

'Based on various mathematical formulas...': Knowledge and legitimation of claims on immigration in the Greek parliament

In immigration debates, one of the ways in which speakers legitimate their constructions of immigration and asylum is through utilising different kinds of knowledge as evidence in support of their arguments. Boswell *et al* (2011) have recently argued that 'knowledge' plays a significant role in establishing the validity of narratives of migration policy. The paper explores the question of knowledge in the context of immigration debates in the Greek parliament. First, it analyses the 'types' of knowledge – such as statistics, research evidence and 'stories' - employed as proof to claims on immigration and asylum by members of the parliament of different political parties. Secondly, it explores the 'sources' of such knowledge, such as government institutions, research organisations, the media and personal experience. For the analysis of the texts, the paper draws on Critical Discourse Analysis with specific reference to legitimation strategies, as well as on recent work by Balch and Babalova (2011). The paper critically engages with the ideological dimensions of knowledge types and sources in the context of the Greek politics of immigration and asylum and interrogates whether and how judgments can be made about their validity and impartiality. Finally, it asks if and in what way such knowledge contributes to the cohesion and persuasiveness of constructions of immigration and asylum seeking.