maintaining a xenophobic regime in practice.

Above I refer to some aspects of the broader context within which Albanian girls find themselves. These points refer to the social conditions that dominated in Greece during the 2000s, prior to the recent outbreak of racism and hostility, the rapid rise of the far right and recurring incidents of violence against immigrants. The discussion that follows is framed within the social portrait of Greece that existed prior to the current economic crisis and political turbulence. I discuss the narratives of Aninta and Anna, two seventeen-year-old Albanian girls living in central Athens. They were both born in Tirana and emigrated to Greece around the age of ten. They both speak very good Greek and attend the state Technical Vocational Lyceum. In particular, I focus on the young girls' accounts of gender and ethnicity as these emerge throughout their narratives.

*Aninta*

Aninta lives in central Athens with her mother, father and younger sister. Her father works as a builder and her mother is employed as house cleaner. She arrived in Greece when she was eight years old. Aninta's parents emigrated to Greece one year earlier than Aninta to arrange their employment and housing before their children moved to be with them. Aninta and her sister spent that year with their grandmother in Tirana. When she arrived in Greece Aninta did not speak any Greek but she highlighted that she managed to pick up the language very fast: 'within three, four months'. Aninta attends a Vocational Lyceum in central Athens and she is following the health and care division.

Aninta talks about her educational pathway as a given, predetermined one. When asked her about her choice of attending a Vocational Lyceum she explains that her cousin went to the Vocational Lyceum and indicates this as the reason why she goes there too. Later, when asked what attracts her to the health and care division she replies that it has always been her 'mum's dream to become a nurse'. Overall, Aninta describes her educational route as a pathway that she 'found herself in, before even

realising it', rather than a result of thoughtful decision-making or an elaborated decision that she made for herself.

Although her narrative of an educational past and present is constructed with a sense of compliance Aninta elaborates on the negotiations that dominate other aspects of self-identification. She talks about her family in general and pays particular attention to her relationship with her mother, referring to the tension that characterises it. When she is asked if she has any ideas about the reasons behind these tensions she responds:

ANINTA. My mom wants me to be the perfect daughter!

E. STAMOU. Which is?

E. STAMOU. Well, first of all to be like... a good housewife, good with housekeeping, you know! To be a bit reserved; to stay at home; to be a decent girl, to study a lot; also she doesn't want me to have relationships. I think she would only allow me to have a relationship with Mr Perfect, which will lead to marriage [laughs]. What else? Oh, she doesn't want anyone to say bad words about her daughter; she wants everyone around to have the perfect opinion about her daughter.

But you see, I like going out... I am going out a lot! I have many friends and mates to hang around with. I am going out with guys! I have boyfriends... well sometimes I also do spontaneous relationships [she laughs]. At this age it's normal to do such kind of things, you need to experience things so it's okay.

Aninta narrates the tension in her relationship with her mother with reference to different 'gender regimes' (Walby, 1997) and legitimate forms of femininity. She depicts her mother's legitimate pattern of 'doing girl' as consisting of being good with housekeeping, being reserved and being a domestic type of girl, whereas Aninta goes about narrating herself as a fun-loving, experience-seeking and sexually liberated individual. Following feminist accounts of the formation of gender, the development of the 'right' sort of femininity is interwoven with elements of class culture (Skeggs, 1997; 2004; Reay, 2004). As Skeggs (1997) puts it, 'being and becoming, practicing and doing femininity are very different things for women of different classes, ages

and nations' (Skeggs, 1997, p.98).

The female identity mandated by Aninta's mother is focused on heterosexuality and constructed within a strong value system as well as a strong collectivity, both of which are mediated by class culture. Skeggs' (1997) ethnography of working class women provides insights into the ways in which women have been observed to consider femininity in strategic ways. In Aninta's narrative the parental perceptions of valid female identifications are marked by a focus on heterosexuality and concerned with developing a type of femininity that can be strategically manipulated and exchanged in the local 'marriage market'. In other words, a concern with being 'marriable' constitutes a main focus of female identification.

According to Aninta's family crafting an apparently proper female identity entails following a standard pathway and sticking to a set of ethical principles and values. In Hall's terms it involves the occupation of collective identities and the chaining of the subject to the discourses of collectivity. In this context limited visibility in the public sphere is regarded as a marker of ethical conduct. Moreover, limited socialisation and reservation in terms of sexual conduct is deemed to be a signifier of decency and purity. Values, norms and prohibition are the material from which the female self is made. Here Chatzaroula (2007) may be taken into consideration in terms of suggesting that patriarchal regimes are maintained and reinforced within migrant families. Chatzaroula (2007) highlights the prevalence of ideas about female chastity and reputation which, as she highlights, put enormous pressure on women and allows them less control over their lives. Similar to Chatzaroula's informants, Aninta narrates her parents' legitimate female identifications as restrictive.

The legitimate female identifications described above are inextricably connected to a social collectivity and its local value system. Aninta refers to her mother's concern that 'everyone has to say good words about their daughter'. Collectivity and the patriarchal value system are not only a source of female identification but also work as a constant monitoring force. Many feminist researchers argue that 'the ontological security of the working class is more likely to lie in "fitting in" rather than "standing out"' (Skeggs, 1997; Reay & Lucey, 2000; Val Gillies, 2005) from the local symbolic systems. This is in opposition to their middle class

counterparts who are supported in seeking distinction. Overall, following Hall (2000) the process through which such a female identity is shaped in this case can rather be described in terms of 'chaining of the subject within the flow of the discourse' (p.19). However, Aninta seeks to elude this discourse and its chains.

Aninta's narrative is centred around an elaboration of her female dis-identifications. Aninta's dis-identifications draw on post-traditional, popular discourses of being or doing the 'modern girl'. The young female self is constructed through a collection of experiences and enacted in public spaces. A multiplicity of experiences, impermanence and spontaneity, along with a loose sense of commitment, constitute a source of pleasure and make up a youth female self that strives to 'free' itself from the norms of a traditional codes of female practice. In Hall's terms Aninta's narrative of self-fashioning should rather be understood in terms of 'a complex work of articulation and suturing' (Hall, 2000, p.17). At first glance it might be suggested that Aninta's narrative echoes Beck's theorisation of 'modern patchwork biographies' (Beck, 2003). Nevertheless, Aninta's narrative of dis-identification does not seem to involve a weakening of the power of collectivity. On the contrary, it is illustrative of a struggle to break away from the limiting power of collective identifications and negotiate her desired youth identifications.

The main focus of Aninta's narrative is centred on negotiating gender, heterosexuality and lifestyle. The articulation of dis-identifications is concerned with claiming more freedom and greater control over her private life and sexual conduct. In the following extract Aninta is asked if she can think of any critical events, moments or people that influence her decisively. She refers to the experience of immigration and reflects on it as follows:

> ANINTA. The fact that I left my country, I got to know a different mentality.

> E. STAMOU. And how do you go about thinking of it?

> ANINTA. Positively! Absolutely positive! It opens your mind. I mean, if I had stayed there I wouldn't have this mentality now. Imagine how I would be if I were in Albania. Well... maybe at this moment that we're speaking I would be married, maybe I would

even be heavily pregnant [laughs]. Can you imagine that? So, what happened was for me the best-case scenario. My cousin was 15 years old when she got married. I do not want that! Well, she finds it absolutely okay; actually she finds it perfect, she is happy – well, at least for the time being. But for me this girl knows nothing, she hasn't lived anything in her life. It's her own life and her own decision, her mistake from my point of view, because I think she has lost a lot.

Later, while talking about her experiences of immigration, Aninta refers again to the 'different mentality' that dominates Greek society. When I ask her if she can elaborate on this, she replies:

> ANINTA. There's a different mentality here. In Albania we are more old fashioned [*paleon arhon*]. I mean, young people here, since from when we're very young we're going to clubs and stuff, we drink, we smoke. It's like people here are more, I don't know how to describe it; more kind of naughty, more open minded.

> E. STAMOU. In what sense?

> ANINTA. In Albania it's very different; very big difference. People at my age are more locked up, more reserved, they are not allowed to go out, they are not allowed to have a relationship while at school, they only think of their school and their lessons, or maybe think of studying something, they are more reserved; they stay inside the house more, they don't go out. Whenever I go back I hang around more with people older than me who are more open minded.

> E. STAMOU. So you find it hard to communicate with people of your age over there or...?

> ANINTA. I find them more reserved. I can have them in my company but how can I explain that... I find that what I do, when hanging around with them, is kind of childish, kind of funny for my age.

On the one hand, Aninta's narrative of ethnicity is infused with gender. 'Albanianess' is constructed as involving a singular pathway for female identification. Her lived experience of 'Albanianess' entails limited choices and multiple restrictions for

femininity. Hence, 'Albanianess', apart from signifying ethnic origin, 'simultaneously speaks' (Mac an Ghaill, 1994) a certain female identity and a respective form of femininity. According to Aninta, 'Albanianess' is mandatory for a family-oriented female so that being an Albanian girl also means following a single traditional pathway, dominated by family values and marked by limited social exposure and experiences.

Aninta's narrative echoes Van Boeschoten's (2007) observations on young Albanian females. Her study presents young Albanian girls as focusing their narratives on the 'strong control exercised by their parents on their personal lives and the intergenerational conflicts generated by this control' (Van Boeschoten, 2007, p.7). Van Boeschoten's research participants appear to resist the rules imposed by their parents and tried to renegotiate their gender identity (Van Boeschoten, 2007, p.7). Aninta's narrative is also indicative of such a process. Aninta acknowledges that the type of femininity embedded in Albanian identity constitutes a source of happiness for some and then goes on to dis-identity herself from such a female identity embedded to 'Albanianess'. Skeggs (2000) suggests that to dis-identify individuals 'need to know from what the dis-identifications are made. Recognitions have to be made, resisted, challenged for dis-identifications to occur' (p.123). Aninta's narrative seems to be illustrative of such a process, as traditional formations of gender are described and then challenged.

*Anna*

Anna lives in central Athens with her parents and her older brother. She goes to the Vocational Lyceum and is following the health and care division. During the interview Anna narrates her educational pathway and relevant choices as featuring her hesitations and low self-confidence. I have discussed elsewhere these aspects of Anna's narrative by deploying Bourdieu's analytical tools (see Chapter 3). Anna appears to regret earlier choices and narrates herself as no longer seeking to gain a set of skills and a vocational certificate. Instead, she articulates an imagined future in higher education and expresses what Mirza (2006) calls 'educational desire'. In this

analysis I focus on constructions of gender, class and ethnicity as they emerge in Anna's narrative of family relations and friendships.

In the following extract I ask Anna to talk to me about her family, her parents and her relationship with them. She elaborates on this as follows:

ANNA. Okay, first of all my father is quite old-fashioned.

E. STAMOU. What do you mean by that?

ANNA. I mean that, okay, it's not that he doesn't trust me. He trusts me. And he knows that I have reached a certain age and he is not able to keep me next to him – even though he would like to. He wants me to give him a full report of what I do. He wants to know everything. And, for example, I cannot talk to him freely about my boyfriend. If I tell him, he will consider it a serious relationship, something very serious. He will ask me to get engaged with him immediately. And of course I don't like this kind of thing! My mom is the same, unfortunately. I haven't got a good communication with them. I keep a lot of things to myself. I can't open up to them.

E. STAMOU. And what about your future plans you talked about earlier. Do they agree, or...?

ANNA. Well, they like the idea that I want to study. They want me to study in order to get a certificate and be able to follow a certain vocation. So, yes they want me to study and get a job, which will be better than theirs. But above all they want me to marry and have a good family – in the way they see the 'good' family. They also want me to be close to them in the future. But even now we have some disagreements. They want me to go out less and study more, listen to what they say, because sometimes my ideas cause tensions between us. My mom wants me to do all the housekeeping jobs, which I don't like.

Anna was asked to talk about her friends and in her response she went about elaborating upon her perceived differences between Greek and Albanian girls.

E. STAMOU. Would you like to talk to me about your friends?

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ANNA. When I was at high school my two best friends were both Albanian. And I don't know how to explain this thing... there was so much competition going on. It is strange but I felt that people with same ethnic origins were competitive. We were from the same country, same town, and I felt that they were like, who is better... why is she better than me, or why is she dressed better than me. And so much bitching was going on. And I didn't feel comfortable; I didn't like this competitive feeling. Now most of my close friends are Greek because I find them more liberated.

E. STAMOU. What do you mean by that?

ANNA. Well... for example, with my friends at high school (who were Albanian) it was such a big deal to go out one night... we had to send a hundred texts and call each other and then finally sometimes they would cancel it. People from here... like with these Greek girls I am now close with, we don't have such issues. Plus I feel they value friendship more, they give a lot to friendship. We understand each other; they have targets in their lives as well, they are good at school and at the same time they like having fun, going out, etc. Well, a typical Albanian girl for example, if she has a relationship she will not put me – her friend – first. She will have her relationship above all and I will go afterwards. Do you get what I mean?

Anna's self-narrative is marked by symbolic differentiation as she reads herself through a process of changing friendships, shifting alliances and s sense of belonging. Changing friendships are narrated along with a process of crossing boundaries between 'Albanianness' and 'Greekness'. Conceptions of 'ethnicity', female identifications and friendship are all present in the narration of Anna's dis-identifications and her struggles for re-identification. Throughout her narrative Anna – similar to Aninta – constructs 'Albanianess' as infused with a certain type of femininity and attitudes towards heterosexuality and friendship. As such, 'Albanianness' for Anna involves a form of 'doing girl' which is marked by limited freedom in leisure and a great concern with heterosexuality. In contrast, 'Greekness' is constructed as a signifier of a rather more liberal female identification characterised by higher aspirations for academic achievement and coupled with greater freedom and

pleasure in leisure. Accordingly, in her narrative racialised boundaries are entwined with female identification.

Anna refers to a sense of competition developing out of the female Albanian group of friends and points out their limited freedom in terms of leisure. Hay's research into girls' friendships may possibly be informative here. Hay (1997) argues that the investment of working-class girls in heterosexuality is in part mandated by their disinvestments in schooling as a source of (academic) prestige (p.76). Moreover, some girls in Hay's study read themselves in competitive relationships with other girls because, as Hay puts it, 'their investment in the heterosexual marketplace is seen as the only route through to what they see as desirable femininity' (Hay, 1997, p.76). In this sense, competitiveness, or 'bitchiness', are seen in Hay's research as implications of a type of female identification and constitute one of the ways in which these girls 'come to resolve who they are' (ibid).

Hay's research may provide useful insights into Anna's dis-identifications. That which forms a constitutive element of 'Albanianess' in Anna's narrative is, in Hay's research, seen to be implicated with certain forms of classed female identification. Drawing on Hay (1997), Anna's shift from her ethnic identity indicates a shift away from a certain mode of female identification and more broadly signifies a differentiation in terms of the means used to construct a sense of self. While developing higher aspirations for academic achievement and career development, Anna dis-identifies herself with a 'youth' and 'girlhood' that are primarily invested in heterosexuality and geographically located in the private sphere. She therefore positions herself closer to a 'youth' and 'girlhood' invested in academic achievement and free to float across public and private spaces. In this context, Anna's focus on strong friendship bonds can be viewed as a resource as well as a network of support that she can draw on to negotiate desired female identifications. Reay's (1998) research elaborates on cases of working class girls placing great value on friendships and treating them also as sources of support. In these cases friendship networks are understood as filling in the void or indeed the limited opportunities for orientation and advice provided by the family in relation to achieving the desired female subjectivity.

**Discussion**

Overall, the ethnic identifications of these girls, that is, their narrated 'Greekness' and 'Albanianess', signify a lot more than just an ethnic origin. They also 'speak' of gender and youth identifications and indicate possibilities for self-constitution. Anna and Aninta narrate themselves as moving away from traditional forms of femininity as well as resisting their families' views of what constitute legitimate female identities. On the one hand, it can be observed that the narratives of the girls, similar to those of the women studied by Skeggs (1997), are primarily underlined by a strong sense of what they do not want to be (p.82). They therefore narrate themselves through a set of dis-identifications as well as articulating fragments of re-identification. On the other hand, I identify the multiple positioning of the girls, which allows me to depict the ambiguity attached to their experiences of immigration. In these cases immigration in terms of 'ethnicity' and 'class' may involve a set of symbolic and/or material exclusions and may be connected to disempowering forms of identification. When it approached in terms of 'gender' and 'age' immigration relates to empowering and desired identifications and might entail the possibility of accessing a wider range of subject positions.

Yet the eagerness and easiness with which ethnic identity is to be left behind is not to be overestimated here. In the narrative construction of dis-identifications and the struggles for re-identification 'Albanianess' does not appear to have any kind of exchange value but is rather perceived as interwoven with forms of female identification purely antagonistic to the desired ones. Consequently, 'Albanianess' in its articulation with 'gender' is narrated as a burden. In other words, it is seen as something that has to be left behind rather than a resource that can be used constructively in the making of the desired female self. Skeggs (2004) may be taken into consideration here, suggesting that 'symbolic exchange enables culture to be used as a form of property… increasing individuals' value and ability to move across social space' (Skeggs, 2004, p.174). Skeggs shows that the value attached to each culture is far from neutral as 'some cultures are differently valued depending on who can deploy them as a resource' (Skeggs, 2004, p.174). Regarding the cultural aspects of 'Albanianess', Chatzaroula's (2007) interviewees negate their Albanian identity by

either hiding that they are Albanian or by trying to distance and differentiate themselves from other Albanians. These attitudes are understood by Chatzaroula (2007) as embodying and reproducing the negative representations and stigmas produced by the media, thus leading to 'a process of concealment and denial of identity' as well as eroding the symbolic space and so diminishing the possibility of positive identification. Within such dominant representations and discourses attached to 'Albanianess' is a set of devalued cultural features, the immigrant girls' cultural backgrounds and the experience of immigration; these are far from useful symbolic resources in the making of young female identity.

The above remarks may also throw light on the individualised manner in which the girls' negotiations are narrated. Indeed, I suggest that these young Albanian girls are negotiating youth identification in individualised ways. Both girls' 'struggles for identity' are marked by the impossibility of taking up an 'Albanian' or 'Greek' identity. Both girls narrate individual configurations of crossing boundaries between 'Greekness' and 'Albanianess'. Rather than signifying the rise of individualisation and the projection of do-it-yourself biographies (Beck, 2003) the girls' individualised negotiations may signify a lack of valid and valued dominant discourses that they could possibly draw on for 'doing the young immigrant girl'. Therefore, the 'chaining of the subject' (Hall, 2000) to valid discourses is not a ready-made option for them. Consequently, the girls' do-it-yourself identifications signify self-customised responses for generating symbolic fragments and negotiating positioning. In this way, here we glimpse a version of what Hall terms identification as a source of agency in action.

**Young Greek Working-Class Males**

*Giannis*

Giannis lives in Corinth with his parents and his older brother. His father works as a heating and air-conditioning technician and his mother is a housewife. Giannis' family lived in Athens for two years but, as Giannis explains, they had to move back to Corinth because they could not afford the high living expenses of the capital city. Giannis talks about his lifestyle in Athens as being very different from and much

more attractive to him compared with his lifestyle in a small town like Corinth. He stresses that Athens offers more choice, more places to go out to and greater stimulation for young people.

Giannis goes to the evening Vocational Lyceum and is following the electronics specialisation. He decided to go to evening school because he did not want to give up his 'real life and job because of the school'. Giannis has been working since he was 13 to 14 years old, mainly during the summer, but lately he has started working during winter alongside school. Going to evening school allows him to continue working as a bartender in a popular local cafe-bar in the evenings and to sleep longer in morning, as he states in his interview. Giannis also mentions that the teachers at the evening school are more generous with grades as well as being far more flexible in their response to student absences. Giannis makes it clear that he is not interested in following up his training in electronics by getting a relevant job or continuing his studies. His future career plans are different:

GIANNIS. I want to go to maritime trade college as soon as I am done with school. I can't see anything else. I mean I could become a technician, but... I would rather go to maritime trade college to train as a maritime trade officer and work on ships.

E. STAMOU. Why do you prefer that?

GIANNIS. For financial reasons. Well, and it's also something relevant to my performance. I'm not good at school you see, I'm not a good student, and this option isn't far beyond my reach. And it pays well!

E. STAMOU. So, the financial part of it is important to you.

GIANNIS. Yes, yes! It is a job that pays well. Basically, the only problem is that it involves a lot of travelling. That's the only problem. I have gathered information about it. I've searched around. And that's why I'm going for it.

E. STAMOU. Is it easy to find a job after finishing college?

GIANNIS. Oh, yes, yes! That's easy.

Financial comfort and consumption are issues that come up at several instances of Giannis' narrative. Throughout his interview Giannis expresses his concerns and highlights in a number of different ways the importance of being 'financially sorted'; this seems to be the main principle that steers his future career choices. Giannis' choice to go to maritime trade college is narrated as a pragmatic account of what is achievable, in the view of his main concern with achieving the highest economic returns possible.

Giannis elaborates on the way he made up his mind on his future career plans, by drawing a set of boundaries from certain forms of identification.

> E. STAMOU. And how did you go about searching and getting information?

> GIANNIS. I started asking people around. I discussed it with friends and other people I know... I gathered several opinions and ideas. And that's how I made up my mind.

> E. STAMOU. Did you discuss it with your family at all? Or...

> GIANNIS. No, not really. I talked about it with people around... with people that know guys who work in the maritime trade. I also talked to a guy who went to the college. He just started working now and he was explaining to me things with lots of detail. He got a job as soon as he graduated and he already makes good money.

> E. STAMOU. And what do your parents say about this choice?

> GIANNIS. Nothing, really. Everything is based upon my judgment. Well, my father has a different mentality... we don't have the same take on such things, so...

> E. STAMOU. So, you don't... kind of... ask for their advice?

> GIANNIS. Advice? No, no, no. We, I just discuss with them sometimes. I tell them what I'm thinking of doing and basically I talk to them about my decisions. And sometimes they may express their views, but that wouldn't really influence me; nor my final decisions; you know what I mean? My mum, for example, is

worried about the long trips at sea. Okay, as a mother she is right to worry. But okay, since I like it, that's not an issue. I decide for my own life, what can my parents say?

E. STAMOU. And what about your father?

GIANNIS. He is the same. He wants me to become a technician and he would prefer it if his son would get up and pick up a toolbox every morning, go around houses, fix things and make an honest day's wages. That's what he's used to; you can't really blame him for his ideas, can you? Since from when I can remember he has been working every day as a heating and air-conditioning technician like that. Working every day and staying at home every night getting some rest, catching up with my mom, watching TV and stuff. So, you know... you can't blame him for not being very comfortable with the idea of his son working on ships, being away for six months, travelling around the globe. I don't like having earplugs, doing what the family thinks is right for me.

I know lots of people my age who do that. They take on board and follow around 70% or 80% of what their family indicates as right. That's not good; they are not independent, they don't have their own judgement and their own will, they have a sheep-like behaviour. I do talk to my parents but I can't say I have constructive discussions with relatives, etc. When we are at family lunches they ask me about these things and they give me their advice, I am like 'yes, yes, sure' and I leave shortly afterwards and I go out for a coffee. But in general, I like hanging out with people who are older than me. I hang around with guys who are five or six years older; or guys who are much older than that; and I like it because you can learn things. While chatting over a coffee you may hear something new, something interesting, you can hear their views. And it's good to collect different views and ideas from different people. And then it's up to you to judge and decide what suits you best. It's wrong to receive one-sided ideas; that's how you become closed-minded.

E. STAMOU. I see.

GIANNIS. For me that's not a problem. I don't see it as a problem. In fact, I would like to travel. I want to go aboard. The trips with these ships last a long time, around six months, but I don't mind. I want to get to know other civilisations and stuff like that. I do like it. A lot!

Individual agency is highlighted by Giannis when elaborating upon his career decision-making process and beyond this, in the way he constructs a youth male identification. Giannis narrates career planning as an individualised process involving a sense that his life is in his own hands. Giannis talks about everything being reliant upon his judgment, indicating that the responsibility for working out his pathway is experienced as an exclusively personal endeavour and individualised procedure. Decision-making for Gianni involves searching around for information and turning to networks of friends and other acquaintances to collect ideas. Overall, a high sense of personal responsibility runs through his narrative of managing his own youth transitions.

At first glance Giannis can be seen as identifying himself along with Beck's and Giddens' reflexive individuals who actively and pragmatically craft their life pathways. Nevertheless, while he is tracing boundaries with other peers who receive guidance and follow the advice of their family, Giannis identifies himself as different and autonomous, as an independent young man who is able to think critically, decide and care for himself. Giannis insistently points out on his independence from family ties, which he regards as limiting. He therefore constructs a strong, decided and opinionated masculine identity freed from traditional expectations and bonds and acting according to his own will.

Giannis' claims to independence and self-responsibility also involve attempts to distance himself from certain forms of class and gender identification. More specifically, Giannis points out the difference between his father's ideas and his own decisions for a future career. He refers to his father as having made different life choices and thus as being unable to offer him useful or relevant advice.

Being a technician signifies for Gianni a working-class identity, which he illustrates in rather dull terms: 'getting up every morning', 'picking up a toolbox' and 'going around fixing things'. Working every day as a technician 'to make honest

day's wages', apart from a class identification, also signifies for Gianni a certain kind of masculinity. It is entwined with a skilled, hard-working type of breadwinner, whose private life and leisure are marked by domesticity. Giannis talks about his father as 'working every day and staying at home every night getting some rest, catching up with my mum, watching TV'. In this way, Giannis draws boundaries and distances himself from a type of working class masculinity, which he constructs in terms of safe, but also routinised, monotonous and thus limiting and unattractive forms of practice.

Despite dis-identifying himself from such a form of working class masculinity work remains for Gianni a central frame of reference for his identification.

E. STAMOU. So do you tend to think of the future?

GIANNIS. Yes. Mainly I think of this issue: getting a job, working and making money, because money is important. If you are not financially well off then you can't do anything. The main thing is work! If you don't work then your mind stops working too. Work! Simple as that! Work is my ideology!

E. STAMOU. So you mentioned earlier that you work apart from going to school.

GIANNIS. Of course. It couldn't happen otherwise. I told you, work is very important to me. What else could I do? Going around, being lazy? Since I've had spare time I've worked. I've been working since when I was 14 years old. I used to work mostly during the summer back then; I was younger, so... I started working during summer with my father, I was helping him out, then I worked at a nightclub, and then I worked at a cafe, I have done a lot!

E. STAMOU. Did you need to work? Was there a need in the family?

GIANNIS. No, no! I just decided myself that I wanted to work. In general my parents don't influence me that much. It's all upon my judgements. I think it's better like that. And at the end of the day what could a young person like me contribute to the family. I just work for myself. I hate laziness. I can't stand

watching these people on TV, complaining on top of being lazy... it's unacceptable! [Interruption. Telephone rings.]

E. STAMOU. So, you were telling me that it's unacceptable...?

GIANNIS. Unacceptable! There are two or three guys on the evening news on the TV and they say 'I'm unemployed and the state has to take action, the government has to do something about it'. Come on, give me a break! If you don't do something with yourself how do you expect the state and the government to do something for you, to sort you out? Disgraceful. Simply unacceptable! I mean, if for me things go wrong and let's say I don't manage to get to the Maritime Trade College, let's say things don't turn out as I planned... Okay, even in this case there is no single possibility that I will not find a job. There's no possibility that I will not be able to make a living. And whoever is not able to do that, he is not capable of anything.

Not being able to make a living and look after oneself? I am not talking about luxury living here. I am talking about basic things, about descent living; being able to support yourself and look after your house. There are others who live in huts and they present themselves on TV shows complaining, 'I don't have anything to eat'. Well, if you are lazy, you are lazy! If you are not you can survive and find your way anywhere! I believe that every human being can survive and find their way, if they are not lazy. The rest is unacceptable! At least in my view.

Work is narrated as a main source of masculine identification as well as a fundamental site for self-realisation. Work is described as his 'ideology', as a driving force that fuels practice and sets subjects in motion. According to Giannis, 'if you do not work, your brain stops working too'. Giannis therefore constructs male identification in terms of a dynamic, hard-working, self-regulated and resilient individual. He does so by sketching and pointing out certain boundaries or, in Hall's terms, Giannis' identity work involves 'the binding and marking of symbolic boundaries, the production of frontier-effects' (Hall, 1991b, p.17). We observe Gianni tracing boundaries and highlighting the distance from traditional working class

masculinities on the one hand while, on the other hand, disdaining what he refers to as the 'lazy underclass'.

While dis-identifying himself from traditional masculinities to rearticulate preferred and desired forms of identity Giannis seems to take on neo-liberal discourses of subjectivity. Riley (2008) argues that 'neo-liberalism describes the idea that people are encouraged to see themselves as if they are autonomous, rational, risk-managing subjects, responsible for their own destinies and called 'to render one's life knowable and meaningful through a narrative of free choice and autonomy – however constrained one might actually be' (Riley, 2008, p.5). Similar to the working class masculinities discussed in Burke's study, Giannis constructs himself as 'immune to any social constraint' through his 'individual determination and self-belief' (2011, p. 179).

Giannis' experience of managing transitions is constructed in terms of an individualised process – along with a sense of self-mastering as delivered through his narrative – that seems to reinforce generalised conceptions of individualised responsibility. Giannis narrates resilience as innate to human nature and constructs as natural the capacity of individuals to support and improve themselves irrespective of the social conditions surrounding them (see Burke, 2011). Failure to achieve this is linked to laziness, recklessness or lack of motivation. Giannis takes on what Kenway (1987) and Ball (1990) refer to as neoliberal 'discourses of derision' to construct failure as 'otherness'.

Throughout Giannis' narrative lifestyle and consumption emerge as significant issues in the process of identification. Work, apart from a source of identification, is also related to a certain lifestyle and signifies proximity to desired identities.

> E. STAMOU. Do you enjoy what you do? Is there a job that you liked the most?

> GIANNIS. Well, the cafe-bar where I work now. You know it, don't you? It's a very popular place. It's a 'must'. It's a very nice place and the owner is really cool. He used to be a DJ. He was DJ-ing for big clubs in Mykonos when he was younger, have you heard about it? He was into electronic music when this was first introduced in Greece... when everybody else was listening to

Greek songs and disco he was already into electronic music and he was going to parties in Mykonos, parties where very limited people had the chance to attend. You have to see his vinyl collection. It's like the history of electronic music in one record case. He plays music sometimes at the bar. I don't know if you've ever listened to him playing music! If so, you would understand what I mean. His sounds are different; you don't hear this music every day! And he is a good boss. We get on really well. And he has set up a nice place, he has good PR, he's been in this world for years, he knows how to do good work. I enjoy working at this place; I have the chance to meet everyone. I am all the time around people, I talk to people. I enjoy it!

Giannis constructs himself as privileged to work at the particular cafe-bar. Giannis talks enthusiastically about the place being a 'must' and refers with admiration to his boss being a trendsetter. Working at a 'must' place, for a 'cool' boss is narrated by Giannis as signifying an advantageous position that brings him closer to desired identifications. Giannis refers to his job as allowing him to meet people, to be popular, to associate and mix with the 'right crowd'. Giannis' admiration for his boss is constituted around a fashionable lifestyle and the exclusivity of life experiences. At several points Giannis highlights his high regard for an exclusive lifestyle. Being introduced to a music trend before everyone else, going to parties that only a few people have access to, owing a rare record collection, are all highly valued due to the exclusivity they involve. Living in an exclusive fashion and 'standing out' from the crowd involve, for Gianni, valued male identifications.

The discussion on exclusive consumption and lifestyle emerges as a significant source of Giannis' male identification.

E. STAMOU. So how do you usually spend the money you earn?

GIANNIS. Clothes! Mainly clothes, and whatever else I need; cigarettes, food, going out for dinner with friends. Basically, clothes. We joke with Dimitri that when I go to his shop we say I'm there to give him my weekly or monthly instalment. I'm a usual customer and I've known him for a while, so we joke a lot. And he lets me know when he receives the new arrivals, or I ask him to order something special for me and he does. Now I have

asked him to check if he can find limited edition Levi's jeans. They haven't arrived in Greece. We both want these jeans like crazy! Maybe you have heard of them... I think they are out in the UK. Maybe you could help me find them? Anyway, we can chat about it after the interview. So... so yeah, he is cool, he is very cool.

Once I went there with my girlfriend. She wanted to buy a dress for a special occasion. And she ordered a dress that she found online and he only ordered one piece. Because you know, it was something special and you wouldn't want to see others wearing the same dress. He is cool, I'm telling you! My girlfriend has a very cool style; she is very trendy! She wears only designer clothes... Miss-Sixty, Killah, you know, this kind of style. So, that's how I deposit the money I earn. Oh, and clubbing. I don't mean local clubbing. I sometimes go to big venues in Athens with guest DJs.

E. STAMOU. Ah-ha. What else do you usually do when you have free time? Well, first of all have you got any free time?

GIANNIS. Yes, I do. I do exercise. I go running every day and I also go to the gym, not every day, although I would like to. And music, loads of music!

Consumption habits and exclusivity are narrated along with the configuration and reinforcement of individuality. Spending most of the money he makes on clothing, following the latest trends, buying designer clothes and being a usual customer at certain shops are narrated by Gianni as signifiers of a certain male identification and state uniqueness. Phoenix, et al.'s research on young consumers (see Griffiths, et al., 2006; Croghan, et al., 2006) suggests that designer labels and brand names are used by young men as signifiers of 'hegemonic masculinity', which partly explains their interest in designer clothing. Furthermore, it is not only the brand names but also, certain shops that 'carried style and identity implications' for the young people studied (Phoenix & Frosh, 2001). Their findings substantiate arguments that consider that 'goods are consumed as much for what they signify as for their basic use value – hence the importance of brand names and "designer" labels to many young people' (Kenway & Bullen, 2001), which echoes Hall's argument that consumption

constitutes a 'dominant regime of truth'.

*Thanos*

Thanos lives in Corinth with his parents and his two sisters. He is in the last year of Vocational Lyceum and he is training to become an electrician. Thanos has been working since he was 14 to 15 years old. For most of this time he has worked as an assistant to an electrician. He mainly works during summers but also during the winter when his boss was busy. His father works at a warehouse on the outskirts of Corinth. His mother works as a cashier at a local souvenir shop next to an archaeological site and touristic attraction in the area. Thanos refers to his parents' past employment and explains that they both used to work at local factories that eventually closed down. His mother used to work in the packaging section of a local factory producing fabrics and textiles and his father worked for 22 years at a wood-processing factory, which closed down three years prior to the interview. He remained unemployed for a whole year before finding his current job at the warehouse.

Thanos stresses that he still remembers this year as one that was not easy. He refers to the financial strains on the household during this year while also highlighting that this situation brought him closer to his father as they were spending more time together and that they 'shared this weight'.

> Believe me, it wasn't an easy year! I contributed financially as much as I could. And I still do. Look, I don't have to pay rent. Since they provide me with housing and food, I do contribute as much as I can; sometimes more and sometimes less, but I do contribute as much as I can. When he became unemployed we spent a lot of time together and we talked a lot. You know, we shared this burden. And in general I have become very close to my father lately. I feel that since then I kind of, grew up, we have been bonding very well. We talk to each other more and we talk more freely. And I believe that he understands me and I understand him too. It's going well.

Family is for Thanos a main source of identification. Thanos talks extensively about himself in the context of his family and constructs himself as part of the family unit. In the above extract Thanos constructs himself along with a great sense of

responsibility to support the household as well as supporting his father during a difficult moment. Growing up as a 'young man' signifies, for Thanos, being able to 'share' the family's pressures. Youth is constructed by Thanos as a phase of maturing masculinity, a process of becoming eligible to talk freely, to bond with his father, to share responsibilities.

While talking about his family Thanos elaborates on the lived experience of working class positioning, describing the family's past and present, the difficulties they have been through and their progression through time. While constructing working class identifications Thanos also, at the same time, identifies himself with certain forms of masculinity.

> First of all my parents… my father worked really hard in a factory for 22 years. When I was a kid I would only see him around three hours a day. He was working night shifts, so I would see him early in the morning. He was coming back home after work and he was waking us up to go to school. Then I would see him for a while in the afternoon, after school, and then for an hour in the night before leaving to go to work. I can't say that I grew up without my father but the truth is our father was not close to us, as was the case for other kids. My mum was the one that was always inside the house. The funny thing of this whole story is that I was feeling somehow that I was the man of the house [he laughs]. I might have been very young when I started feeling like that but believe me, I did feel that I had a kind of responsibility, a share of responsibility because there were three women at home and my dad was working long hours; he was away during the night and most of the day. I know it sounds very funny because I was just a young kid, but believe me I was feeling like a protector. Well, how could I protect them anyway? [Laughs loudly.] But it doesn't matter, that's how I felt. And my mother was struggling daily for all of us to have a good living.

In the above extract Thanos illustrates a view of some of the moral and affective aspects of growing up as boy in a working class family. Thanos talks about developing a high sense of responsibility towards the female members of the family when his father was away working nightshifts. Being the only male in the house signifies for Thanos a responsibility to undertake the role of the 'protector' despite his

age. Thanos' narrative draws on traditional discourses of gender according to which female subjects are 'weaker' and 'in need of protection'. Being male automatically enunciates the need to be emotionally strong, conscientious and able to look after the 'weaker' family members. He constructs this masculine identification as inherited, un-reflexive and spontaneously generated. Masculinity in the case of Thanos is constructed as given and granted to him by the broader contextual conditions that he finds himself in.

Thanos has an older and a younger sister. While talking about them he stresses that unlike him both of his sisters study a lot and do well at school. His older sister graduated from a General Lyceum and now studies finance at the University of Patras. Along with her studies she works as a secretary so that she does not put extra financial burden on her family. Thanos' younger sister is in the first year of Lyceum. According to Thanos she is 'following in the footprints' of their older sister and has already started preparing for the exams. Below I ask Giannis if he still feels like protecting them, as he did when he was young.

> E. STAMOU. Do you still feel like that towards your sisters and your mum?

> THANOS. Yes. And we are quite close with my sisters. We talk quite a lot. We talk about personal issues – well, up to a point. I don't like asking them questions and being nosy. They know I am here for them and they can talk to me anytime they want. I've never checked up on my sisters. I don't like control myself; I hate it when people tell me what to do, where I should go, who I should hang around with… you know what I mean? So I would never do something like that to my sisters. I have simply told them, 'Look I have never done something to embarrass you and that's what I would like from you as well. Because of my job I happens to know many people and many people know who my sisters are… so I won't tolerate it if someone says bad things about you'. Do you get me?

Thanos' narrative about his sisters entails gendered understandings of family bonds. Thanos talks about their close relationship but distances himself from traditional masculine authoritative practices. While distancing himself from controlling practices

he still constructs himself as a male brother along with a sense of responsibility towards his sisters. Being a boy with two sisters signifies the need to be 'there for them' anytime they need it. Therefore, he narrates himself in terms of a solid, sound and reliable masculinity. Moreover, Thanos articulates certain moral values and expectations of ethical conduct. He explains that his only expectation of his sisters is that they behave in ways that are acceptable and do not trigger gossip or bad comments, and he does the same. The harmonisation of conduct with the dominant local value system is narrated as involving a sense of pride and decency, while the failure to fit in may create embarrassment or a sense of humiliation.

The aspects of male youth identifications presented earlier refer to the emotional constitution of identification and are mainly related to family relations. In the following section I will look at some other aspects of male identity formation.

E. STAMOU. So what about girls?

THANOS. I think I get on well with the opposite sex. The girls seem to like me and I like them too. I tease them, I joke with them. But of course I don't have the same attitude towards all the girls. I won't tease a girl who is more reserved; I will never embarrass a girl! I like trying different girls. But I don't judge their appearance. It has happened to me to have the opportunity to go for two girls and I didn't choose to go for the best looking one.

The main thing for me is communication; it is really important to understand each other and to speak the same language. In fact, now I am in a relationship. It started two months ago; we met via common friends. She is one year older, she in Thessaloniki studying botany. She wants to do an MA after finishing her first degree. It is relatively recent but we get on well, I enjoy hanging around with her and I appreciate her a lot as a person. She is into politics and we tend to discuss a lot and I tease her a lot. She is part of the communist youth organisation and she tries to get me into this circle of people. She even makes me read the Rizospasti [the newspaper of the Communist Party]. They do say some correct things! But they tend to exaggerate. But in general what they say sounds good. Overall, in relation to politics I think that the

politicians that genuinely care about this country are very very few!

Thanos constructs his heterosexual identity by reference to his 'success' with girls and his curiosity to 'try different girls', while also highlighting his respectful behaviour towards 'the other sex'. Thanos distances himself from contemporary preoccupations towards female appearance and highlights the significance of 'communication', of 'speaking the same language' in a heterosexual relationship. While referring to his girlfriend Thanos proudly explains that she studies at university, that she plans to continue to postgraduate studies and also that she is politically active and part of the communist youth organisation. Thanos describes his girlfriend as dynamic, ambitious and active. Similar to his sisters, his girlfriend is constructed as incorporating characteristics of a 'modern' female identity, which is accorded to the broader changes taking place in the contemporary Greek formation, that is, the expansion of higher education and the massive increase in women's participation in higher education and the labour market.

So far I have presented Thanos' narrative of family relations as a primary feature around which his narrative is constructed. I also refer to constructions of heterosexuality. Work is another significant site for Thanos' self-identification.

E. STAMOU. Do you think of the future at all? Have you got any plans or ideas about it?

THANOS. First of all, I know that I want to work as an electrician. Now I am not sure if I will be self-employed or whether I will work at a factory or in the public sector. To be honest I quite like the idea of being self-employed. The way I work now, although I work for someone else, I do have a boss, but I can have a break whenever I need it and I can smoke a cigarette anytime I want, I can have a coffee anytime I feel like it... Don't get me wrong, the job will be done on time and it will be done well. I won't put aside the job for other things, but I am simply more relaxed while doing my job.

I have worked for him for the last couple of years. I try to be all right to him. And he is all right to me. I have told him that I want to go on to attend the vocational school this year so that I'll get a certificate. He understands because he did a

similar thing himself, he was working alongside going to school. We get on well, very well. I started there with a daily salary of 25 euros and within two years time I managed to be getting paid 40 euros a day. And I show that I am productive and that I do work. Do you understand what I mean? I started as an assistant and now I am able to work independently.

When we go to a job with my boss he just explains to me what he wants me to do and that's it. He won't start explaining to me how to do it. He knows I will manage. Sometimes I ask him, how do I do this? And he says, 'why are you asking me? You know very well how to do it!' Do you get my point? Now I have reached the point where I have my own assistant, a younger guy, and I get him and we do the job together. The boss just pops in and checks out if everything is all right, if we need any materials. He splits us into three teams and he goes around overseeing us. And I am lucky to work with good friends.

Thinking about the future is constructed by Thanos as thinking about his vocational arrangements. Thanos wants to follow up his vocational training and continue working as an electrician. He expresses a sense of satisfaction that has arisen from his employment and refers to the positive aspects of his flexible working arrangements. Not having to 'swipe a card' every morning is narrated as offering freedom and independence. Thanos talks about his relationship with his boss, in terms of 'being all right' with each other. 'Being all right' signifies a certain code of practice that involves mutual understanding and mutual respect. At several points throughout the interview Thanos refers to his co-workers and describes the way they developed a close friendship, by 'bonding day by day'. Developing their code of communication and having their jokes is a marker of bonding and turns work time into a good time. Overall, Thanos' narrative of workplace relations is pervaded by a sense of community and alliance.

On the other hand, Thanos emphasises his fast progression and advancement at work. He refers to his vocational pathway by considering where he has started from and comparing it to where he is now. He points out on the steps forward he has made, thus delivering a sense of pride and self-appreciation. Thanos constructs himself as skilful, productive, hard working and fast progressing. Making progress is constructed

as a fundamental source of fulfilment and self-identification. Progress is also highlighted at another point in his narrative, as seen below.

> My parents left their village and came to Corinth without any money and we have now reached a point where we have our own house and two cars. And we live a life that is comfortable and descent. But of course, since from when we were little children we have never made any special demands of our parents. Neither my sisters nor I ever cared if we wore Levi's jeans. We were happy that my mom bought our clothes from the open market. We didn't care at all about such kinds of things. There are guys in my class that go and work for a whole week in order to buy a pair of jeans that cost 125 euros! During summer I earn double that much but I would never ever do that! I don't do that. It's just a piece of clothing. Is there any reason for spending so much money on it? What do you try to show off? That you wear a designer pair of jeans... and so what?

The concept of progress is not only embedded in the process of Thanos' self-identification, but also emerges in the construction of his family's history and class positioning. Here again, Thanos identifies himself as part of the family unit and therefore part of its collective history and shared class identification. Thinking in terms of 'where they were and where they are now', pointing out on the fact that his parents started the family without any money and managed to have their own house and two cars signifies upward mobility and is narrated as a marker of collective improvement. The narrative of the family's class history provides the frame for the collective identification of its members and works as a background against which individual histories can be contextualised, assessed and acquire meaning. Furthermore, class positioning and the concept of making progress are narrated as delineating family members' expectations, defining their patterns of consumption and lifestyle, specifying what is achievable and generating as sense of contentment. Overall, Thanos identifies himself with reference to the continuation of the class history of his family and their collective step-by-step struggle for progression, mobility and improvement. Family history provides him with the context for assessing his class standing and in conjunction with the concept of progress constitutes a source of contentment in terms of where he stands and contentment with what he has.

Finally, I ask Thanos if he has any free time and what he usually does during his leisure time.

> I don't have a particular hobby. I like cars. I have taken part in two car particles patent shows. I also enjoy watching car racing and Formula One. But what is really fancy is going out with my mates. That's what makes me really happy. I have three very close mates, with whom I happen to work. And as I told you earlier we enjoy going out a lot. We now have two to three places that we usually go to. We don't like big clubs with too many people and too much noise. We either go to a place that plays Greek music or to a bar that plays Greek rock, soft rock, not very hard-core stuff. So we have two to three favourite places. When we feel like having a chilled-out time we go to the place that plays soft rock. When we feel like partying we go to the place that plays Greek music... we dance our *zeibekika* our *tsiftetelia* [Greek popular dances]... we are good!

Leisure is also narrated as socialised and collectively experienced. Thanos talks about going out with his mates, listening to their favourite music, going to their favourite places and dancing their favourite songs. Being good and feeling happy in Thanos' narrative consists of his three mates, their two or three favourite places and the two kinds of music they listen to; it involves certain people, particular practices and specific places. Therefore, identification in terms of leisure is localised and habitualised, involving certain shared practices and a prevailing sense of community.

**Discussion**

In the above discussion I present and discuss two youth male narratives, those of Giannis and Thanos. My interest is chiefly focused on the ways they construct class and gender identifications as well as on the interplay of constructions of gender and class. As explained earlier, Giannis and Thanos share some background features, that is, they both live in a small town to the south of Athens and they both come from working-class backgrounds; they both attend evening vocational schools and combine education with work. At the same time, Giannis' and Thanos' identifications differ in several ways. I will now discuss in parallel their youth identifications with an

emphasis on the emerging interplay of gender and class identifications. Work, family relations, vocational futures and heterosexuality are the main themes that I touch upon in the above section and this shapes how I organise the parallel discussion of youth male identifications.

Work appears to be a fundamental concern and a basic source of identification for both Giannis and Thanos, while schooling is regarded as an issue of secondary importance. In both cases school is regarded as an unavoidable route for obtaining a certificate. In Thanos' case the acquisition of knowledge and skills is strictly related to work and school is constructed as a way of obtaining formally recognised qualifications and the legal permission to be self-employed. Here Savage's research is relevant and suggests that working class manual culture is 'suffused with ideas of mastery, the assumption that skills learned through apprenticeship of youth training are thereby established and embodied in the independent worker who needs no future training' (Savage, 2000, p.137). In Giannis' case the school certificate is the key for accessing maritime trade college.

Throughout their narratives of current work and future vocational plans the two boys construct gender and class identifications. In the case of Giannis working as a bartender at a local fashionable cafe-bar proves to be so important that he basis his decision of going to evening school on his urge to keep it. While talking about this he constructs himself as a 'cool and trendy' young male. Working at a 'cool' place that offers him the opportunity to be popular and meet the right crowd is narrated as a plane that brings him closer to admired exclusive lifestyles and desired fashionable self-identifications. Work also allows Gianni to financially support his preferred patterns of consumption.

While narrating his current job Thanos constructs himself as skilful and productive, highlighting a sense of collectivity and alliance with his co-workers. Day-to-day bonding via the development of daily habits and routines, as well as through their 'jokes' and their overall code of communication, are narrated as defining belongingness to a team as well as turning work into a pleasant time. In this context 'being all right to each other' [entaxei] is narrated as a constitutive element of relating to each other as well as a marker of a straightforward and respectful masculine identification.

Class identifications emerge throughout both boys' narratives, especially while talking about their family. They both identify their family positioning in working-class terms. Class positioning also signifies certain masculine identifications. Giannis narrates his father as working daily to make an 'honest day's wages'. This simultaneously signifies for Gianni a traditional male breadwinner identity dominated by dullness and repetitiveness. Giannis insists on dis-identifying himself from such traditional working-class identifications and goes on to articulate a desired form of masculinity that rests on his consumption patterns. Following the latest fashion, doing exercise, listening to the latest music, going to the right places, socialising with the cool local crowds reinforces distance and differentiation from a breadwinner's type of masculinity and works as a means towards stating individuality.

This aforementioned distance does not, however, also involve any kind of strategy for moving away from working-class employment. Although Giannis aspires to a different lifestyle from the one of his parents, according to his vocational plans he nonetheless sees himself having a working-class job in the future. His job is pragmatically and carefully chosen, taking into consideration his school performance, as the best possible route for maximising financial return. Giannis narrates himself as deciding to work hard in order to become 'financially sorted' and supports his preferred patterns of consumption and lifestyle.

Overall, in Giannis' case consumption emerges as key in the constitution of desired masculinity. Giannis' narrative echoes Griffiths, et al.'s (2006) argument that consumption plays a significant role 'in forming the impossible space' that youth subjects 'struggle to find a way to occupy' (Griffiths, et al., 2006). In Giannis' narrative consumption and lifestyle are indeed central in fabricating and maintaining distance from unfavourable masculinities. Crafting a desired masculinity and planning a vocational future is constructed by Giannis as a highly individualised process. Giannis constructs himself as autonomous, responsible for his self-development, free of his family's influence and independent of traditional bonds. He narrates himself as willing, hardworking and therefore 'immune to social constraints' (Burke, 2011). Giannis draws upon neo-liberal discourses of derision to construct failure and unemployment in terms of individual responsibility, laziness and recklessness.

To some extent Thanos' narrative of family relations highlights the emotional aspects of class and gender identifications. As in the case of Giannis, Thanos also narrates class identification as 'simultaneously speaking' and signifying certain types of masculinity. Nevertheless, in Thanos' case family is narrated as a unit with strong emotional bonds and constitutes a frame of reference for his self-identification. Class positioning is narrated as a lived experience of everyday struggle, hard work and collective endeavour for progression. Collective struggle for financial survival and advancement is narrated along with a sense of pride in managing well. Thanos refers to his parents' daily struggle to raise their children and on the other hand talks about the children's lowering of expectations and adjustment of lifestyle to low-budget patterns of consumption. The concept of family progress emerges as binding together parental endeavours and children's expectations as well as defining possibilities and setting the limits of consumption and lifestyle.

Growing up a working class boy implicates certain male identifications that are illustrated in vivid terms throughout Thanos' narrative. Thanos emphasises the emotional weight that this entails and points out the emotional landscape of responsibility, sovereignty, a sense of duty and strength to share the family's burdens. Growing up a strong, caring male, responsible for looking after the female members of the family is seen as a given. Thanos emphasises the inevitability of this kind of emotional work and comments on their occasional paradoxical enactment. For example, he points out the irrationality of feeling responsible for protecting the female members of the family, including his mother, when he was only a young boy.

Overall, in Thanos' case self-identifications, whether they involved class, gender or age, all emerge as involving collective bonds; that is to say that Thanos constructs class, gender and youth identifications with reference to wider social assemblages. Several elements of class positioning and masculinity are narrated as given and inherited. A narrative of his family's class history is constructed as emotionally framing his imagined future. Within this context perceptions of progress over time seem to set the boundaries to his expectations, as well as generating contentment; a sense of accepting his current positioning in the social world. Finally, Thanos narrates youth as a phase of masculine entitlement and growing responsibility for taking on the burdens of adult life.

Thanos' masculine identifications sit comfortably with class identification as well as his imagined vocational future. He constructs masculine identifications that resonate with a traditional 'gender regime' (Walby, 1997), one that is marked by the dominance of manual labour and a subsequent gender division. His identifications also emerge as incorporating a psychic landscape of male responsibility, sovereignty and duty. Interestingly, in contrast Thanos narrates himself as surrounded by females who take up post-traditional subject positions. He refers to his older sister as studying finance while also working and to his younger sister as working hard at school and aiming to go to university. He also refers to his girlfriend as being in the first year of university and planning to continue to postgraduate studies. Within the broader context of de-industrialisation and the expansion of higher education Thanos finds himself within a different 'gender regime' surrounded by young females who shape their ambitions and pathways accordingly. Consequently, Thanos' masculine identification appears to strike a possibly different cord within the broader context of social change and its implications for gender relations.

**Summary**

In the above discussion I utilise Hall's understanding of identity as a continuous and open-ended process. In the four youth narratives of the self that I work with the deployment of Hall's concept of identification allows me to understand the formation of youth identities as an on-going process that involves young people's active engagement with identification 'work'. I therefore observe young people's 'struggles for identity' as they take on, negotiate or resist discursive subject positions that are available to them, or work towards formulating fragments of alternative forms of identification. In the cases of Anna and Aninta, Hall's tools allow me to unsettle female identities and identify the ambiguity embedded in them by exploring the interplay of class, gender and ethnicity. In the cases of Giannis and Thanos, working with the concept of identification allows me to explore the interplay of class and gender and to map out continuities and discontinuities in the making of the masculine youth subject.

According to Hall (2007a), 'the world has now become more pluralist, more open-ended [...], those collective identities have not disappeared in any sense. So these constraints are still on any identity formation'. Nevertheless, 'there is a relatively greater degree of openness in the balance between the 'giveness' of an identity and the capacity to construct it or make it' (ibid, p.282). Overall, Hall's tools allow me to identify the workings of collective identities along with exploring the space between the 'giveness' of the identity and an individual's 'capacity to construct it'.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS

**Working at the Limits of Modernity**

This final chapter is neither conclusive nor definitive. The inevitable diversity characterising my project will also be present in the assembling of its parallel developing analytical strands. I describe the task I became involved with as an analytical exercise with a dual objective, that is, the exploration of some aspects of 'ordinary' youth identities in modern Greece on the one hand, and on the other hand, the analytical experimentation with theory and method through the deployment of multiple perspectives in the analysis of my data. My aim in this chapter is to summarise the main points of my analyses of youth identities as well as providing an overview of the whole project along with my critical reflections.

I locate my study within the broader context of redefinitions of youth and the changing content of youth experience. Throughout the literature review I outline a working definition of youth as a phase that is expanding in terms of time and acquiring a changing status; youth is considered less as a transitional phase since it progressively acquires an autonomous status. While expanding in terms of time new subdivisions emerge, such as early adolescence, post-adolescence and so on. Redefinitions of youth relate it to a state of ambiguous dependency in both financial and emotional terms, as well as connecting it with flexible patterns of education and employment and mixed housing arrangements. Although ascribing myself to the argument that youth is a useful concept to maintain in the vocabulary of sociological and educational research I also indicate the need to consider youth as a highly differentiated category. Subsequently, the enquiry for the research into youth is to seek, bring to the fore and understand the different and/or unequal forms of youth experience.

In epistemological terms I position my study on the foundation of Bourdieu's work and his problematisation of sociological practice. Bourdieu's contributions prove particularly productive for my task in overcoming the dualism between subjectivism and objectivism, as does his conceptualisation of the relationship

between theory and research. I refer to Bourdieu's criticism of objectivism for neglecting the distance between primary experience and objective knowledge. I also refer to his criticisms of subjectivism for constituting a form of knowledge that is attached to primary experience in a self-evident manner. I talk about Bourdieu's understanding of all forms of theoretical knowledge as bounded and his suggestion for developing a critical awareness of such limits, namely, the adoption of a reflexive 'gaze' in sociological practice.

The epistemological arguments on the inherent 'relationality' and therefore partiality of theoretical knowledge, as well as the inseparability of theory from empirical research, 'allow' me to experiment with theory and method in the way that I do. From this point of view I appropriate and explore Ball's suggestion that 'two theories are better than one' (Ball, 1994; 2005; 2006). I therefore attempt to engage with my data through three different 'lenses' (ibid.) with the expectation that deploying three (inevitably partial) frameworks and generating three (inevitably partial) analyses is better than one. In other words, I expect that the deployment of three different concepts in the interrogation of youth narratives of the self will allow me access to more interpretive possibilities of youth experience. Therefore, the quest of my task has been to look for ways of generating multiple interpretative schemes and therefore develop a broader understanding of youth.

Working with a do-it-yourself analytical technique rather than following a readymade one has been neither simple nor straightforward. There have been plenty of perils involved in this project, which for me indicates a need to be constantly vigilant and highly reflexive at every single step of the process. I have been particularly aware of the ever-present risk of slipping into eclecticism or implicitly succumbing to claims to neutrality. Considering the latter, I have made it explicit that by no means do I claim to hold a neutral ground that allows me to objectively use and appraise different perspectives along with their analytical strengths. On the contrary, I identify myself with critical traditions in sociological and educational research (Bernstein, 2000; Apple, 1996; Bourdieu, 1986, 1977a; Ball, 1994; 2005). I therefore try to make clear that all the epistemological affinities, methodological choices, theoretical orientations and analytical directions adopted in this project have been articulated from this perspective. The definition of the object of my study, as well as

its aim and intended contribution, are also defined through this positioning. More specifically, I have trailed out a multi-perspectival analysis of youth narratives with the aim of enriching our ways of thinking about social and educational inequalities and the workings of power with respect to youth subjectivities, educational pathways and forms of youth experience. Below I summarise the main points of my analysis while also discussing the analytical possibilities that each of the three frameworks offer.

**Bourdieu: Mapping the Invisible Space of Relations Surrounding Youth Subjects**

While exploring the data through Bourdieu's approach I place my analytical focus upon young people's narratives of imagined futures (Ball, et al., 2000) and discuss the construction of youth subjectivities along with identifying the historically accumulated workings of social positioning that are incorporated in them. Reading the data alongside Bourdieu's concepts has directed me towards focusing on the relationships between structure and agency and has allowed me to conceptualise dualisms in the making of youth subjectivities differently, that is to say relationally. I elaborate upon this point later on.

In the aforementioned process I find it particularly useful to draw upon some popular theorisations of late modernity as a background against which to lay out my analysis. In particular, I draw on Beck's and Giddens' theories of late modernity. Although different in their epistemological underpinnings and adopted methods, these theoretical approaches share some similar concerns with Bourdieu's research in posing and dealing with somewhat parallel 'big sociological questions'. Nevertheless, Bourdieu's work and that of the late modernity theorists interestingly approaches similar questions by highlighting opposing tendencies and social workings. Doing what Vandenberghe (1999) describes as 'twisting the stick in the other direction', namely, reading Bourdieu through the spectacles of Giddens, has facilitated my analysis of youth subjectivities by allowing me to better highlight those points where the two approaches stand in opposition. This in turn enables me to explicate in fine detail the points that develop out of the deployment of Bourdieu's analytical tools, while also pointing out the possible limitations of late modernity theorisations.

Throughout the analysis of my data using Bourdieu's lenses I primarily work with the concept of habitus to understand youth narratives of the self. I consider the latter as an integral and constitutive part of Bourdieu's wider set of conceptual tools and interpretive schemes. In other words, I do not extract habitus from his broader framework. Instead, I make sense of it as interrelated with the concepts of field and capital embedded within his research into strategies of distinction and processes of cultural and symbolic reproduction. Furthermore, drawing on feminist researchers I deploy habitus in interaction with field and understand its workings in a dynamic way. In other words, I understand habitus as 'not determining but generative' (Lawler, 2005, p.112).

Placing modernity theories in the foundations of my analysis has allowed me to indicate some key issues in the construction of educational pathways, which in Beck's and Giddens' framework would be regarded as manifestations of the ontological features of late modernity. So by 'twisting the stick in the other direction' I look into these issues further and explore them along with Bourdieu's approach. Accordingly, I discuss two girls' narratives (Marianna and Anais) that echo Beck's and Giddens' theorisations of self-identity in late modernity. I point out the two girls' reflexive engagements with their pathways and the strategic projection of their biographies. I also refer to the adoption of a calculative and proactive attitude towards risks and dangers and their 'colonisation of the future'. I highlight the two girls' confidence, certainty and optimism with respect to their educational future, while also pointing out on the 'dark side' of reflexivity, that is, the intellectual and emotional intensity involved in this process of 'crafting a do-it-yourself biography'.

While looking into these issues using Bourdieu's spectacles I turn my gaze and focus on the two girls' habitual inclinations in the constitution of life pathways and self-identities. I interrogate the two girls' narratives within the context of their personal histories, that is, considering the girls' embodied material and cultural accumulations. I analyse their narratives of imagined futures within the material and symbolic conditions in which they find themselves. In one case (Marianna), I point out on the socioeconomic background that facilitates a 'distance from necessity' in material and emotional terms, as well as allowing access to the types of resources required when crafting a do-it-yourself biography. In the other case (Anais) I

highlight the large volumes of accumulated cultural capital and relate these to narrated experiences of growing up in what Bernstein calls a 'person-oriented family'. In both cases Bourdieu's tools offer me insights into personal histories and background accumulations, seeing them as generative of the girls' 'feel for the academic game'. As Vryonides (2007) puts it, I see the girls as embodying a 'habitus of success'. In these cases I understand reflexivity as being triggered, or simply made possible, by habitual dispositions as well as being enacted within the girls' narratives.

I then move beyond Beck and Giddens' theories to discuss youth narratives that I interpret as indicating little or no signs of a reflexive projection of self-identities and biographies. Although acknowledging that these theories claim their validity as a set of theoretical propositions and not through their application in research (Savage, 2000), I nevertheless set a question mark over the universality that these theories claim. By shifting my point of view and exploring the data through Bourdieu's lenses, this has allowed me to think beyond the assertion of a 'simple' agency within these youth narratives and their indication as manifestations of the ontology of late modernity. Instead, I pay close attention to the unequal social landscape within which subjects are positioned and the resources with which they enter the field of education.

I discuss two youth narratives (Angeliki, Giannis) that conveyed a loose sense of reflexive engagement when crafting pathways and articulating imagined futures. Although very different in their positioning and reasoning, both young people narrate themselves as 'going with the flow' and appear to be rather far from constructing a sense of individualised responsibility and the active management of their educational pathways and life projects. By deploying Bourdieu's tools and looking at the specificities of the individuals' socioeconomic positioning, in one case (Angeliki) I depict a relaxed and positive outlook towards the future according to which future possibilities are loosely perceived as opportunities rather than risks. I point to the narrative of the past, the present and the future in education as 'taken for granted' and identify habitual workings as making the route through which education is 'immediately intelligible and foreseeable' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.58). I discuss this case in terms of an 'unrealised reflexivity' since the possibility of reflexivity is there but is resisted and cancelled out in practice. In the other case (Giannis), hesitation in envisaging the future is narrated along with puzzlement and confusion, feelings of

inadequacy and a sense of being lost. I read this in terms of Bourdieu's 'doubled habitus', highlighting on one hand the (perceived as irrelevant) familial logic of practice and on the other hand, the changing features of the economy and the labour market in Athens. I also discuss this mismatch as reinforcing stability and immobilisation in the social field.

Understanding the concept of habitus as 'generative' (Lawler, 2005), I further explore youth narratives that indicate a mismatch between the 'feel for the game' and 'the game itself' (Adkins, 2003; 2005). I therefore analyse two cases (Anna, Costas) in which habitual inclinations and the familial logic of practice are narrated as distinctively different from young people's own educational aspirations, anticipated futures and desired subjectivities. In both cases I observe habitual inclinations as interacting with unfamiliar fields; in one case this is due to immigration while in the other it is due to close interaction with the neighbouring 'cave of literature'. Using Bourdieu's tools I read these incidents as triggering distance from habitual practice or disrupting habitus, as well as generating reflexivity and conscious efforts to supersede habitus and rework subjectivities. Finally, I map the emotional landscapes embedded in young people's narratives of disrupted habitus and their experiences of being a 'fish out of the water', while also discussing the emotional complications involved in their efforts to move beyond their 'practical sense' and develop strategies of distinction.

Overall, Bourdieu's analytical tools allow me to explore difference and inequality in youth subjectivities and imagined futures. While reading my data with Bourdieu's habitus I map different possibilities and impossibilities for dis-embedding from structural workings and for developing a reflexive engagement with the self. I understand individual reflexivity as a lot more than a side effect of institutional reflexivity. Instead, I depict the reflexive engagement with imagined futures as being allowed by habitual dispositions, resisted or triggered within the context of contradictory principles of habitus and field. Moreover, I illustrate a view of the 'emotional landscapes' surrounding these processes and discuss them in terms of their effects in supporting movement or reinforcing mobility in the social world.

## Foucault: Temporalising the Youth Self

Reading the data through Foucault's lenses I focus my analytical interest on the 'kinds of work individuals perform upon themselves in order to turn themselves into' youth subjects of a kind. I focus on the discursive means deployed by individuals as well as looking into the forms of subjectivity that they aspire to. In other words, in Foucault's terms I am interested in the techniques of the youth self and the types of truth that accompany them. More specifically, my focus is upon a certain set of techniques deployed by individuals, namely those related to time.

While turning my gaze to the concept of time I try to distance myself from common-sense conceptions of time, in terms of either a natural phenomenon or a mere container of human practice. Instead, I draw on sociocultural understandings and discuss the symbolic aspects of time, considering it as a 'category of the mind' that becomes meaningful within culturally and historically specific social contexts. Moreover, time is understood beyond the context of collective representations as an artefact that involves different perceptions and responses from individuals. As such, time, and more specifically time in its several forms, is regarded as an integral part of human practice, a constitutive part of institutions and an ever-present element in human realities.

Working along with these lines of thought and drawing on Tamboukou's (1999; 2000) work on the spatial dimensions of self-constitution and particularly her concept of technologies of space, I move towards identifying the temporal elements of the self-formation process. My interest is to develop a certain reading of temporalities alongside forms of self-care. I therefore look at time as a tool and a technique that individuals deploy while developing a certain relation to their selves or work towards developing desired subjectivities; consequently, I analyse the data from a technologies of time perspective. Throughout my analysis I identify different temporalities which are embedded in the process of constituting the youth self. I thus identify different perceptions and definitions of time along with which individuals read and narrate the youth self. I regard these cases as provisional and indefinite although indicative points of articulation with broader discursive configurations. I discuss different temporalities within which the self is contextualised or worked through and constituted.

First of all, I look at youth narratives that contextualise the youth self in present time. I go on to explore further the constitution of the youth self along with present time by interrogating the different kinds of self-temporalities associated with it. I therefore discuss a form of youth self which is shaped in the extended present, as well as exploring a form of youth self that was formed within routinised, habitualised time. The extended present is constituted within a form of selfhood that resists envisaging the future and lives for the present. Therefore, the extended present captures the instantaneity of a self who 'lives for the moment' and resists stretching into the future, who is embedded instead in a sense of continuity featuring the repetition of everyday habits. Throughout my analysis of present-focused self-temporalities I also seek to represent the constitution of youth selfhood along with habitualised time. In this case, practices are discursively divided into clear temporal intervals (that is, school time, work time and free time) and are marked by repetitive sequences. In the context of habitualised time individuals narrate everyday practices as orchestrated in an ordered, predictable and cyclical manner.

In contrast, those youth narratives that position the self within a future temporal horizon entail different perceptions of time. Here time and self are stretched into the future but there were different meanings of time involved in this process. I identify and discuss perceptions of 'maximising time' and 'accumulative time'. A maximising outlook towards time involves individuals' purposive manipulation and intensification of time. Time is to be manipulated by the youth self in order to make the most out of it and is directed towards certain outcomes. Through this frame of maximising time I have been able to glimpse individuals rendering meaning and redefining other aspects of practice. For example, in reference to Marianna I point out aspects of present time that acquire their meaning as either useful, worthwhile or as a 'waste' according to their potential input towards the aspired to selfhood. Maximising time also involved spending time privately, in terms of restorative time as well as straining and disciplining the self. In another case (Katerina) time and future temporalities are rather less intense and are perceived in more accumulative terms (a developmental self). Accumulative definitions of time entail an evolving sense of self, that is, a form of youth self that develops and progresses along with time. In this case it is throughout time and its accumulative capacities that the desired self is to be built

up. In a similar manner I identify perceptions of future time as ever unfolding, non-cyclical and marked by unexpectedness. Time is therefore to be lived to the full and collect experience, so as to keep unfolding within a future horizon. This sense of time does not have a specific destination and involves unimagined future.

As it is becoming apparent from the discussion undertaken so far in my analysis of youth narratives, perceptions of time are entangled with certain types of truth about the self and respective techniques of self-constitution. Notions of an extended present coexist with constructions of a rebellious masculine youth self; a self that resists institutional temporalities and struggles against the parental definitions of time that seek to regulate him, for example, turning school time into time for having fun, turning study time into time for 'hanging out'. I read such negotiations as entailing collective experiences of time and collective formations of alternative self-temporalities. In this case, the youth self is narrated as being constructed mainly in and through socialised time. Forming and inhabiting collectively alternative temporalities seems to work as a source of self-constitution beyond the dominant discourses, as in for example the 'time at the square'.

I find constructions of habitualised time being developed alongside constructions of a 'hard-working', strong and disciplined masculine youth self. Discursive constructions of time as strictly sequenced, structured and tightly accorded to institutional time and fed into a youth self striving for adult maturity and independent living in the 'real world' of adult life. The techniques for making up such a selfhood involves disciplining and fitting the self into given temporalities, scheduling and enforcing the self within dominant institutional temporalities. There is a strong sense of obligation and duty delivered through the narration of techniques of habitualised time. Furthermore, habitualised and routinised time is constructed as a source of security and thus the youth self is stabilised through temporal reiteration.

Accumulative notions of time reside in the process of formulating a 'communitarian selfhood'. In this case, I depict the female self as seeking to craft a selfhood that will be able to give back to others and contribute to the community, that is, a caring and giving female self. The technique for achieving this involved self-observation, a way of getting to know and manipulate the self accordingly. Spending time observing and learning the self is perceived to be a duty and prerequisite for

building a communitarian self. Finally, maximising notions of time are accompanied by maximising notions of the youth self. Time is carefully calculated, strategically inhabited and invested in a future desired self. All efforts are directed towards achieving a marketable, strategic and competitive subjectivity.

Throughout the analysis I consider the technologies of time as being developed and exercised within networks of power, alongside techniques of domination and forms of regulation. I look at instances in which individuals inhabit institutional temporalities or dominant discursive configurations of time and work towards orchestrating the self accordingly. Nevertheless, thinking about the concept of technologies of time allows me to bring to the fore different negotiations and responses for inhabiting dominant discursive constructions of time. For example, 'futurity' as a dominant temporality that seeks to regulate the youth self is negotiated and inhabited in different ways: as a means for developing an 'ever-experiencing', 'open-minded' self, as a strategy manipulated in order to achieve a 'marketable self', or as an instrument deployed in order to develop a 'communitarian self'. Reading my data using technologies of time allows me to capture local struggles and resistances and the formation of self-temporalities beyond the dominant discourses of time. For example, I refer to negotiations over 'school time' as well as negotiations with parental discourses and techniques of time, both of which seek to orchestrate youth practices. Furthermore, I glimpse the formation of alternative youth 'temporal homes' (Chowers, 2000) that are collectively developed through socialised time. I discuss the latter as providing discursive resources and thus offering possibilities for developing an alternative sense of self (for example, 'time at the square').

Working with the concept of technologies of time also allows me to bring to the fore differences in the sense of mastery laying in the core perceptions of time and youth self. In particular, I map differences in terms of time inscription and time mastery in the constructions of time and self. For example, I refer to youth narratives in which time is constructed and perceived in terms of a tool and manipulated to serve the formation of a future self in the best possible way. On the other hand, I talk about perceptions of time as an imposition; a given frame, a container of youth practice where the quest is to fit and discipline the self within it. This is perceived to be a source of fulfilment relating to a sense of strength and discipline, stamina and control

over the body and the self. Mastering time to achieve the desired selfhood or mastering the youth self to fit into given temporalities, as well as discursive constructions of time as habitat or time as instrument, pose different questions for the process of youth self-constitution and entail different forms of reflexive involvement with the self.

## Hall: Capturing Youth Identities in Terms of 'Difference in Unity'

In shifting to Hall's lenses I utilise his (re)conceptualisation of identity as a continuous, open-ended process involving multiple identifications that are strategically constructed and articulated in the form of a 'unity in difference'. Following Hall I turn my gaze upon the process of youth identity formation, considering it along with the specificities of the context in which it is situated with my task being to 'describe this play of "difference" within identity' (Hall, 1990c, p.396).

I identify this play of difference in two ways. On the one hand, the deployment of Hall's concepts allows me to unpack youth identities and look into the multiple identifications embedded in them. More specifically, I look into constructions of class, gender, ethnicity and youth. I explore whether different identifications are constitutive of each other and in what ways. On the other hand, I explore the ways in which different forms of identification come together to form situated temporary (identity) articulations and context-specific responses. Hall's framework allows me to discern not only the affinities among different identifications but also enables me to grasp inconsistencies and disruptions. In Youdell's terms, I attempt to 'tease out the nuanced processes of subjectivation' and therefore look into discursive 'constellations of identity categories' (Youdell, 2010, p.44). Similar to the enquiry posed in Youdell's research, although using Hall's toolbox, I attempt to move beyond understandings of 'categorical identities' as 'discreet or sealed' and observe 'how these categories might come to be meaningful though their relationship with other categories within particular constellations and whether constellations might be necessary for apparently singular identities to be meaningful' (Youdell, 2003, p.29).

While discussing the negotiations of female youth identities I explore young girls' narratives (Aninta, Anna) articulated through their gender, class, ethnic and

youth identifications. I highlight and look further at those points in which ethnic identifications are entangled with forms of femininity. In both cases I find that the narrative construction of ethnicity 'simultaneously speaks' (Mac an Ghaill, 1994) a lot more than an ethnic origin. It also mandates certain forms of femininity and lifestyle as well as signifying certain types of youth experience. 'Albanianess' is narrated as being entangled with 'gender regimes' (Walby, 1997) that echo traditional patriarchal social relations along with their subsequent values, norms and hierarchical segregations. The 'right' kind of femininity and lifestyle are narrated as predominantly focused on domesticity, moral reservation and family values. Furthermore, I also find the construction of 'Albanianess' to be interwoven with certain forms of youth experience. Ethnic identification is narrated as entailing very particular possibilities for youth identification. In this case 'Albanianess' is narrated as being closer to childhood rather than adulthood and involves limited social exposure and considerable reservation with respect to sexual conduct. Following Youdell's work (2003; 2006) it may be suggested that dominant Albanian female identifications and discourses of 'doing the modern young girl', which is appealing to my informants, are narrated as 'incommensurable'.

This might have been elaborated upon further if I had had Albanian male youths in my sample, but unfortunately I did not. I did however have Greek working-class youths in the study. Throughout the analysis of the young males' narratives (Thanos, Giannis) I identify 'constellations' (Youdell, 2006) of masculinity and class. Both young men narrate social relations of class as involving certain types of masculinity. Nevertheless, they value these types of masculinity differently and position themselves accordingly. In one case being a worker translates into a repetitive, routinised, narrowing and limiting masculine lifestyle. In the other case being a worker signifies a struggling, skilful, hard-working, responsible and proud masculinity. I discuss the latter case as indicative of what Hall would term the 'giveness of an identity' (Hall, 2007a). I therefore find that social relations of class do not only define the 'right' sort of masculinity, but also work in the most hidden and non-material manner to shape the 'emotional landscape' (Reay, 2005) of working class masculinity as responsible, sovereign, capable, strong and supportive of the

'weak opposite sex'. In all these instances Hall's framework allows me to bring into light multiple forms of identification and look into their interconnections.

Nevertheless, following Hall requires that I see the constitution of self-identities as a lot more than the sum of different positions and respective identifications. Quite the opposite, I read youth identities as constructed through difference as well as 'operating across difference' (Hall, 2000) and map them as complex configurations. I therefore manage to illustrate a view of the 'binding and marking of symbolic boundaries, the production of frontier-effects' (Hall, 1991b, p.17), as Hall puts it. In the discussion of male youth identifications I highlight dis-identifications that relate to social class and culture. In particular, I refer to the young boy's (Giannis) resistance to male identity that resonates with his working class social positioning. In this case, pointing out the limiting effects of the given working class masculinity is accompanied by claims to a trendy exclusive lifestyle. Here, attempts at 'binding and marking of symbolic boundaries' and suturing youth masculinity are made through consumption and lifestyle.

In the case of female identifications I identify the two girls (Aninta, Anna) as constructing themselves primarily through difference and via a set of dis-identifications. I identify them as crossing cultural boundaries between 'Albanianess' and 'Greekness' and dis-identifying themselves from the 'girl to be' and the 'youth to be' mandated by the dominant culture of their ethnic origin. Both girls refuse to 'chain' themselves to traditional discourses of a female codes of practice and struggle with 'suturing' desired identifications. In both cases the girls narrate themselves primarily in terms of what they do not want to be (Skeggs, 1997) and secondarily they articulate fragments of what they want to be.

In one case freedom from fixity is manifested in identifications of the youth female self as a collector of experiences. A multiplicity of experiences, impermanence, spontaneity and a loose sense of commitment are constructed as a source of pleasure. Claiming playful forms of youth experience, constructing and enacting youth identities – predominantly in the public sphere – and seeking to enhance freedom and control over sexual conduct are narrated vis-à-vis negotiations of traditional codes of female practice. In the other case, struggle against unity is narrated along with aspirations of social mobility and female independence. The

desire to move away from given subject positions is narrated as involving great self-discipline, very hard work and considerable emotional and intellectual investment. Achieving a position in higher education, gaining qualifications and fighting for a successful career signifies a pathway to liberty, autonomy and desirable female identifications. Both girls echo Tamboukou's and Ball's (2002) 'nomadic subjects' as they both appear to be 'struggling against fixity and unity and attempting to speak and act outside or beyond the positions available within the collectivities to which they belong' (Tamboukou & Ball, 2002, p.267).

In all these instances that I present I read the process of 'suturing' and 'binding' youth identities beyond the given subject positions as involving individualised responses. Far from considering them as indicators of the weakening effects of collective identities, following Hall I explore them further, thus enquiring into wider discourses to which the subject is temporarily, successfully articulated or chained (Hall, 2000). In other words, I approach the individualised ways in which young people deal with identity-negotiations and dis-identifications as discursively contextualised responses. In the case of the young immigrant girls I take into consideration what Kokkali (2005) describes as 'strategies of invisibilization'. Consequently, I read their individualised identification struggles as developing in the void of valid and relevant dominant discourses of 'doing' the immigrant girl in contemporary Greece. In the case of the young male I discuss dis-identifications, pointing out the 'chaining' of the youth subject to neo-liberal discourses of self-autonomy and freedom of choice, as well as highlighting manifestations of what Kenway (1986) refers to as 'discourses of derision'. Claims to independence, personal responsibility and free will were contextualised within dominant neo-liberal discourses that encourage individuals to understand themselves through psychological and individual discourses (Burke, 2011).

Overall, Hall's conceptualisation of identity allows me to unpack and describe the multiplicity of identifications that make up youth subjectivities. Furthermore, he offers tools for conceptualising the relations between and among different forms of identification and understanding their meeting points; the ways that they are brought together to form a type of context-bound, temporary, contradictory and asymmetric unity. Thinking of youth identifications in terms of 'difference in unity' allows me to

think about and depict ambiguity while avoiding 'the twin traps of reductionism and essentialism' (Slack, 1996, p.112). That is, I explore how different forms of identification are articulated in certain contexts without presuming an unfolding core self or regarding subjectivities as a summing-up of social positions. For example, I am able to grasp immigration and immigrant identifications as disabling in terms of class and ethnicity, although enabling in terms of gender identifications and forms of youth experience. Overall, I am able to read and understand youth identifications as a complex structure: 'a structure in which things are related as much through their differences as through their similarities' (Hall, 1980d, quoted by Slack, 1996, p.117).

Moreover, Hall's understanding of identification as a 'source of agency in action' (Hall, 1991b) proves useful in exploring young people's active endeavours and struggles for identity. This enables me to illustrate a view of the relations between the subject positions available to young people and the multifarious ways they are going about taking them up. So for example I point out and discuss youth dis-identifications from the types of masculinity and cultural practices ascribed to class position. I also refer to youth dis-identifications from dominant femininities and forms of youth experience indicated by ethnicity and class position. Hall's concepts allow me to understand pluralism and map out the asymmetries of youth identifications, without losing grip of the 'giveness' of youth identities and the continuing workings of collective identifications. In other words, I develop a better understanding of what happens in what Hall describes as a 'relatively greater degree of openness in the balance between the "giveness" of an identity and the capacity to construct it or make it' (Hall, 2007a).

## Greek Youth in the 2000s: Preliminary Insights and Points of Departure

This analysis of youth narratives of the self using the spectacles of Bourdieu, Foucault and Hall offers some, albeit preliminary, insights into young people's accounts of and responses to wider socio-cultural workings in Greece in the 2000s; the modernization period, as it is often referred to. These might be considered as points of departure for enquiring and further elaborating upon the diversity of 'ordinary youth' experiences by exploring young people's 'personal troubles' alongside 'the public issues of social

structure' (Mills, 1959, p.8). Such questions take on even more meaningful form in the current context of financial crisis, political turbulence and wider, radical social transformation.

Deploying Bourdieu's concepts to explore young people's 'imagined futures' affords me useful insights into young people's engagement with the making of life pathways alongside the workings of broader structural configurations taking place in Greece in the 2000s. Throughout my analysis, I capture youth as an extended phase in the lives of young Greeks and I identify it as less linear and rather de-standardised. All the informants I refer to, irrespective of their family background, their place of residence or the school they attend, narrate their imagined pathways in terms of an extended youth phase. In the narratives of Marianna, Anais, Angeliki, Giannis, Anna and Costas the end of their school careers is to be followed by a period of undefined length, for gaining credentials; a phase of prolonged financial dependency on their parents which, in some cases, might be combined with independent living. In this respect the changing social landscapes that accompanied the period of modernization in Greece can be identified as interrupting traditional pathways and youth transitions. Nevertheless, the prospect of extended youth -quite differently to what late modernity theories claim- does not directly translate into young people's taking their lives into their own hands. Quite the opposite, I map out a range of responses and argue that thinking, articulating and dealing with the horizon of an extended youth constitutes an unequally shared experience for my informants, which is marked by the unequal distribution of constraints, opportunities and risks.

In the cases of Marianna and Anais, taking their lives into their own hands is habitually triggered, allowed and facilitated by their access to a 'valid' stock of material and/or cultural resources. In Angeliki's case extended youth is perceived as a phase protected from the ties and responsibilities of adult life and therefore as 'a time of searching for and experimenting with social identity' (Erikson, 1974 cited in Kruger, 1990). For Giannis extended youth is an impending horizon although unintelligible, inarticulate and vaguely grasped. Giannis's response to 'go with the flow' involves limited sense of control over his pathway as well as limited access to relevant, 'valid' cultural resources. Anna and Costas narrate themselves as inevitably taking their lives into their own hands following their desire to move away from their

given place in the social world. Their strategies of social mobility involve imagined routes through higher education. These cases echo Kruger's description of youth as 'a phase of stress and obligatory individualization' (Kruger, 1990, p.115).

Overall I understand young Greeks' imagined futures in the period of modernization, as being configured within a context where structural forces have not lost their effect. My initial insights allow me to glimpse aspects of a new social landscape facing young people with the horizon of an extended youth phase. Nevertheless throughout my analysis the diversity of responses manifested the intricacies of old and recurring social hierarchies. Similar to Taylor's (2012) study of youth in de-industrialised settings, my initial insights demonstrate 'different responses from those who are 'getting ahead' in 'new' times as opposed to those who are simply 'getting-by' or even 'losing out', uncovering this as a profoundly classed process' (p. 11). In the cases I discussed young people's choices, ideas and strategies for dealing with this 'new' horizon of youth as infused with the cultural workings of their family background and social positioning.

Through the deployment of Hall's concepts I obtain some initial insights into the particularities of the process of youth identity formation in Greece. Using Hall's concepts to explore youth narratives allows me to glimpse the presence or absence of collective social identities in Greece as well as exploring how they are taken-up, negotiated or resisted at the level of the individual. First of all, Hall's spectacles allow me to elaborate on what it means to be young female Albanian living in Greece in the 2000s. I particularly explore the intersections of gender, race, class and age in the making of female identifications. By looking into the multiplicity and ambiguity of Albanian girls positioning I identify how such intersections work towards enhancing educational aspirations and/or plans for independent living. To some extend this discussion entails elements of what Mirza (2009) describes as 'educational urgency', a desire to succeed against all odds' (p.144). Indeed a recent report by the National Centre for Social Research 'Social Portrait of Greece in the 2012', uses quantitative data to show that immigrant girls' plans and desire to participate in higher education is particularly high and continuous throughout the last years. Nevertheless my discussion also points on the complexity and intricacies that girls' desire to mobilise themselves in physical and symbolic spaces entails.

On the other hand, by deploying Hall's concepts I explore what it means to be young, working class male living in Greece in the 2000s. Here Halls's concepts enable me to observe how collective social identities do not always inform young people's individual identities in a symmetric or straightforward way. The case of Thanos is indicative of an individual who takes up a collective working-class identity and masculinity. His narrative of youth identification is strongly bounded by his family history and social positioning and is constructed in terms of continuity as a further extension of it. I make sense of his narrative as displaying fixity and unity. However I also discuss that this continuity is contextualised within changing conditions and particularly point out on the shifting 'gender regimes'. In Giannis' case collective working-class identifications are used as a reference point against which his difference and individuality are highlighted. Yet seeking to break away from family history and working class positioning, doesn't involve routes through education or strategies for gaining qualifications. I capture Giannis' dis-identification as articulated around patterns of consumption and lifestyle. Giannis' narrative could be regarded as drawing on aspects of what Sevastakis describes as the 'chauvinism of well-being', which was persistently cultivated by the media, alongside the general call for modernization, throughout the 2000s.

Looking into youth narratives from a 'technologies of time' perspective allows me to bring to the fore some preliminary insights into the temporalities embedded in the broader discursive configurations that comprised the political and social landscape of Greece in the 2000s. By exploring different versions of time alongside techniques of the youth self as these emerge through their narratives, I try to interrogate the discursive 'temporal homes' that were available to young Greeks in the 2000s. Throughout my analysis I identify the extended present as arising out of a conflict with allocated future-oriented conceptions of time (of the family and the school). I discuss the extended present as amalgamating a focus on the present and a sense of repetition. In some ways the extended present can be regarded as echoing what Sevastakis (2004) describes as the 'urban Zen', as one of the temporal horizons constructed throughout dominant cultural discourses during the 2000s. In Sevastakis' (2004) study modernisation discourses are analysed as being infused with different and sometimes seemingly conflicting social temporalities. Consequently, tributes to

the 'constant flow' of goods and commodities, as well as to the constant movement of labouring bodies and bodies having fun, are entangled with the spirit of 'coolness'. According to Sevastakis (2004) temporalities of the 'cool' and 'relaxed' are harmoniously blended with images of high-speed living in a context where grand narratives and teleologies are fading away. In this sense the extended present might be regarded as drawing on such late modern dominant discourses.

Nevertheless, these dominant discursive constructions of time are not generally manifest in my data. I discuss the multiplicity of temporal horizons that are constructed through the youth narratives of my research. Besides the extended present I discuss a version of time that focuses on the present but mainly involves a sense of giveness regarding the temporal organisation of practice. In this case I observe the youth self as being formed and stabilised through temporal reiteration and the routinisation of practice. These also implicate fixity for the youth self in temporal and spatial terms. I make sense of 'routinised time' and the techniques of the self deriving from it, as related to tradition and its workings. While discussing future-oriented temporalities I refer to techniques of 'maximising time'. In this case I point out a form of time that involved an intensified form of engagement with time and the self. Time was to be mastered and manipulated in the making of the desired self, and this involves individualised discourses of an enterprising self; a youth self that is active and calculating, 'a self that calculates about itself and that acts upon itself in order to better itself (Rose, 1996, p.154). Ambition, determination and drive fuelled by the strategic management of time and self. I discuss this version of time and futurity as involving the display of neo-liberal discourses of individualisation. Yet throughout my analysis I also identify future-oriented self-temporalities and techniques of self-constitution beyond liberal discourses of individualisation. I refer to accumulative conceptions of time and discuss the constitution of the self along with communitarian values. In this case, techniques of the youth self were orchestrated around collectivity and the self evolves with reference to the local community and its institutions. The youth self is perceived as evolving along with a sense of social responsibility and time and its qualities are to be amassed and generate returns.

The youth narratives that I discuss draw on a range of wider discursive configurations and display different versions of social time. These can be understood

as indicative of the various co-existing temporal regimes that dominated Greece during the 2000s. Although initial and preliminary my first insights indicate that youth narratives were not harmonised with dominant cultural discourses of modernisation and are far more complex and diversified. Cultures of modernisation call for a break away from tradition and the recent past; they put forward a euphoric and playful outlook for the future that is available to all those who are willing to adapt and generate sophisticated individual strategies and lifestyles. Yet looking into techniques of time and the youth self I capture the remaining workings of traditional time alongside temporalities associated with neo-liberal discourses. I also identify the workings of time that involve communitarian values while exploring negotiations of time and the self beyond allocated futurity in terms of the extended present.

Overall, my first engagement with exploring Greek youth occurs in line with Demertzis, et al.'s (2008) argument that is it particularly important to deploy multiple and differing perspectives in the study of Greek youth. As they explain, 'the necessity of a multi-perspectival study of Greek youth is mostly needed in the context of Greek reality, which combines in unique ways elements of traditional as well as elements of a modern, postmodern and risk society' (p.55). So far I have suggested that Bourdieu, Foucault and Hall might provide different standpoints and shed light on different aspects of tradition, de-traditionalisation, individualisation and risk in relation to the formation of youth subjectivities.

At this very historical moment the socio-economic conditions in Greece have radically changed compared to the period when the data of this study were collected. Since the outbreak of the financial crisis Greece is facing severe economic austerity, extremely high rates of unemployment and political turbulence. These challenges carve out new social sceneries of risk and uncertainty for young people. I suggest that a follow-up exploration of young Greeks in the current conditions of crisis would capture social change and would offer useful insights on the formation of youth subjectivities and the role of education within conditions of economic and political turmoil. Moreover I suggest that Bourdieu's, Foucault's and Hall's concepts would open-up different analytical possibilities and would capture varied yet insightful aspects of youth experience within a context a radical transformation.

Through Bourdieu's lens the current crisis could be understood as signifying a radical re-configuration of social 'fields' and 'sub-fields'. Working with the concept of 'habitus' and 'field' would direct analytical attention both on instances of continuity as well as mismatch between young people's habitual inclinations and the changing fields. Bourdieu's tools could enable the mapping out of young people's responses in a wider context where embodied accumulations may have lost their relevance or 'exchange value', routes of social mobilization may have been obstructed and aspects of previously hegemonic divisions of power and control are in flux. Beyond that, Bourdieu's concepts are potentially useful in observing and further questioning which forms of (material and symbolic) capital are losing or gaining value and which forms of capital enable young people to navigate through such storming conditions and develop resilience.

Beck's and Giddens' theorizations could also be discussed anew in these changing contexts. Although one would imagine that within the current financial crisis, ideas related to economic and social de-regulation and institutional reflexivity would lose their power, a recent report published by the Transnational Institute explains how the European Union governments' policies paradoxically followed the opposite direction. The report argues that 'the dark irony is that an economic crisis that many proclaimed as the 'death of neoliberalism' has instead been used to entrench neoliberalism' (Zacune et. al, 2013, p.3). The idea of 'flexicurity', which stems from theorizations of 'reflexive modernization', is such an example. 'Flexicurity' has been identified and put forward by both the European Commission (2005) and the Greek Government (Diamantopoulou, 2006) as a key concept for guiding socio-economic restructuring and orchestrating the European states' responses to the crisis. These approaches should therefore be reconsidered and questioned in the light of their remaining influence. Beck's and Giddens' theories and their approach to structure and agency must be critically reconsidered, in a period when traditional structures are violently demolishing opening-up a space of significantly less opportunities and yet more limitations and restrictions for youth life-pathways.

In Foucault's terms a 'technologies of time' perspective could be particularly useful in understanding how wider social temporalities have been rapidly and severely disrupted by the financial crash and explore their implications for forms of youth self-constitution. In fact, since the outbreak of the financial crisis several discursive constructions of time have dominated public discourses. For example, unifying redefinitions of collective past and present have been deployed to legitimise the austerity measures, rendering individuals ethically guilty and morally responsible for the crisis. In these cases the recent past is portrayed as a period of generalised prosperity, wellbeing and living above their means. The so often used metaphor of the Greek society as a big party that is now over and people are asked to pay the bill, is one such example (for a critical account see Fragoudaki, 2012). According to Papanikolaou's (2013) study on the 'grammar of the crisis', the management strategies of the crisis mainly deploy the 'future perfect' tense. In this respect, dominant political rhetorics construct collective future as already defined and accomplished, although cancelling a range of individuals' rights and denying them forms of present living. Working with 'technologies of time' would allow bringing to the fore different social temporalities and consider their disciplinary workings. Moreover individual negotiations of time and self and techniques of self-constitution would be identified within and beyond hegemonic temporalities.

Finally in a period when social divisions are reconstructed and the boundaries among social groups are redefined, Stuart Hall's concept of identification would allow the exploration of old and new collective identities as these are taken-up, negotiated, resisted in youth self-identifications. The restructuring of taken-for-granted social orders, following the economic crash has obliterated certain collectivities while giving rise to others –ranging from fascist groups to citizen's charitable initiatives and social movements. Additionally, young people are forced into previously unimaginable forms of youth experience and respective identifications. They are therefore asked to negotiate novel, unanticipated or contradictive identities such as for example the well-educated, middle-class yet unemployed or precariously employed. Hall's concepts would facilitate a detailed account of youth strategies for dealing with such challenges.

# Epilogue

Overall, Bourdieu's, Foucault's and Hall's concepts have enabled me to throw light on different aspects of youth narratives and have allowed me to develop a multifaceted reading of youth identities and forms of youth experience. Analysing youth narratives along with Bourdieu's tools has offered me insights into the 'invisible' incorporated elements of young people's social positioning as well as their workings in the making of unequal forms of youth experience. They have also offered me insights into young people's histories in the form of material and symbolic accumulations, as well as enabling me to understand the manifestation and workings of contextual specificities in the process of constructing youth identities and educational pathways. Bourdieu's lenses have allowed me to explore the invisible space surrounding young people in terms of embodiment and understand social positioning as the 'structuring absent' (Skeggs, 1997) of the diversity of youth narratives of the self.

Foucault's tools have allowed me to unlock certain aspects of the process of youth self-constitution by unravelling the temporal elements of the self-formation process. Reading time as social time has opened up a space for investigation. Working with the concept of technologies of time has enabled me to describe difference in forms of youth experience by identifying different versions of time and forms of self-constitution, as well as making sense of 'time' as the means through which 'the reflexivity of self upon self is established', as well as exploring the 'discourse of truth that is linked to it' (Foucault, 1988). Additionally, I have been able to bring to the fore local struggles and negotiations involved in inhabiting dominant discursive constructions of time, as well as identifying differences in the sense of mastery involved in the temporal constitution of the youth self.

The deployment of Hall's concepts has allowed me to grasp difference at the level of the individual in the process of the formation of youth identities. More specifically, it has allowed me to unpack the multifarious dimensions of identity and explore multiple identifications of youth subjectivity across the various social positions that youth subjects occupy. Throughout the deployment of Hall's concepts I

have been able to conceptualise 'constellations of categorical identities' (Youdell, 2003; 2006) and map how different forms of identification relate to and constitute one another, in addition to how they come together to generate context-specific responses. Most significantly, Hall's concepts have allowed me to move beyond a mere celebration of difference in youth identifications and have directed me towards conceptualising unity in terms of asymmetrical, context-bound and temporary articulations.

Bourdieu, Foucault and Hall offer different interpretive opportunities in the exploration of youth narratives and different interpretive schemes for unpacking and understanding the diversity of youth. In Bourdieu's terms the diversity of youth is understood along with unequal accumulations and the contextual specificities of a subject's positioning; that is, unequal possibilities of young people's dis-embedding from structural workings and developing reflexivity lies in the fabrication of imagined futures. Through Foucault's lenses I have explored differences in the forms of temporal discursive constitutions of the youth self. I have identified different perceptions of time according to which the youth self is orchestrated, different forms of inhabiting dominant temporalities and differences in the sense of mastery entailed in this process. Hall's concepts have offered me insights into the diversity of youth experience by depicting the ambiguity of social positioning. Moreover, they have facilitated an understanding of youth identities as consisting of multiple identifications and a grasping of their interrelations and articulations.

My study has experimented with both theory and method in addition to exploring the interpretive possibilities that different concepts offer in the exploration of youth. The deployment of different theoretical spectacles has afforded me different views of youth identity and therefore enabled a multifaceted understanding of youth identities and forms of youth experience. Overall, my task has constituted what Tamboukou and Ball (2003) describe as an 'intellectual border crossing' full of dangers, 'a transgressive practice' (p.2). According to Tamboukou and Ball (2003), 'researchers have a lot to gain from opening their minds to the yet "unthought" and drawing upon and combining the possibilities of different theoretical and methodological traditions' in order to address 'the multifarious and complex ways in which things are happening around us in the "runaway" world' (p.2). My project

constitutes an exercise in this process of experimentation with theory and method. As noted earlier, all my theoretical and methodological choices have been based upon my positioning within the field of critical sociological traditions in educational research. My analyses have to be read as contextualised and bounded by this standpoint. Deploying different or more theoretical tools may possibly open new pathways for exploring and understanding youth narratives.

Let me finish by drawing on Delanty (1999), who points to the limitations of modernist thinking regarding the subject and indicates the need to reopen the question of the subject in the changed social and intellectual context of the twenty-first century. In particular, Delanty (1999) argues that 'it is no longer a question of attacking false universalisms but of overcoming relativism and the fragmentation of the social' (p. 3). My study has not gone so far as to suggest a way out of relativism, but it has experimented with developing relational analyses while acknowledging their boundaries. From a different ground of critique and with respect to the question and modernist thinking of the subject, Youdell (2010) observes that 'as some categories press upon us and others are elided, any notion of "wholeness" that is not a return to unitary subjects or essences remains elusive' (p.43). In this way, although my study does not offer a way out of fragmentation, it does experiment with a way of addressing it.

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APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I

**Semi-structured Interviews with Young People: The Interview Guide**

This is a broad interview guide in the form of a list of themes used during the interviews. The guide was used in a very loose way in order to facilitate discussion. The themes presented here were not always covered and did not exhaust the discussion. The discussions during the interviews had their own dynamics and evolved around the themes that were relevant for young people.

**A. Introducing themselves**
• Age
• Place of residency
• Introducing other family members/carers (education/jobs)
• School
• Choice of division

**B. Description of a typical day in their lives**
• Discussion about daily activities
• Thoughts and reflexions about these activities

**C. School life and education**
• Talking about daily life in school
• Relations with teachers
• Relations with other schoolmates
• Educational choices so far
• Thoughts about their education in the future
• Pan-Hellenic exams: their experiences, preparation, aims and hopes
• Their families' or friends' views on the above

**D. Family life**

• Description of their parents/carers and siblings

• Discussion on their relationship with them

• Discussion about incidents of everyday family life


**E. Networks of friends and intimate relationships**

• Discussion about their companies and close friends and on how they relate to them

• Discussion about their intimate relations and their experiences of sexual relations

• Sharing their experiences and thoughts


**F. After school/leisure activities and interests**

• Discussion about activities that they are currently involved with (or they had been involved with in the past, or activities they would like to take up in the future)

• Discussion about their 'free' time, the balance between school-time and leisure etc.

• Going out: freedom from parents, favourite places

• Music

• Sports

• Fashion

• Consumption habits

• Their involvement with new technologies

• Politics

• Religion

## APPENDIX II

**Introducing the Research Participants**

In this section I include some basic demographic and background information on the research informants whose interviews I quoted from and discussed throughout the analysis. The interviewees' original names are not mentioned in order to protect their anonymity. I present the interviewees in the order they are discussed in the course of the thesis.

**Chapter 3. Habitus and Imagined Futures**

1) Marianna lives in northwest Athens with her mother and her grandmother. Her parents separated when she was very young. She does not have any siblings. Her mother graduated from a further education college and works as a health professional. Her father holds a BA in Social Policy from the University of Athens and two postgraduate degrees from universities in London and Paris. She attends a state Unified Lyceum and is following the technological direction.

2) Anais lives in northwest Athens with her father and her younger brother. Her mother died shortly before the interview.
Her parents are secondary education graduates but they also obtained further education in informal settings. They were both heavily involved with left-wing politics and the anti-dictatorship movement. Her father works as warehouse administrator. Her mother worked at the same private company as cashier. She attends a state Unified Lyceum and is following the theoretical direction.

3) Angeliki lives in west Athens with her parents and her younger sister. Her parents are university graduates; they both studied economics in France. Her father works for a private company as an economist and her mother runs her own business in the tourism sector.

Anna and her sister attend a private French-speaking school. She is following the theoretical direction.

4) Giannis lives in central Athens with his mother, his stepfather and his younger sister. His mother is a secondary education graduate and works as a secretary in a private company. His stepfather graduated from a further education college. He is a dental technician and runs his own business. His biological father is a sailor. Their relationship is adventurous and Giannis has limited contact with him.

   Giannis attends a state Technical/Vocational Lyceum. He is following the health and care division.

5) Anna lives in central Athens with her parents and her older brother. Anna is originally from Albania (Tirana) and has lived in Greece since she was seven years old.

   Her father works as a builder and her mother works as domestic cleaner. Both parents are secondary education graduates.

   Anna attends a state Technical/Vocational Lyceum and is following the health and care division.

6) Costas lives in northwest Athens with his parents and his two older brothers. Costas' father is a bus driver and his mother works as school bus monitor. His father is a lower secondary education graduate (Gymnasio) and his mother is an upper secondary education graduate (Lyceum).

   Costas attends a state Unified Lyceum and is following the theoretical direction.

**Chapter 4 .Youth Self and Time**

1) Yorgos lives in Athens with his parents. He does not have any siblings.

His father owns and runs a pharmaceutical company. His mother is a lawyer and used to work for pharmaceutical companies. At the time of the interview she is on a career break but is considering some job offers that she has recently received. Both parents are university graduates.

Yorgos attends a Unified Lyceum and is followed the technological direction.

2) Dimitris lives in Corinth, with his parents, his younger sister and his baby brother.

His father has a lorry that distributes water. His mother is not officially employed but helps out his father with the water distribution. His father is a primary education graduate and his mother is a secondary education graduate.

Dimitris attends an evening state Technical/Vocational Lyceum and is following the engineering division. During the winter months Dimitris also works with his grandfather who is an electrician and during the summer months he works at with his father.

3) Damien lives in Corinth with his parents and his older sister.

His mother is a public servant and works for the city council. She is a university graduate. His father is an electrician and graduated from a college of further education. He is also an elected member of the group of local governors.

Damien attends a state Unified Lyceum and is following the science direction.

4) Katerina lives in Athens with her parents and her younger sister.

Her parents are secondary education graduates. Her father owns and runs a car components shop. Her mother is not officially employed but helps Katerina's father with the accounts.

Katerina attends a state Unified Lyceum and is following the theoretical direction.

5) Marianna lives in northwest Athens with her mother and her grandmother. Her parents separated when she was very young. She does not have any siblings.

Her mother graduated from a further education college and works as a health professional. Her father holds a BA in Social Policy from the University of Athens and two postgraduate degrees from universities in London and Paris.

She attends a state Unified Lyceum and is following the technological direction.

## Chapter 5. Identifications

1) Aninta lives in central Athens with her mother, father and younger sister. She is from Albania (Tirana) and has lived in Greece since the age of ten.

Her father works as a builder and her mother is employed as house cleaner. Both parents are secondary education graduates.

Anna attends a Technical/Vocational Lyceum and is following the health and care division.

2) Giannis lives in Corinth with his parents and his older brother.

His father works as a heating and air-conditioning technician and his mother is a housewife. Both parents are secondary education graduates.

Giannis attends an evening Technical/Vocational Lyceum and is following the electronics division.

3) Thanos lives in Corinth with his parents and his two sisters; one older and one younger.

His father works at a local warehouse. His mother works as cashier at a local souvenir gift shop. They are both lower secondary education graduates (Gymnasium).

Thanos attends an evening Technical/Vocational Lyceum and is following the electronics division.