

Immigrants and National Identity in Europe.

Anna Triandafyllidou. London, Routledge, 2001.
Pp. ix + 145; Notes, Bibliography and Index. ISBN: 041525728X.

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The movement of people from one geographical area to another has been a universal feature of human history. Before the appearance of the nation-state, these movements were common but not problematic: nomadic peoples often shared territories without conflict or implied challenges to the other's identity. The modern nation-state raised barriers to these movements through guarded boundaries and assertions of sovereignty, but encouraged migration in the contemporary period by sponsoring political and economic globalization. Anna Triandafyllidou's Sociological study of *Immigrants and National Identity in Europe* offers one view of how these contradictory dynamics have impacted the identities of historically dominant social groups in Europe.

This book might best be described as a work in progress: islands of lucid observation and insight that lack pathways of critical thought to connect them. The structure of the writing is presented in much the same way as a doctoral student might organize a dissertation, which can be annoying at times, often obscuring the author's effort to tease out the structuring of national identities. It also leads to a rather isolated view of 'othering', or the phenomenon of creating a national identity through interactions with other national groupings. The author's reliance on the sociological and anthropological literature of immigration greatly weakens her argument that national identities are primarily construction with reference to 'significant others', either within or without the territory of the dominant national identity. ('Othering' is also a major theme in political and international relations literature, which approaches it more critically as a political and not merely anthropological dynamic. See, e.g., R.B.J. Walker's 1992 thesis *Inside-Outside*.) It also offers a rather confused definition of 'nation', which often shifts between an anthropological and political-institutional perspective. The narrowness of her analysis also fails to acknowledge the importance of institutional structures and broad ideological influences . . . all of which appear in her otherwise interesting discussions of the particular recent histories of Greece, Croatia, Italy and Spain.

The primary vehicle for the author's thesis is the analysis of political and press discourses in three cases that have reflected shifts in national identities postulated as 'threats'. While these analyses present occasional insights, they lack a formal theoretical explication. As students of discourse theory will recognize, that discourse analysis requires a carefully constructed rationale for the selection of particular dialogues, and also some connection to a larger theoretical argument about the role of discourse in the structuring of politics. It may be that the author's chosen discourses are representative, but how is largely left to the reader's imagination.

The value of the book for those interested in immigration and national identity issues can be found in its detailed treatment of the politics of immigration policy in the cases cited, which reveal varying treatments based on the particular economic and international relationships of each case. The nuances that emerge are clearly more than consciously driven policy preferences for bare economic or political purposes, rather, they are residual evidence of past practices and embedded ideological themes, illustrating how they are modified by changes in a population's perception about internal and external national identities.