



Biennial Hellenic Observatory
PhD Symposium on Contemporary
Greece and Cyprus

Saturday 15/June/2019
Hellenic Observatory, European Institute, LSE

Plenary Session I: How to write a PhD on Greece & Cyprus

Speaker: Kevin Featherstone, Director of the Hellenic Observatory,
Eleftherios Venizelos Professor of Contemporary Greek Studies, LSE

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9th Biennial LSE PhD Symposium on Contemporary Greece and Cyprus

How to write a PhD ...on Greece/Cyprus

PROFESSOR KEVIN FEATHERSTONE

Eleftherios Venizelos Professor of Contemporary
Greek Studies; Director, Hellenic Observatory, LSE

Writing a PhD...

- A long, lonely process...
- Purpose of the Symposium:
 - to challenge your arguments & research design = improve progress, quality.
 - to link you to other researchers
- Some initial points to stimulate your PhD planning, progress...

What is your research question?

- Can you say it in ONE sentence?
 - *Is it: Why? How? What?*
- Why is this question important?
 - *What is your academic contribution?*
 - *Conceptual and/or empirical?*
 - *Who would disagree with you?*
 - *Are you revising the current understanding? Is there anything counter-intuitive, surprising in your findings?*

Your explanation

- Can you summarise your argument/answer in one sentence?
- Clarify any causal statement: e.g. 'X' occurred (dependent variable) due to 'Y' (independent variable)?
 - *Are there intervening variables affecting the outcome? How do they link with theory?*
- Can you formulate a (causal) hypothesis?
 - *Can it be disproved?*
 - *What does it contribute? Parsimonious?*

Caution with Greek 'exceptionalism' as causality

- Causal explanation requires conditions to be identified that *logically* produce the outcome.
- Causal conditions = theory
 - Too many conditions \neq theory-building .
- Theory = allows researchers to identify & compare Greece with other cases.

What is the 'puzzle' here?

- What is Greece/Cyprus a case of?
 - Think of the big theme & why Greece is a relevant case to consider, to show your contribution.
- A puzzle: e.g. (Greece/Cyprus) shows an unexpected outcome that contradicts:
 - *A previous Greek (historical) pattern or understanding; and/or,*
 - *other international cases with similar conditions;*
 - *and/or predictions of a widely accepted theory.*

Selection of case studies: Greece and another?

A 'puzzle' in comparison?

- E.g. a comparative study: following J S Mill's method of difference; or, of agreement:
- 2 most similar cases, but different outcomes. Puzzle: *why?*
- 2 different cases, but similar outcome. *Why?*
- Comparison helps you to focus on the key conditions explaining the outcome, helps develop theory.

Greece as a single case study ⁽¹⁾

- A 'puzzle' from a comparison *within* Greece between sectors?
- Single country study can support international comparison if study uses comparative concepts, theory [Refining theory from deviant cases].
 - *Greece as a 'least likely' case: theory suggests outcome is least likely (puzzle = it has, so why?).*
 - *Greece as 'most likely' case: theory suggests outcome most likely (puzzle = it hasn't, why not?)*
 - *For both: what theory revision is needed?*

Greece as a single case study ⁽²⁾

- Empirical material: show its validity; reliability; replicability.
- Multiple sources: triangulate your evidence?
- Interviews: access? Purpose?
- Archives: access? Foreign archives?

Trying out your ideas...

- Write a paper...try publishing.
 - To test your ideas and get feedback.
 - [start with a blog? 'Greece@lse']
- Choose relevant international journals – to sell your ideas beyond Greece.
 - Link theory & empirical contribution.
 - Go beyond Greek 'exceptionalism'.
 - Why should a 'non-Greek' audience be interested? What will they learn about a phenomenon?

After the PhD.... publishing & a career.

- Turning the PhD into a book?
- Publishing one or more journal articles.
 - Both are crucial signs of the value of your PhD.
- How to get published?
 - Re-package your PhD thesis: a book is a different product.
 - Beyond Greek case: relevance, debates, implications.
 - Market? Who should read it.

Further reading...

e.g.

- **P. Dunleavy, Authoring a PhD**
(Palgrave, 2003).
- **R. Hancke, Intelligent Research Design**
(Oxford University Press, 2009).



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