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NATIONAL IDEOLOGIES, HISTORIES, AND POPULAR CONSCIOUSNESS: A RESPONSE TO THREE CRITICS

The commentaries of Zahariadis, Gounaris, and Hatzidimitriou on my recent article, "Politicizing Culture: Negating Ethnic Identity in Greek Macedonia" (Journal of Modern Greek Studies [JMGS], 1993, vol. 11, pp. 1-28), raise important issues and concerns that merit further attention. The argument I advanced in that article, reduced to its most basic expression, was that national ideologies concerning the essence of "the Greek nation", evidenced in Greek popular culture as well as in many public statements emanating from Greek academic, media, and political circles, have ascribed a political meaning and significance to Slavo-Macedonian culture in Northwestern Greece. I argued that, under the influence of a Greek national ideology, popular perceptions regarding Slavic-speakers in the Florina area of Greece have come to redefine what could have been regarded as a latently benign sense of ethnic identity among such Slavic-speakers as a potentially hostile national identity, one that is both alien and antithetical to widely-held popular notions concerning the homogeneity of the Greek nation. Pejoratively labelled as “Bulgarians” until at least 1944, many Slavic-speakers in Greece who today continue to express views about their cultural distinctiveness are now denounced as “Skopian agents”¹. The result, however unintentionally, has been the effective denial of a Slavo-Macedonian cultural and ethnic identity as a legitimate component of the contemporary Greek nation-state.

* Editor’s note: The editor considers that the debate which arose from Dr. A. Karakasidou’s article “Politicizing Culture: Negating Ethnic Identity in Greek Macedonia”, is closed in this issue.

1. Skopje is the capital and largest urban center of the FYROM. It is also the name that many Greeks adopt when referring to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), objecting to the inclusion of the word “Macedonia” in the title of that newly independent state.
My article explored various complaints voiced by Slavic-speakers in Northwestern Greece, including charges that their ethnic identity has been wrongfully interpreted as a foreign national consciousness (or a political allegiance with a foreign nation-state), and that they have suffered political oppression and cultural suppression. I framed discussion of these complaints through the analogy of a court proceeding (e.g. plaintiffs and defendants). The purpose of this approach was not to act as an advocate for Slavo-Macedonians or any political “cause”; nor was it to render a final, sweeping judgement on the issues raised. Rather, my purpose was to facilitate discussion of a number of theoretical issues of immediate concern to Modern Greek Studies. The idiom of a court hearing was deliberately adopted for three principal reasons: 1) to offer a forum in which the “plaintiffs” could express their views, unadulterated by the views of those in the Greek media, government, or academia who would otherwise disparage them; 2) to open a discussion about the criteria for assessing the validity of “evidence”; and 3) to leave “judgement”, if it must be made, to the minds of individual readers. Nevertheless, I did offer my own interpretations of evidence and drew my own analytical conclusions. I argued that the politicization of Slavo-Macedonian ethnic culture has been a by-product of the resurgence of national ideologies in recent years, the transnational situation of Slavo-Macedonians (living in Greece and the former Yugoslavia, as well as in Albania and Bulgaria), the ill-defined boundaries of cultural exchange and ideational discourse in the region, and the contemporary climate of tension and suspicion that characterizes relations between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). I concluded by suggesting that rather than adopting attitudes and policies more tolerant of multi-cultural diversity within a modern nation-state, the predominant response of many Greeks (including government administrators, media commentators, academic scholars, and the lay public) to local claims to a Slavo-Macedonian ethnic identity has been characterized by inflammatory rhetoric, hostile perceptions, and discriminatory practices. This has fuelled, rather than abated, tensions and unrest in the area today.

The response to my article in Greece, as well as among Greek diaspora abroad, has varied from congratulatory approval, to constructive criticism, to hostile refutation. I have been praised for my “integrity”, criticized for my “naivety”, accused of being an “agent of Skopje”, and subjected to death threats. The three commentaries on my article by Zahariadis, Gounaris, and Hatzidimitriou offer more scholarly critiques, raising objections to or voicing concerns over my sources, evidence, theory, logic, style, and conclusions.
Before turning to specific concerns raised in each respective commentary, I first offer some general comments.

All three commentaries show little appreciation or familiarity with anthropological methods and theories. This is unfortunate, for no productive interdisciplinary exchange can take place on empirical issues without a prior mutual understanding of how cognate disciplines address interests of common concern. Sociocultural anthropology is "holistic" in that it addresses the nexus of various dimensions of culture and society, from language and idea­tion to socialization and enculturation, from politics and economy to family, kinship, and social groups. It is a discipline that is concerned with how society is thought about and organized, and how it changes over time. Field methods commonly employed by anthropologists include extended local-level field­work: living with and among the subjects of one’s inquiry for protracted periods of time. This is critical to developing a rapport with respondents, and provides an opportunity to cross-check information obtained from one source with that derived from others. My own work is both historical and contempor­ory: it entails the solicitation of oral testimony as well as the scrutiny of available written documents and archival evidence. Through both participa­tion in and observation of interaction in a local setting, ethnographers hope to discover information not always readily discernable in written documents, information not always available to short-term interviewers practicing so-called "hit-and-run" methodologies.

One of the most important issues raised in this regard concerns the methodological and epistemological problems involved in using oral histories. While each commentator voices healthy skepticism over the validity of oral sources, each also assumes an unhealthy unskepticism over the inherent validity of written sources. There is a well established scholarly tradition (both in anthropology as well as its cognate disciplines) that recognizes the value of oral sources if they are collected methodically, used critically, and tested, cross-checked (against other oral as well as written sources), and corroborated. Moreover, there are many potential pitfalls involved in the (exclusive or uncritical) use of written sources2.

The issue is not merely an academic one, for Anderson (1983) has linked

2. Space precludes a full treatment of the relative strengths and weaknesses of oral and written historiography or the respective methodological and theoretical approaches of history and anthropology. There is a plethora of scholarly publications on this matter, and I can only draw attention to a few productive starting points (e.g. Cohn [1987], Keesing [1986], Vansina [1985]).
the rise of nation-states and national ideologies to print capitalism. Written, as well as oral, accounts should all be subject to the same critical scrutiny. To accept, a priori, published materials and scholarly bibliographies as 'established truths' (an issue to which I will return in my discussion of Hatzidimitriou below) is, in my opinion, rather naive. In the context of competing national paradigms (such as we see today in the present Macedonian Controversy between Greece and the FYROM), such naivety can breed ignorance, an ominous trend in any context.

Finally, all three commentaries also voice concerns with "mega-trends": communist conspiracies, Slavic aggression, and the like. I, too, am concerned with global processes, but my particular training has led me to examine such issues in localized (as well as regional, national, and international) contexts. History has many faces, each of us one of them. The more faces we can see of History, the better we may hope to comprehend it. That understanding, I believe, will inevitably lead to the realization that there is not simply one "correct" or "objective" History, but rather a multitude of histories. Our respective analytical perspectives may lead us to emphasize certain histories more than others, or to accord greater significance (and different interpretations) to particular historical events. But without a concern for and attention to the muted or "subaltern" voices of history, our knowledge and understanding will be only partial and we risk continuing to labor indefinitely in a mystifying veil of ignorance. This is not a "sentimentalism", as Gounaris would have it. Rather, it is a concern with the multiple voices and the multifaceted character of history.

I turn now to address each commentary in turn, for each revolves around its own particular underlying theme. I address that of Zahariadis first, for he has already published a much edited-down version of his critique in the Journal of Modern Greek Studies (May 1994, vol. 12, pp. 167-168). I have responded to him there, also in a much abbreviated form, and simply suggest that interested readers examine the core points of our exchange in that forum. The central theme or underlying subtext of Zahariadis' commentary is explicitly expressed in his concluding assertion: "The point is not that there is no case to be made, but rather that Dr. Karakasidou has failed to make it".

This is an important (and a disarming) statement, for it assumes general agreement that Slavo-Macedonian ethnic culture in Greece has become politicized. Zahariadis, however, takes issue with my interpretation of the causes of this politicization, preferring to see it as rooted in the actions of communist forces and the responses of successive Greek governments to this perceived
threat. I am disappointed that Zahariadis did not place his critique of my argument in the context of his own extended analysis of the politicization of ethnic culture in Northwestern Greece. Such an approach might prove more productive than the surgical-like critique he offers of my method, logic (and style), theory, and evidence.

Zahariadis characterizes my research method as little more than gathering information by "striking 'amicable' conversations with whomever was willing to talk". As nearly any anthropologist will agree, fieldwork is hardly mere amicable conversations. Some interviews and informal discussions may be amicable, but others are not. Moreover, quite often the challenge (or obstacle) to field research is to facilitate response: to have people become willing to talk. This is not always a simple or easy task, particularly so for a Greek conducting interviews with Slavo-Macedonians on these issues. Effective ethnographic and oral history research requires the cultivation of a sustained rapport with respondents, which in turn is predicated on the ability or predisposition to listen, to hear, and to withhold judgement for the moment. Preconceived dogmas (or patriotic sentiments towards Hellenism and the Greek nation) do little to facilitate research on the type of questions I raised in my article. One will reap what one sows, so to speak. Slavo-Macedonians in the Florina region have learned through decades of experience to be guarded in their responses to Greek journalists and researchers, and many keep silent on issues of identity, consciousness, or even language.

I myself have visited villages where men insisted that the entire village has been always and forever nothing but Greek speakers, only to have an elderly grandmother come wandering over and begin speaking to one or more of the men in Slavic a short time later. The woman spoke no Greek at all, and the men were extremely evasive about their knowledge of Slavic. Protracted fieldwork in a localized context offers an opportunity to cultivate a rapport, trust, or level of comfort or understanding with those initially less willing to talk. In this manner, a researcher does not need to rely on the sometimes biased views of "activists" working with their own agendas. Should one doubt accounts obtained through oral interviews? Healthy skepticism would be a better point of departure. Should one reject such stories outright

3. While Zahariadis complains that I offer no discussion of my research methods, scholarly journals (and the JMGS in particular) have little space to permit extended discussion of complex anthropological fieldwork techniques. Interested or critically minded readers ought to correspond with the author in question (or should examine her or his research proposals and grant applications, if permissible) in order to evaluate and to scrutinize methodology.
or accept them at face value? Certainly not, and despite the accusations to the contrary levelled in these commentaries, I have done neither.

Zahariadis does make a good point when he questions why I used oral accounts (which he derides as mere “anecdotal evidence”) to document “the Slav” case, but no interviews for “the Greek” case. First, I must take issue with the way in which he aggregates the plethora of opinions and viewpoints into two highly reified categories: “the Slavs” and “the Greeks”. Most of the ethnic Slavo-Macedonians I spoke with also consider themselves Greek (in terms of their national identity), and would strenuously object to Zahariadis’ compartmentalization of them in a non-Greek category. His juxtaposition of “Slav” and “Greek” confuses contemporary ethnic and national labels. Furthermore, my research indicates that there is not one but many voices on either of these two supposed sides (see Karakasidou 1993b).

Concerning the substance of Zahariadis’ criticism, let me point out that written documentation concerning Slavo-Macedonian viewpoints and opinions is difficult to find or to obtain, if one excludes (as I did) the biased, nationalistic-oriented material emanating from the FYROM. I have conducted numerous interviews with what Zahariadis would consider “Greek” respondents, and I could have easily provided many of their oral accounts as counter-points to those of Slavo-Macedonians. But such information would have had relatively little bearing on how national (not local) ideology in Greece has politicized popular perceptions of ethnic culture in the Florina region, distorting it as somehow alien to the Greek nation-state and antithetical to the concept of the Greek nation, and either demanding its assimilation or denying its existence.

I also find it disappointing that in critiquing the logic of my argument, Zahariadis paints a “straw man” caricature of my positions and reasoning. He asserts, for example, that I “readily accept” ethnic identity as a non-politicized constant. Balderdash. I have never, neither in that article nor in any of my work, made such a claim. In fact, my argument is exactly the opposite, and I do not understand why Zahariadis has inverted my position. No-

4. I cannot help but wonder whether such testimonies, in supporting a Greek national position, would also have been dismissed by these commentators as “sentimental” field-notes of “limited value”.

5. I agree with Zahariadis that individuals do not acquire their ethnic identity solely through the family (although the family is one of the most critical contexts for socialization and enculturation). But I disagree with his reasoning. Ethnicity may transcend kinship, but does not always do so. Such conclusions cannot be drawn a priori, but should provide the basis for empirical research. I also agree that ethnicity may be transmitted through
thing is constant except change. Certainly ethnic identity is conditioned by political forces—not only those “outside of Greek national boundaries” (as Zahariadis would have it), but also by forces within those borders.

Furthermore, Zahariadis' confusion over what he labels as my “dependent” and “independent” variables is also a product of his own misunderstanding. First and foremost, I do not employ such terminology and I have serious epistemological doubts over whether any social “variable” can ever be considered truly “independent” of others. Social scientists deal with human culture, not an ‘objective’ physical environment governed by ‘natural laws’. The problem may be one of a simple disjuncture in our respective conceptual approaches: while Zahariadis may be more comfortable working with static, even functionalist, models, I am a dialectician. To assert, as Zahariadis does, that I maintain Slavo-Macedonian ethnic identity to be independent of other forces, is to misrepresent my position in the most profound manner.

In the same vein, I must protest that nowhere do I attempt “to demonstrate the distinctiveness of ethnicity and the historical validity of Slav claims”, as Zahariadis asserts. While this is a legitimate topic for research, it was not the purpose nor the point of my article. Again, my concern was to show that what could have been regarded as a latently benign sense of ethnic or cultural difference has been, rather unfairly, through, the often zealous rhetorical force of national ideology, recast as a dangerous, sectarian, manifestation of potentially secessionist national identity. I do not argue nor suggest, as Zahariadis claims, that political repression leads to the emergence of ethnic “distinctiveness” or “Otherness”. While repression may lead to a heightening of consciousness regarding differences between groups (as has been the case in the Florina region), Slavo-Macedonians have suffered political repression and cultural suppression because they have been perceived by Greek authorities as being different—and different in a dangerous way.

I also take issue with the manner in which these commentators consistently

“common language, rituals, religion, traditions”, and other media. But I pointedly take exception to Zahariadis’s inclusion of the term “racial characteristics”. For a detailed account of my perspective on the formation and transformation of ethnic and national identity, see Karakasidou 1992.

6. The macro-minded need not be beholden to the theoretical works of Anderson (1983), Barth (1969), Chatterjee (1993), Gellner (1983), and others to understand such processes. In his discussion of political states and “the notion of tribe”, the late anthropologist Morton Fried (1975) offered path-breaking insight on such themes long before most of these later, oft-cited major theoretical works appeared.
refer to the "alleged" repression of Slavo-Macedonians. I could understand their skepticism if my sources had been confined to pro-FYROM political activists. In fact, they were not. There is nothing "alleged" about the discrimination and the suffering inflicted upon many Slavic speakers (even non-communists) in Northwestern Greece (see Souliotis 1992). Official Greek government archives such as those of the Historical Archives of Macedonia/General Directorate of Macedonia (as well as the Metaxas Archives7) provide ample documentation to support those claims. While I can respect the political convictions of those who argue that such repression is only "alleged" to have taken place, such views are untenable as scholarly positions. "National truths" are not necessarily "ultimate truths", and whether a scholar chooses to come forward to present one's findings is an issue left to the ethics of each individual scholar.

Zahariadis goes on to accuse me of a "very myopic view of politics", claiming that I "erroneously" equate "politics" with "the state". His criticism strikes me as a non-sequitur. If my view of politics is overly "myopic" (i.e. local), how could I possibly equate politics with the state? Anthropology is one of the few social sciences that draws its theoretical strength from cross-cultural studies of state and non-state societies, and anthropologists have regarded "all politics as local" long before the late U.S. Congressman Tip O'Neil was credited with coining the phrase.

In addition to the way in which he conflates ethnicity and nationality, Zahariadis also confuses a basic distinction between *nation* (a population) and *state* (an administrative unit). The two may coincide (as they do in Greece), but do not always do so. History has seen both multi-national states as well as stateless nations. The processes of modern nation-building do, however, occur in the context of—or are launched against—existing state-level administrative apparati. I also question whether the process of forging ethnic identity (or Zahariadis' "ethnos" "etimi") is dependent upon "the ability to forge sovereign authority" among a group of people. Sovereign authority is a political issue in the formal sense of the word, and its relationship to the formation of ethnic identity is tenuous at best. On the other hand, it is the construction of *national* identity that is predicated upon "the willingness of other similar groups to accept [sovereign] authority". Such is the hegemonic character of national ideology and this, in a nutshell, was what my *JMGS* article was all about.

There is a significant misrepresentation of fact in Zahariadis' commen-

7. See, for example, Lithoksoou 1993.
tary when he implies that I claim "only Greek history...is constructed". *Nowhere* do I make such a claim, and his citation (Karakasidou 1993:18) is an outright fabrication. He questions why I consider Greek "historical memories" of descent from Alexander the Great to be far-fetched, but not "the Slav claim" that Greeks arrived in the Florina area after 1913. First of all, it is misleading to characterize Greek claims to descent from Alexander as "historical memories", while depicting and (delegitimizing) assertions made by Slavo-Macedonian respondents as mere "claims". I hardly 'glorify' the claims made by Slavo-Macedonian villagers as "absolute truths", as Zahariadis maintains. The polemical character of his assertion is evident in his question of whether "there is something to Slav memory that is inherently superior to Greek memory".

Furthermore, the evidence Zahariadis offers to support his argument is also misleading. It is hardly surprising that no mention was made of "Slavo-Macedonians" in Ottoman censuses, for the categories employed in those documents ("Greek", "Bulgarian", "Serbian", etc.) referred to national or ecclesiastical aggregates rather than ethnic cohorts whose boundaries were not territorially defined. Censuses and survey-type questionnaires only provide answers to the questions that are asked. In this light, we ought to pause and consider why after 1951 the national Greek census stopped asking respondents about the languages they spoke. As for the issue of Greek settlement in the Florina area, one need only refer to the post-1913 Greek government documents relating to Florina, documents that hardly may be considered to have a pro-Slavic bias but which nevertheless support the verbal "claims" of my respondents.

Consider, for example, information contained in the Historical Archives of Macedonia/General Directorate of Macedonia, File No. 53 ("Population Statistics of the Educational Districts of Voden, Karatzova, and Gevgeli, 1911, 1913, 1915), Table A: "Florina District: Ethnological Census of the Population's Inhabitants". After factoring out the Turkish population, this document describes 38.6 percent of the Christian population as "Greek", but notes that none were monolingual in Greek. Of those multi-linguals who were described as Greek and could speak Greek, 52.8 percent also spoke "Bulgarian", 32.5 percent also spoke "Koutsovlach", and 14.7 percent also spoke

8. The passage to which Zahariadis evidently refers is this: "Yet most Greek scholars do not regard ethnicity (or even nationality, for that matter) as a historical construct, and many fail to recognize the fundamental truth that reality — just like our cultural representations of "self" and "other" — is *constructed*" (emphasis in original).
“Albanian”. On the other hand, 59.4 percent of the Christian population was described as “Bulgarians”, as much as 70 percent of whom were mono-lingual in “Bulgarian” only. These, according to official Greek government archives, were the political and linguistic realities that the Greek state faced after the incorporation of the Florina region in 1913.

Finally, I turn to several of concerns raised by Zahariadis in connection with what he calls my “substantive points”. First, he returns to an issue raised at the outset of his commentary, one that many concerned scholars have also raised: namely, how large is the Slavo-Macedonian population of Florina and how does one define its parameters. Rather than inventing my own “etic” criteria to define membership in that ethnic cohort, I opted to employ the “emic” categories used by respondents to define themselves: namely, “Slavic speakers or descendants of Slavic-speaking families”. I do not consider my decision to provide a rough estimate of this population cohort in proportion to the rest of the area’s population to be a “grave error”, as Zahariadis charges. Considering the lack of precise, concrete numbers that we can all agree accurately reflect the specific size of this group (or “non-group”, see Boissevain [1968]), I believe that I have acted in a responsible manner.

Nevertheless the ‘numbers game’ should not be used as a pretext for dismissing or downplaying the past repression visited upon Slavic speakers in the area. As one historian remarked to me, “If we are only talking about a small number of people, what does it matter?”. First of all, my field research suggests that we are not talking about a “small number of people”, although certainly they represent but a tiny fraction of the entire population of Greece. Secondly, if we were to adopt such a line of reasoning, it is only fair to ask at what numerical threshold should we become concerned about political repression and cultural suppression: ten people? one hundred? one thousand? ten thousand? At what point may we determine that it is one too many?

Zahariadis concludes by asserting that I “inadequately” address the reasons behind Greek authorities’ past repression against Slavo-Macedonians. While, as he notes, I do recognize that Greek authorities have had legitimate concerns about the situation in the Florina region, as well as anxieties about the expansionist designs of neighboring states against Greek territorial integrity, I have no desire to serve as an apologist for any discriminatory practices. Zahariadis attributes Greek government actions to an “anti-communist fervor”. While I have no doubt that such sentiments played a significant role in shaping post-Civil War government policies, it would be simplistic in the extreme to explain cultural suppression in such terms.

The popularity of such commonplace arguments (like those that attribute
Slavo-Macedonian ethnic identity to a ‘communist conspiracy’\(^9\) is linked, I believe, to the manner in which they allow us to compartmentalize the issue into the soothing, readily digestible categories in national history: namely the Civil War and the communist threat. They allow one to explain away the problem without ever seriously addressing more fundamental underlying issues. In blaming the ubiquitous ‘Other’ (in this context, Slavic communists), such arguments lead one away from a potentially more painful soul-searching reflection on how Greek policies and practices have contributed to and even exacerbated the problem.

While I certainly agree that Bulgarian communists took up the banner of the “Macedonian” cause to further their own ends or those of the Comintern, Zahariadis must recognize that terrorism was practiced by both communist and nationalist partisans during that period of civil conflict. Slavic speakers of the region were often caught between these two opposing political and military forces, and were certainly split into different ideological camps. Equally significant is the element of teleology embedded in Zahariadis’ argument, i.e. how it rephrases the issue of ethnic identity in terms of national and international political contest. If Slavo-Macedonian identity only found its conceptualization and expression in the context of nation-building campaigns within a foreign, Slav dominated, international communist movement, then one may justifiably ascribe a threatening national character to such expressions of identity. If, on the other hand, the premise of such arguments can be shown to be false, then the whole house of cards tumbles.

I turn now to the remarks of Gounaris, for the two commentaries offer interesting comparisons. While Zahariadis claims that there is a point to be made but that I have failed —largely through faulty theory—to make it, Gounaris praises my theoretical reasoning as “solid”. Nevertheless, Gounaris asserts that my arguments and conclusions are tainted by a “sentimental” attachment to respondents. This is a deceptively powerful accusation, for it provokes a crisis of credibility concerning my intellectual integrity. He maintains that this “sentimentalism” has naively misled me to an unintentional misperception and misrepresentation of the evidence, thus devaluing my argument and disqualifying my conclusions.

Let me begin with a few comments on Gounaris’ theoretical orientation. He agrees with me that nation-building processes are often painful and de-

\(^9\) There may be good reasons for viewing “Macedonian” national identity in such a light, but not for so regarding Slavo-Macedonian ethnic identity.
Anastasia N. Karakasidou

tuctive, and he accepts my assertion that Slavic ethnic culture in Greek
Macedonia has been politicized, noting that such phenomena are common
where “ethnic nationalism” (his term) prevails. I would like to suggest a word
of caution in employing terms such as ‘ethno-nationalism’ or “ethnic nationa­
lism”. Such labels conveniently lump together (and thus gloss over) important
distinctions between ethnic and national identity. I do not deny that the two
may become conflated; in fact, the point of my article was to show how natio­
nal ideology has affected just such a transformation in Greek popular culture.
When used carelessly in an a priori manner, such perspectives equate ethnicity
with nationalism, effectively politicizing culture by linking it to national ideo­
logical movements. Ethnic groups may potentially become national groups.
The issue is whether or not they do, and if so how and why.

Gounaris’ main concern lies in criticizing what he calls my “biased nega­
tion theory”. Just as I believe it is inaccurate to ascribe to me a “negation
theory” (nowhere in my article do I presume to outline a coherent theory of
‘negation”), I also feel that it is unfair to label my work as “biased”, except
for the fact that it is openly critical of distortions created by national ideologies
of all varieties (including both Greek and “Macedonian”). His opinions ap­
parently arise from the “additional political meaning” Gounaris attaches to
my article in his opening paragraph, claiming that I examine the politiciza­
tion of Slavo-Macedonian ethnic culture and identity in the context of present­
day disputes between Greece and the FYROM10. In point of fact, I do not focus
my analysis on this limited context, but rather orient my discussion around
the nineteenth and twentieth century process of nation-building in Greece.
Moreover, texts do not themselves “assume additional political meaning”,
but rather have such significance ascribed to them by readers, such as Gou­
naris, who in this instance is concerned with the timing and context of my
article’s publication. In retrospect, the timing of its publication was important,
but it was a factor over which I had little control11.

10. In a similar vein, Gounaris questions why my assertion that most Slavic-speakers
in Greek Macedonia feel “nothing less than Greek in national consciousness and political
loyalty” is placed in a note rather than in the main text. It was placed there because it should
be a common assumption underlying these discussions and not a major point of contention
to be highlighted in the text. The vast majority of Slavo-Macedonians in the Florina region
are ardent Greek patriots who consider themselves to be, and wish to be regarded as, legitimate
citizens in the Greek national collectivity. It has been largely national zealots from
other parts of Greece who have questioned—and continue to cast doubts upon—the national
political loyalties of Slavo-Macedonians in Greece.

11. As I noted, my paper was first presented at the 1991 MGSA Symposium in Gaines­
ville, Florida.
Gounaris takes issue with my use of the works of Martis and Kyriakidis as examples of how Greek national ideology has influenced public perceptions on the Macedonian Controversy. He protests that Martis, for example, was a qualified politician and administrator but not an academic scholar, and thus should not be cited as representative of Greek academic positions. This misses the point entirely. Authors such as Martis bring with them into the arena of public commentary on the Macedonian Issue powerful forms of political capital. By virtue of prominent public and/or political positions of their authors, the works of Martis and others have received prominent attention from the media and the general public. In fact, I have suggested that it is their very preeminence in non-academic circles that enables them to influence public opinion to an extent rarely achieved by most scholars (Karakasidou 1994). Moreover, Martis’ influential treatise received both critical acclaim and an award of recognition from the Academy of Athens.

Throughout his critique, Gounaris repeatedly makes reference to my “historical” evidence, consistently placing the word “historical” within inverted commas. This subtle rhetorical (if not polemical) device is employed by an historian to question the anthropologist’s command of history. Leaving aside the issue of oral histories and the debate over the criteria for determining what constitutes evidence, I am surprised that Gounaris, as an historian employed by the Museum of the Macedonian Struggle, is so unaware of written documentation (supposedly more acceptable to him as “historical evidence”) on local resistance to Hellenization and Bulgarization during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Greek government archives themselves contain documents describing in explicit detail the hostility and resistance with which many Slavic-speaking communities in the Florina region confronted the political activities of both Greek and Bulgarian national agents in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (see Karakasidou 1994a). While I myself would not label such resistance as “ethnic ‘Macedonian’” (Gounaris’ term), the fact that it occurred suggests that some among the local population had ambi-

12. Similarly, Gounaris derides my use of Kyriakidis as an influential example of how national ideology has shaped public perceptions on the Macedonian Issue, claiming that the latter’s “views on ethnos were perhaps [only] representative of his post-war generation”. Again, Gounaris, although an historian, is missing the largely historical point I was making: that for his time the works of Kyriakidis carried a great deal of influence in molding popular consciousness and scholarly thinking on these issues. Certainly, the bibliographical database on Greek nationalism has grown immensely since World War II. But I nevertheless stand by my assertion that certain elements which informed the thinking of Kyriakidis (and others) continue to find expression in many contemporary writings (cf. Karakasidou 1994b).
valent feelings towards enculturation into the national collectivities that were competing for sovereignty over them.

Similarly, I am surprised that Gounaris refers to a period of "state tolerance" [toward local or regional ethnic culture] during the years 1912-1936. Such a characterization seems oblivious to official Greek government documents describing a concerted and justified policy in the 1920s to deport, exile, resettle, or imprison inhabitants of the Florina area who actively displayed a non-Greek consciousness and/or actively resisted the imposition of Greek rule following incorporation into the expanding Greek nation-state in 1913. While I agree that political oppression was not restricted to Slavic-speakers during the Metaxas era (1936-1940), it is important to recognize that different motivations may have been behind Metaxas repression against particular segments of the country's population. Certainly some, but equally certainly not all, Slavo-Macedonians held leftist sympathies. To reiterate, "anti-communist fervor" cannot alone adequately explain the political repression and cultural suppression visited upon Slavo-Macedonians in general.

Gounaris subscribes to widely-held popular beliefs that there was a "transition from Bulgarian to Macedonian [sic] identity" among the Slavic-speakers of the area. Empirically speaking, some—but not all—Slavic-speakers of the Macedonia region did adopt a Bulgarian national identity (and consciousness) as a result of successful Bulgarian national propaganda efforts in the area. This is amply documented in official Greek government archives. But there is no evidence that all Slavic-speakers of the region had Bulgarian leanings. In fact, data suggest just the opposite. Some Slavic-speakers sided unequivocally with Greek nation-building efforts: others resisted both Greek and Bulgarian national enculturation campaigns.

Gounaris' ill-founded assumption is based, at least in part, on his own theoretical perspective on the issue: that there were no ethnic groups in the area, but rather only population cohorts that were potential national groups (Gounaris, personal communication). Apropos my earlier point concerning

13. For details, see Karakasidou (1994a).
14. At the same time, I am not completely convinced by Gounaris's a priori assertion that communists surely were forced to consume "more castor oil than any Slav-speaker". Surely, any careful social historian would research that question or at least conduct a credible survey before making such a claim; I would like to see the numbers upon which Gounaris bases his assertion.
15. Again, see Karakasidou (1994a).
pitfalls in the application of the term “ethnic [or ethno-] nationalism”, Gounaris questions whether any Slavo-Macedonian ethnicity existed “before nationalists in Skopje searched in their turn for the ethnic core of their brand new nation-state”. Such a teleological perspective conflates ethnic identity with national identity, suggesting that the former is derivative of the latter. It implies that there were no cultural differences or local emic notions of ‘distinctiveness’ (whether highly articulated or vaguely expressed) before nationalism and national ideologies arrived on the scene. Gounaris fails to understand that national constructions are predicated on some existing form(s) or sense of distinctiveness (or “Otherness”). Such distinctions are then highlighted, emphasized, and endowed with an ideological character as one political aggregate of people is marked off from others. I find it highly untenable to suggest that cultural homogeneity prevailed in the region of Macedonia before national activists from “Skopje” (or Bulgaria or Greece for that matter) appeared on the scene.

While we may debate whether such cultural distinctiveness may be most appropriately characterized as “ethnic”, “local”, or “regional” (or any other of a plethora of labels), the fact remains that prior to its partition, the geographic region of Macedonia was characterized by cultural heterogeneity. To assert that all inhabitants were “Greek and only Greek” from time immemorial may fit contemporary national fancies or support “the nation” in a time of political crisis. It may even earn one glorification as a national patriot, or at least protect one’s job security in government controlled employment. But such assertions fly in the face of both an enormous theoretical literature as well as an available body of empirical evidence. Moreover, they obfuscate—rather than clarify—material and symbolic processes of change. Rather than mystifying ourselves with racist-tinged notions of “purity” (assumptions that fuelled both Nazism and ideologies of “ethnic cleansing”, among other things), would it not be more productive to recognize the inordinately successful character of modern Greek nation-building? If one is disinclined to believe oral accounts of cultural distinctiveness related by respondents (whether owing to a distrust of oral testimony or because of a priori assumptions that anyone who advances such claims must by definition be a ‘Skopian agent’), then why not turn to other documentable differences, such as those of kinship terminology, marriage patterns, family organization, language, rituals and customs, and the like? Why is it that cultural pluralism is held in such ill-repute in contemporary Greece? Why does Gounaris conclude that it has never become a “realistic political option in Europe?” I hardly feel his assessment is accurate.
Gounaris goes on to take issue with the way in which my "historical" evidence (again, those peculiar inverted commas) is connected with recent activist demands for certain civil liberties and equal rights in employment, religion, language, and folk culture. Here his commentary shifts from a critique of my argument to an evaluation of the legitimacy of those demands. I am not particularly disposed towards arguing for or against such demands (hence the plaintiff v. defendant format of my article); I leave that task to politicians and polemicists. Nevertheless, since Gounaris frames these comments in terms of a general critique of my article, some response is necessary.

First, Gounaris is correct in asserting that it is common place in Greece for many people who have failed to secure work in the coveted public sector to complain about unfair access to jobs. Clientelism in Greece is well documented and openly acknowledged. Slavo-Macedonian complaints that they are disproportionately discriminated against in their search for public sector employment certainly should *not* be accepted at face value. I included such claims of discrimination *not* to lend credence to them, but rather to show that Slavo-Macedonians now capitalize on what they perceive to be their ethnic distinctiveness in order to seek better access to such coveted jobs in a region marked by economic underdevelopment. In this manner, I sought to show that the politicization of culture may become a political tool used by parties on any side for a variety of reasons.

More significant, however, are the doubts and skepticism voiced by Gounaris concerning two other claims, namely language use and the enculturation of children with ethnic songs, dances, and folktales. Gounaris overly simplifies the language issue when he points out that villagers outside of Edessa did not feel uncomfortable speaking Slavic in front of an outsider such as myself. A great deal depends upon who is involved. Considering what many Slavic-speakers in Greek Macedonia have been subject to over the course of this century for using their native language, it is hardly surprising for them to feel guarded when in the presence of a Greek-speaking outsider. Some will openly speak Slavic and express contempt for any opinions that they should

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16. A non-partisan commission of inquiry would be one way of assessing the validity of such claims.

17. In that particular instance, the two men to whom I referred had heard my husband and I conversing in English before they spoke to each other in Slavic in our presence. That case was somewhat peculiar (reflecting, as I implied in my article, a high degree of ethnic consciousness in that village). As noted above, I have visited many villages in the Florina area where local residents vehemently denied they spoke or understood any Slavic dialects, yet then later conversed with neighbors or relatives in Slavic.
speak only in Greek. Others, however, censor themselves, feeling that to speak Slavic in public will only lead to unwanted trouble. It is important to point out that use of the Slavic vernacular is no longer prohibited nor considered a punishable offense. Yet nevertheless it remains a highly politicized issue.

Gounaris also doubts that “censorship has been imposed on grandmother fairy tales”, a phrase I find rather demeaning. Yet in much the same manner as with language use, many Slavo-Macedonians exercise a conservative discretion in transgenerational transmission of folk-tales, songs, dances, and even family histories. Many parents and grandparents consider —some even argue about— what good it would do a child to learn songs in Slavic? Or family histories and genealogies that would muddle all sense of today’s clearly demarcated international state boundaries? Or folk-tales conveying the values and traditions of a now past agrarian lifestyle and its old extended agnatic families? It is not a strict self-monitoring of the sort often employed when speaking in the mixed company of native Greek speakers. But many parents now ask themselves what is the point of having their children learn such things, or ponder the consequences a child might face if such knowledge were voiced or expressed at a poor moment or in an untactful manner. ‘Ignorance is bliss’.

Gounaris points out that even the casual traveller to Florina can attend numerous festivals and dances, further evidence of which is available through the media (newspapers, magazines, television). The discerning observer may note that most of the music is devoid of words, song verses having been purged and the dances renamed in Greek. In some villages, Slavic songs and dances are performed openly, but this is a rather recent phenomenon\(^\text{18}\). More often, one finds that a band performing in a Slavo-Macedonian village will play Greek songs for most of the evening. Only late at night, after much of the crowd and most of the outsiders have departed, will they begin to play, sing, and dance Slavic tunes\(^\text{19}\).

\(^{18}\) Until only a few years ago, it was not uncommon for police to step in and stop a band from playing Slavic songs and dances; such cases are easily documented.

\(^{19}\) Sometimes, “censorship” or intimidation are still employed to discourage such expressions. As recently as 1992, I witnessed a Greek restaurant owner in Florina threatening to call the police when an amateur musician began playing and singing Slavic songs to the small crowd of patrons that still remained at 2:00 in the morning. In other instances, arguments and even fisticuffs have erupted at wedding festivities when some family members and guests called for the band to play Slavic songs, while others protested vehemently. At one festive gathering, an angry listener cut off power to the band’s amplifiers when they
For these reasons, I have few doubts concerning assertions in the work of folklorists or even 'local historians' that culture in the Florina region is "Greek". A national culture has permeated the area. In many contexts, it is the dominant idiom through which people define their identity. But many local families and individuals also possess other idioms through which they conceptualize their identity. The standards one must maintain when conducting research in such a setting are the same standards against which all studies and all documents must be evaluated: one must ask who conducted the inquiry and who responded, in what setting, to what questions (equally important are the questions that are not asked), and with what purpose in mind.

Gounaris returns to the issue of language in his claim that I identify language with "cultural (i.e. ethnic) differentiation" and "cultural identity". This is a simple misunderstanding of my position: language may be linked to ethnic or cultural identity, but it alone is hardly determinative. More disturbing is Gounaris' patently false assertion that I claim the Slavic dialect spoken in Florina is "quite the same all around Greek, Bulgarian and Yugoslav Macedonia". Nowhere in my article do I make anything remotely similar to such a claim. Likewise, Gounaris claims that I maintain a "preordialistic" view of "Slavo-Macedonian nationalism and ethnic identity". Again, nowhere do I make nor imply such a position, which might explain why Gounaris provides no page references to my article. Such arguments are antithetical to my views on ethnic and national identity. In fact, what he calls my "constructivist" approach to modern nationalism is applied even handedly to both the Greek and "Macedonian" cases. Moreover, nowhere in the article do I refer to a "Slavo-Macedonian nationalism" nor to "ethnic Macedonians" (his term) 20. Considering the highly charged political environment surrounding this issue, I would have expected Gounaris to be more careful in his use of words and labels.

Gounaris would also have one believe that Greek views of communist language construct refer not to the local vernacular but only to the official language of the FYROM. While some Greek scholars (e.g. Kofos 1986) have continued to play Slavic music. On the other hand, some individuals do sing "Macedonian" nationalist songs, imported from the FYROM, which justifiably outrages the police.

20. As I have explained almost ad nauseam in many different forums (including my 1993 article [p. 21-22, note 2]), I reject the claims of nationalists in the FYROM to a "Macedonian" ethnicity or nationality. Instead, I opt to use the term "Slavo-Macedonian", with 'Slavo' referring to language dialect and culture, while 'Macedonian' refers to the geographic region in which those Slavic-speakers live.
been careful to make such distinctions, the ideologies of popular nationalism in Greece do not\(^{21}\). Moreover, even some scholars do not make such distinctions, as evidenced in Hatzidimitriou’s commentary. In much the same light, while Papatheemelis may not be a linguist, his views have had an inordinate influence over the formation of popular perceptions in Greece and have contributed strongly and directly to the politicization of culture in Western Greek Macedonia. As I noted above, in taking issue with the academic credentials of the influential sources I cite, Gounaris fails to grasp the basic point that national ideologies are not the exclusive domain of academic scholars. They are an empowering force that enables the lay public, however historically or ethnologically ill-informed, to speak with authority on such issues out of a ‘national concern’. My article was an attempt to explore the ramifications of this tendency.

In discussing the issue of political refugees, Gounaris claims that I omit “historical details” concerning Slavic designs against Greek territory. He asserts that I simplify a complicated political question because such details “do not fit [my] model”. I can only respond that I do, in fact, explicitly discuss such concerns in my text (1993a:19). While it may be politically expedient to maintain that visas are denied only to those suspected of plotting seditious acts against Greece, the fact remains that the visa denial policy is broad and inclusive. It places both known pro-FYROM activists and other non-politically active refugees in the same *persona non grata* category. One could legitimately argue that Greek authorities are maintaining a cautious policy in times of national crisis, but that does not detract from the discriminatory character of the exclusion order.

Gounaris also casts doubts upon the validity of my conclusions and the representativeness of my sample of respondents. He asserts that the same “handful of activists” that have lobbied for national and international attention were “probably [the] very same who supplied Dr. Karakasidou with her evidence”. I consider it highly unprofessional for Gounaris to make such an assertion without substantive evidence, and I suggest that it reflects his own bias on the issue. Without compromising the identity of any respondents, let me state for the record that I spoke with activists and non-activists alike; men and women; youths, adults, and the elderly; townspeople and villagers; Greeks, Vlachs, Slavo-Macedonians, and Arvanites; laborers, farmers,

\(^{21}\) On the other hand, some Greeks will go so far as to vehemently deny that any Slavic-speakers exist in Greece.
technicians, entrepreneurs, media personnel, artists and musicians, doctors, school teachers, clergy, and local administrators. Moreover, my work has not been confined to the solicitation of oral accounts, but has included examination of media sources and documents in official government archives. Likewise, I utterly reject his allegations of a “deliberate omission of a solid historical background and the supposed ignorance of bibliography”. Gounaris is a personal acquaintance of mine. He is fully aware of the diversity of my sample, my familiarity with the historical background, and my command of the extensive bibliography on the Macedonian Issue. Needless to say, I have a high degree of confidence in the diversity of my sample, the range of my sources, and my conclusions.

Gounaris also dismisses categorically many of the examples I offer of Greek national ideology and rhetoric as “not really representing anyone”. Such an assertion opens a Pandora’s Box of questions concerning who has the authority to ‘represent’ whom. This is an important epistemological and political issue, but one that creates false dichotomies when dealing with popular nationalism. While my illustrations may not fit Gounaris’ category of elite, official, or ‘representative’ positions, the wide range of discussions, interviews, and surveys of the media I have conducted in Greece suggest that many Greeks do subscribe to the positions or views outlined in my article. Certainly there is variation²². Conservatives, liberals, and leftists may debate or bicker with each other (or even amongst themselves) over particular points of contention. But these differences are minor, and are dwarfed by the overwhelming consensus of popular national ideology on the Macedonian Issue.

Gounaris also suggests that there are legitimate Greek concerns about an international conspiracy against Greece on the Macedonian Question. As evidence, he cites Turkey’s offer of military assistance to the internationally recognized Muslim government in Bosnia and the dispatch of U.N. and U.S. peacekeeping forces to the FYROM. While I am not a “political analyst”, I would hazard a guess that the decisions made by foreign governments, or by international political bodies such as the U.N. or the European Union, have been based on concerns considerably more complex than a collective conspiratorial plot to encircle and threaten Greece. Such views thrive in an atmosphere of increasing popular and government concern over Greece’s growing international isolation on the Macedonian Controversy. There is

²². I find it rather facile to criticize me for not citing the recent book by Kyrkos (1993). Gounaris has the advantage of playing the “Monday Morning Quarterback”; my article was written in 1991 and was already in press when Kyrkos’ work was published.
increasing concern among the international community over the threat of violence or war in the Southern Balkans. The uncompromising position of the Greek government, while immensely popular in Greece, as well as Greece’s unilateral economic blockade of the FYROM and the widespread popular support in Greece for Serb nationalist actions in Bosnia, all do little to abate such fears.

Gounaris closes by reiterating his agreement that culture has become politicized in Greece, justifying it with the perceived and passionate need for patriots and nationalists to “‘protect’ Greek ‘historic rights’”. Gounaris argues that “there is not even a single argument [in my article] which is not in complete alignment with Yugoslav (‘ready-made’) Macedonian nationalism”. He concludes that “even without fieldwork, propagandists in Skopje sound more realistic than sentimental social anthropologists”. Gounaris knows better than to accuse me openly of being a ‘Skopjian agent’, although the implications in his rhetoric are certainly suggestive. Rather, he opts to dismiss (and to delegitimize) my work as “sentimentalist”. But such views are based on his own values and perceptions rather than on any substantive evidence. Does he find the positions of ‘Skopjian’ propagandists attractive because they deal in clear-cut ideals rather than the complicated tangle of tangible reality?

I would suggest that Gounaris’ conclusion offers an example of the reified, bifurcated, and reductionist ‘US:THEM’ mentality so common in national ideologies. Scholarly studies that do not conform to perceived national truths or to accepted canons of national history are regarded as serving the interests of (or being “in complete alignment with”) ‘THEM’ rather than ‘US’. National ideologies ‘cleanse’ and sterilize world views, painting black-and-white pictures of simple, clear-cut dichotomies. Their absolution desensitizes or blinds us to the complicated reality that lies somewhere between two illusory extremes. They are a modern day opiate that feeds off ignorance, fear, and uncertainty to offer comfort through their simplicity. But national ideologies can be highly intolerant of dissent, and non-conformists risk condemnations of ‘betrayal’ for supposedly serving the purposes of opposing national ‘Others’.

In this vein, I turn finally to Hatzidimitriou and his full article length commentary, “Distorting History’. As its title suggests, this is a rather polemi-

23. A recent article in The New York Times (Simons 1994) cited public opinions polls in Greece that show at least eighty (80) percent of the population supports the government’s position on the Macedonian Controversy.
Anastasia N. Karakasidou

cal piece in which I am repeatedly accused of “assuming a political position in the guise of anthropological research”; of working from a “biased and political agenda”; of making “deliberate misrepresentation of the evidence”; and of engaging in “personal speculation”, “imagined application” of theory, and “undocumented accusations” against Greek authorities. The principle theme of his commentary is the attempt to demonstrate that my article was politically motivated. As he portends: “[I]f it can be demonstrated that Dr. Karakasidou’s assertions are based on a serious misrepresentation of the evidence, then one must conclude, based on this article, that she is assuming a political position” (emphasis added). In an unconscious manner, Hatzidimitriou continues the court metaphor he so detests in my article. He proposes to establish both my motive and my opportunity, thus ‘proving’ my guilt.

Texts, it has been said, may sometimes mirror their author. Such a reductionist, bifurcated world view that regards different opinions as inherently politically motivated is, I suggest, itself a product of national ideology. Consider the manner in which Hatzidimitriou takes issue with the map accompanying my article, denouncing it as “a political statement” that illustrates “irredentist aspirations” of nationalists in the FYROM. He will undoubtedly be surprised to learn that the map was a hybrid adaptation of maps contained in several leading Greek historical studies. Far from being ‘Gligoroff’s map’, as one angry commentator put it, it indicates the boundaries of geographic Macedonia in a manner similar to that employed in those other Greek works. Moreover, the word “Macedonia” was deliberately placed along the tri-state international boundary using a typeface different from that employed in the names of various nation-states. In addition, the FYROM appears unlabelled, for at the time my article went to press there was no international agreement on the official name of that newly independent nation-state. Hatzidimitriou also claims that my map fails to show “present politico-geographic divisions”, but they are shown clearly, in accordance with standard international cartographic conventions. Similarly, he asserts that the area of Western Greek Macedonia is “absent” from my map, but it too is plainly there and clearly marked, along with “Central” and “Eastern” Greek Macedonia. While Hatzidimitriou repeatedly accuses me (without presenting any evidence) of deliberate misrepresentation of fact, his description of my map is so distorted that I am afraid it is he who is guilty of misrepresentation.

24. As a footnote, I would like to point out for the record that several deliberately altered versions of my map have appeared in Greek-American newspapers. Lines of demarcation on those unauthorized re-publications have been retouched by others to show a shaded
Trained as an historian, Hatzidimitriou draws on an impressive array of bibliographic sources to offer citations that he claims disprove various positions I take in my article. I regret that Hatzidimitriou does not apply his knowledge in a constructive re-interpretation of the issues I addressed from the standpoint of an alternative theoretical perspective. Instead, he draws on established literary canon (or Tradition) in Greek academia (as well as some foreign works on Greece) in a piece-meal attempt to refute my observations, arguments, and conclusions. I have neither the space nor the inclination to respond to all of Hatzidimitriou’s assertions, many of which are patently absurd. Rather, I will focus only on those points of contention that I believe can be salvaged into a constructive intellectual exchange which will put both his work and mine in proper perspective.

Both Zahariadis and Gounaris voiced concerns about the validity of verbally solicited field data, information which Hatzidimitriou disparages as “personal field notes of limited value”. Yet his commentary raises a deeper epistemological issue. This concerns the extent to which an existing body of literature on a given subject should be read critically. Does one accept the arguments made in certain works on the basis of the social capital of the author’s name, or the extent to which the conclusions meet with one’s approval or satiate one’s emotions? Or should all scholarly works alike be critically scrutinized for problems in conceptualization, logic of reasoning, and the ways in which definitions—and thus interpretations—of evidence are constructed?

When Hatzidimitriou accuses me of violating “basic principles of historical method and analysis”, he is alluding to a National History. I refer not to a general synthesis of ‘the history of the Greek nation’, but to an accepted, established canon of scholarly literature that shares certain fundamental assumptions about ‘the Greek nation’ and ‘its history’. In short, I refer to what he calls “texts from the long historical tradition of Hellenism”. The reified and reductionist categories in National History contain epistemological assumptions antithetical to the notion of multiple histories or multi-vocal histories. They also tend to set the ideological standards against which citizens are treated and the works (and motivations) of scholars are judged. Quite unconsciously, a national historical perspective tends to look backward from the point of view of the present. Generally speaking, National History in

“Macedonia” outlined by a heavy, broken line. Obviously, such symbols convey very different implications. Yet they are the Orwellian handiwork of others, and do not reflect my positions,
Greece has not been concerned with how the peoples of the Southern Balkan Peninsula were transformed into the people of the Greek nation-state; it has been concerned with showing that those people have always been "Greek", and with demonstrating the historical continuity of Ancient-Classical-Byzantine-Modern Greek culture and the Greek nation.

As noted above, my 1993 article was a study of how national ideology has influenced popular consciousness on the Macedonian Issue and has contributed to a politicization of ethnic culture in Northwestern Greece. I was concerned with the impact of national ideology and popular national consciousness on the lives of self-ascribed members of an ethnic cohort living on what might be considered the margins of the Greek nation-state. Many Greeks have only a vague familiarity with these issues, and even less understanding of how they have affected the lives of citizens in Northwestern Greece with a Slavic-speaking ancestry. While the elitist assumptions in Hatzidimitriou's National History perspective lead him to categorically dismiss modern Greek popular culture as "not worthy of serious comment", it has been the forum of popular national culture, far more than the Greek academic arena, that has most directly influenced the politicization of Slavo-Macedonian culture. Many Greek scholars and intellectuals have played a role in this process, but so too have politicians, the media, and concerned private citizens. National ideology, as noted above, is an empowering ideology. The concerns and opinions of non-specialists are accorded a legitimate place in its discourse and rhetoric. The emotive component of national ideologies helps to elevate their assumptions to the status of moral dogmas. In this sense, popular culture is well worthy of study.

Hatzimitriou is concerned with what he calls the "ethnic/national' nature of hellenic continuity". It was precisely this tendency to conflate ethnicity with nationality that I criticized in my paper. Moreover, in describing the

25. In this sense, I believe the references I make to the popular magazine *Tachydromos* are quite relevant and pertinent, despite Hatzidimitriou's objections. Publications such as that have contributed directly and significantly to the politicization of ethnic culture in contemporary Greece through an inciteful and libelous campaign of distortion and misrepresentation. Similarly, I believe it is misleading to claim that "Greek journalism is often influenced by party politics" while official government positions are inherently "more balanced". Party politics have played a highly significant role in framing the policies of successive Greek governments in the twentieth century, including government positions on the Macedonian Controversy.

26. He later conflates yet again the terms ethnicity and nationality in his subsequent discussion of William Miller (see below), as well as in his assertion that "ethnic" Vlachs,
“nature” of Hellenism, he metaphorically endows the national ideology with organic, natural qualities. So prepared, he then goes on to talk about the “continuity” or “survival” of Hellenism, and how “Hellenism reasserted itself”. While national ideologies provide powerful motivating forces, it is wrong to ascribe to them an active role of agency. Hellenism didn’t reassert itself, it was reasserted by human actors. Hatzidimitriou echoes this organic analogy in his discussion of the “Hellenic mutations” fostered through cultural interaction or through the incorporation of many groups into the Greek nation “naturally as part of a peaceful assimilation process”. In fact, assimilation for Slavo-Macedonians in Greece has been neither an inherently “natural” process nor a particularly “peaceful” one. Yet it did take place.

Hatzidimitriou is, by his own admission, principally concerned with the comparative “study of Hellenism”. He derides me for not having a familiarity with the necessary scholarship and accuses me of ignoring “essential documentation”27. He will no doubt be surprised to learn that I embarked on this research with some of the same assumptions that he voices, namely the hypothesis that the redefinition of ethnicity with nationality “may have been part of a historical process beyond the control of the Greek state, or that it may have occurred...as part of a peaceful assimilation process”. What I found, however, was an overwhelming degree of oral testimony to the contrary. For me, the critical question then became one of exploring whether any written documents existed to corroborate (directly or indirectly) those assertions. Such documentation does exist in official Greek government archives (see Karakasidou 1994a).

In addressing specific issues, Hatzidimitriou seems principally concerned with proving that the Greek state is not guilty of the charges levelled by Slavo-Macedonian respondents. He totally misunderstands the purpose of my opening vignette, and while I would like to explain its meaning to him, there are more serious issues requiring attention. To begin with, he holds a priori assumptions that invalidate any testimony provided by Slavo-Macedonian respondents. Since their “absurd claim concerning the identification of Slavo-Macedonians with Alexander the Great” must be rejected, he reasons, “why

27. For example, he makes much out of the fact that my article does not refer to the numerous works of the historian Kofos. Again, my article dealt specifically with popular culture and national consciousness in Greece. I have engaged some of the arguments of Kofos elsewhere (e.g. Karakasidou 1992).
lend credence to their other assertions and reproduce them?" 28. Such bias borders on bigotry. Obviously, the former claim may be based entirely on nationalistic sentiments, and was included only as a point of departure for my discussion of nationalism and popular culture. In contrast, many assertions made to me by Slavo-Macedonians can be substantiated through written documentation, including official Greek government sources (see Lithoksoou 1993, Karakasidou 1994a). Directive No. *122770, for example, sent by the General Directorate of Macedonia to all villages in Greek Macedonia (regardless of whether they were Slavic speaking or not), forbade the use of Slavic (and other non-Greek) languages 29.

Similarly, I find his assertion, made without citation or documentation, that “all Slavic languages in Florina are referred to as Bulgarian” to be an example of cultural (or national) bigotry. Referred to as such by whom? Certainly they are not so referred to by their speakers, who commonly use the term “(en)dopya” (local, native) to describe their Slavic vernacular 30. Even native speakers of Greek in Florina refer to the local Slavic vernacular as endopya, rather than as “Bulgarian”. Similarly, he maintains that I “cannot point to any historical references to Slavo-Macedonian as a separate language prior to the establishment of the Yugoslav republic of Macedonia”. Here it

28. Hatzidimitriou is extremely distrustful of the Slavo-Macedonians respondents whom I cite, although he does not know anything about them personally. His national political sentiments are evident in his discussion of Edessa as a separatist stronghold during the 1940s, where he cites some supporting evidence from what he calls “enemy” documents (note 6).

29. Consider the following passage taken from the archives of a Greek Macedonian township: “[We] listened to the president articulate to the [township] council that in accordance with the decision [*122770] of Mr. Minister, General Governor of Macedonia, all municipal and township councils would forbid, through [administrative] decision, the speaking of other idioms of obsolete languages within the area of their jurisdiction for the reconstitution of a universal language and our national glory. [The president] suggested that [the] speaking of different idioms, foreign [languages] and our language in an impure or obsolete manner in the area of the township of [X] would be forbidden” ([IX] Township Decision No. 134, 13 December 1936).

30. Hatzidimitriou is apparently personally unfamiliar with language use in the Florina area. He questions how I, a non-speaker of Slavic, could understand my respondents, and raised doubts about the reliability of data derived through “Greek translators”. Nearly all Slavic speakers in the region, with the most prominent exception of some elderly women, now also speak Greek. I did not have to rely on translators; respondents with whom I spoke directly voiced their own opinions and views in Greek. It was only in the case of the village outside of Edessa that respondents preferred to speak Slavic amongst themselves before agreeing on an opinion to present to me in Greek.
is curious to note that while Gounaris insisted that Greek scholars carefully refer only to the official Slavic dialect formalized in Skopje after 1944 as a (communist) construct, Hatzidimitriou clearly implies that the spoken Slavic vernacular of Florina is also part of such inventive constructions. The two languages are definitely not the same. Slavic speakers from Florina themselves maintain that they have difficulty understanding radio and television broadcasts from Skopje, where the standardized “Macedonian” language borrows from Serbo-Croatian. Such borrowing is often necessary to fill in vocabulary gaps when a vernacular is transformed into a standardized language. Hatzidimitriou’s difficulties stem, in part, from his confusion over elite and popular culture. Ironically, he accuses me of failing to distinguish between “formal and popular culture”. In point of fact, such a distinction was a central theme in my argument: that “formal” (or ‘High’ or national) culture can delegitimize notions of popular (or ‘Low’, ‘folk’, or ethnic) culture, the latter in this case being that of the Slavo-Macedonians in Greece. While Hatzidimitriou ascribes to me a “theory of ethnic destruction” (placing in quotation marks a phrase that appears nowhere in my article), he questions whether nation-building is always “destructive in every case” (his words). When he asserts that the transformation from ethnic to national orientation “varies within the social and institutional levels of the society”, he has grasped a central theme in my argument, although he apparently does not realize it. He points out that “Hellenism” was not eradicated by the Ottoman occupation. His confusion, I believe, is rooted in the erroneous conflation of ethnic and national categories. One would be hard pressed to show that “Hellenism” was a “popular” or ‘Low’ culture in the Ottoman Balkans. Certainly many people

31. I owe this observation to Susan Gal.

32. Nor does this otherwise meticulous bibliographer provide page references to places where I allegedly use such terms.

33. Hatzidimitriou also attempts to support his assertion through reference to the “survival and increase in population of the Muslim minority in Thrace”. First, I am not certain that the two contexts are entirely comparable: Second, my own research in Greek Thrace suggests a great deal of popular variety within the broad category of “Muslim”, a religious label, to be sure, but one that is also employed as a national or “formal” label. Furthermore, it would be absurd to argue that Muslim culture (in its numerous varieties) is not hard pressed in Greek Thrace. Hatzidimitriou also raises the issue of the “destruction of Hellenism” in Asia Minor, perhaps to suggest my intellectual efforts would have served better purposes by focusing on that situation. Indeed, the comparison could prove interesting, for (as in Greece) Hellenism in Asia Minor was a “formal” or ‘High’ culture. One could certainly explore how hybrid elements in the “popular”, local, or ‘folk’ culture of Asia Minor refugees have fared since their resettlement in Greece.
subscribed to notions of "Hellenism", and those ideas diffused through various parts of their lives. But "Hellenism" became a national ideology, and a highly formalized one as Hatzidimitriou himself shows in his assertion that there is a proper body of bibliographic references necessary to any discussion of Hellenism.

Objections are also raised to my rough estimate of the size of the native Slavic-speaking population in Florina in proportion to that of native speakers of Greek. When Hatzidimitriou compares the figure I offered with the census of 1928 (which put the "Greek population of Florina" at sixty-one percent), he concludes that either it has been "the Greeks of Florina that have suffered 'ethnic destruction'" over the years, or that I would have the reader believe "that a mass exodus of Greeks has taken place" from Florina since the late 1920s. This is a ridiculous assertion; what in fact happened was an in-migration of Greeks following the area's incorporation into the Greek nation-state in 1913. Official Greek government documents clearly indicate that, as of 1913, there were no mono-lingual Greek-speaking villages in the prefecture34.

The question of language use is linked to the processes of socialization and enculturation, which I argued had formerly been within the domain of individual families but over which the Greek state gradually extended its influence. Responding to my argument, Hatzidimitriou demands to know why I seem "unaware" of similar Serbian, Bulgarian, and Romanian efforts in Ottoman Macedonia since the nineteenth century. This, again, strikes me as another knee-jerk reaction of national ideology. Certainly such efforts have taken place; the theoretical perspective I employed clearly anticipates as much. But why is this an issue in reviewing my article? I was not writing about Serbian, Bulgarian, or Romanian nation-building campaigns. I would welcome such a study, for it would place my own work (as well as that of others) in a broader comparative perspective. Yet, ironically, after first excusing Greek institutional repression of Slavo-Macedonian ethnic culture as conditioned by competition with these other national powers, Hatzidimitriou then goes on to deny such repression ever took place. It would seem he not only wants his cake, but to eat it too.

Hatzidimitriou also turns to the works of several authors in an attempt to 'prove' that I have misrepresented their arguments and positions. He quotes from Kyriakidis at great length, for example, in an attempt to show that the latter did not link "Hellenic [i.e. national] consciousness" to notions of race

34. Again, refer to the statistics cited in the text above, data obtained from the Historical Archives of Macedonia/General Directorate of Macedonia, File No. 53, op. cit.
or superiority. But to argue that to possess a national consciousness is to be fundamentally different from the "herds and swarms of animals" (i.e. those without a nation or national consciousness) strikes me as ethnocentric rhetoric to say the least. Moreover, he goes on to admit that Kyriakidis wrote with a political agenda in mind: "to combat Bulgarian and Yugoslav territorial demands in the middle of the Greek civil war".

While Hatzidimitriou also attempts to use Miller's observations to refute mine, I read them as generally supportive of my contentions. He quotes him as describing a turn-of-the-century Macedonia divided by "a medley of conflicting nationalities". He interprets the passage from Miller as arguing that no solution to the region's political problems (i.e. the determination of national boundaries) can be made on the basis of "common cultural [i.e. ethnic] consciousness". This is precisely the scenario I described in my article: the road to nation-building in early twentieth century Macedonia was a tricky business; it was accomplished only through the transformation of ethnic identity into a national identity and consciousness.

Hatzidimitriou also confuses apples with oranges when he draws on Abbott's observations in Greek-speaking parts of Macedonia. My analysis focused on Slavic-speaking Florina, and I explicitly note that circumstances in the area were markedly different from those in Greek-speaking areas of Macedonia (e.g. the Langadhas Basin in Central Greek Macedonia where I have also conducted fieldwork [see Karakasidou 1992]). Similarly, he attempts to establish the presence of a Greek population in Florina prior to 1912 through reference to documents relating to the area around Naoussa. Yet not only are Florina and Naoussa different locales, but Naoussa is located in a different area of Macedonia that other scholars (e.g. Kofos 1980; Vouri 1992) have referred to as an "undisputed zone" of Greek influence. Rather than referring to statistics from Naoussa to assess the Greek presence in Florina, one could turn to the 1911-1915 population statistics from Florina in the Historical Archive of Macedonia that I referred to above.

Hatzidimitriou again conflates ethnicity and nationality in his discussion of "Macedonian identity" and "consciousness". He maintains that "Greece refuses to formally recognize a foreign Macedonian national consciousness within Greece...because such an ethnic consciousness is an artificial construct created by a hostile neighbor with territorial aspirations" (emphasis added). This is precisely the type of thinking that my article criticized. As I have noted, I regard the so-called "Macedonian" national consciousness in Greece as a recent construct imported from the FYROM. While also a "construct" (i.e. a product of human agency), Slavo-Macedonian ethnic identity (i.e. a sense of
cultural distinctiveness) is a phenomenon of a totally different order and cannot be categorically dismissed as propaganda from the FYROM. All forms of identity and consciousness (be they ethnic, national, or whatever) are human constructs.

The influence of Greek national ideology on Hatzidimitriou's thinking is also evident in his use of the term “Greek millet”. In point of fact, it was known as the Christian Rom millet. It was predominantly associated with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, for that national institution held broad administrative and ecclesiastical jurisdiction over it. I should also add that while Hatzidimitriou also accuses me of presenting the policies of the Greek Patriarchate “as being identical” with those of the Greek state, I never made any such claims.

Despite his apparent command of vast bibliographic resources, Hatzidimitriou concludes with several significant claims advanced without any citations whatsoever. First is his broad and highly inflammatory assertion that “it can be demonstrated that it is not true that ‘most Slavo-Macedonian activists have never sought to secede from Greece or to change the country’s borders in any way’”. If, as he claims, the “historical record” supports his contention, why does he not substantiate this accusation? Second, I would be particularly interested to learn of documentation that substantiates his claim that “technical recognition of minorities within Greece has allowed Yugoslavia and Bulgaria to claim authority over Greek territory in the past”. I was not aware that Greece has recognized any “minorities” (other than a Muslim minority, which has little if anything to do with Bulgaria and Yugoslavia), nor was I aware that such recognition has enabled those two countries to claim territorial concessions from Greece. While Hatzidimitriou has offered

35. If Hatzidimitriou accepts this point, then he cannot argue that Greek national consciousness (or that mystical ‘psychic’ unity of Hellenism) has survived impervious to change through the millennia.

36. Through a rather bizarre logic, Hatzidimitriou interprets my historical overview of the nineteenth century contest between the Greek and Bulgarian Orthodox Churches over Macedonia as an attempt to “lend historical legitimacy” to claims of present-day Slavo-Macedonians (or what he refers to as “informants, allegedly from Florina” — why “allegedly”?) that they have suffered repression at the hands of the Greek government. It is not difficult to understand how twentieth century prohibitions against the use of Slavic vernacular may have been conditioned by the role of language in that nineteenth century national ecclesiastical struggle. Yet I fail to see the logic in reasoning that by discussing the latter one thereby lends “historical legitimacy” to contemporary complaints of past repression.

37. Curiously, his own historical “overview” of twentieth century Northern Greece is a summary that is surprisingly consistent with, if not similar to, mine.
an impressive bibliography on Greek National History on the Macedonian Controversy and on the study of Hellenism, is it unfortunate that he fails to provide any citations or documentation to support the more contentious assertions he makes in his commentary.

Finally, a word on minorities, violence, and nationalism. While he expresses sympathy with and support for Greek government positions on the issue of minority status, Hatzidimitriou himself refers to Slavo-Macedonians as “the Slavic minority of Northern Greece”. He goes on to attribute “abuses of minority rights” to a general “Balkan phenomenon” of “local vengeance”. He dismisses out of hand the validity of verbal reports from the victims of such abuses, asserting that they may be motivated by “protracted acrimony that expresses itself as irredentist [sic] nationalism”. He calls for supporting documentation of such claims, such as for example the findings of “international and governmental organizations on minority rights within Greece”. There is, in fact, ample evidence that can be cited from such sources (e.g. reports from the international Helsinki Watch, the Minority Rights Group in Greece, or the annual U.S. Department of State reports on human rights). I can, however, anticipate Hatzidimitriou’s response, for there is a “Catch-22” inherent in his logic: if the complaints of “alleged” victims of repression are not to be trusted, then how can one trust written reports based on such testimonies? Once again we return to the issue of assessing evidence against the standard of perceived national truths. But how can one explain away similar evidence of repression found in official Greek government archives, such as the Historical Archive of Macedonia.

Hatzidimitriou concludes that “either Greece has become less tolerant of Florina’s Slavic population since 1962, or ...Karakasidou’s article misrepresents the situation”. It is unfortunate that rather than making any serious effort to re-evaluate the former hypothesis, his commentary is devoted exclusively to an attempt to ‘prove’ the latter premise. Yet by holding Hatzidimitriou accountable for his words, I think I have shown that it is not I but he who engages in misrepresentation. Such tactics do little to promote legitimate scholarly exchange on some of the most important national issues facing Greece today.

38. It is a small irony that, while I chose to let the assertions of respondents stand by themselves (rather than to provide written documentation to verify their claims) because I did not wish to appear as an advocate of “minority rights”, this is precisely what Hatzidimitriou accuses me of doing.
In reviewing these three commentaries on my 1993 JMGS article, I have highlighted several epistemological issues worthy of further discussion. These include the potential advantages and potential pitfalls in the use of verbally solicited field data; the valuable insight that extended, local-level field research may offer; the need to evaluate all sources (oral and written) with a critical eye; and the subtle ways in which national ideologies may influence perceptions and interpretations of issues relating to the Macedonian Controversy in Greece. At the same time, I have pointed out the disturbing ways in which all three commentators have engaged in sometimes subtle, sometimes blatant misrepresentations, misquotations, and miscitations of my work. Such distortions may serve the purposes of their authors, but they do not and cannot contribute to a productive scholarly exchange. 'Strawmen' are easy to topple; a sustained theoretical and epistemological debate requires greater sensitivity and fairness. To falsely attribute arguments, to seriously misrepresent positions, to offer polemical attacks and unsubstantiatable accusations of political motivations not only falls pitifully short of established standards of ethics and professionalism, but also offers little intellectual challenge to the author upon whose work such commentaries are made.

The present international situation in the Southern Balkans is marked by a contest between competing Greek and "Macedonian" nationalisms. There is considerable evidence to support contentions that nationalist activists in the FYROM are attempting to export a "Macedonian" national ideology to Slavic speakers in Greece's northwestern frontier. It is a testimony to Greek nation-building efforts that such activities have met with only limited success. But we must also look at what that nation-building process has entailed. I have no doubt that neighboring nation-states such as Albania, Bulgaria, Turkey, and the former Yugoslavia also engaged in political repression and cultural suppression as part of their own state-strengthening and nation-building campaigns. My own research has merely focused on how such processes unfolded in Greece. Until we can overcome the reductionist 'US: THEM' categories of national ideology, until we can liberate ourselves from a bifurcated world view that sees only "ruthless villains and innocent victims", a comprehensive understanding of the history —and the effects— of modern nation-building in Greece will remain elusive.

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