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# Afterword

## Pragmatism against austerity: Greek society, politics and ethnography in times of trouble

*Evthymios Papataxiarchis*

### 1 Words in trouble: multiple temporalities, alternative paradigms<sup>1</sup>

#### *(i) Making sense of the Greek ‘crisis’*

Greece is in trouble. Its public finances, its ‘labour market’, its democratic institutions, its social state, its major political parties, and, most important, its people – the elderly pensioners and the young graduates, those at the margins and those at the centre, the multitude of the unemployed and the precariat, the lower and middle social strata – have been for some time now and still are in trouble. The economy has reached the threshold of collapse, the political system is in a state of instability, society is in flux and the country has experienced an unprecedented uncertainty for several years now.

The chapters in this theoretically diverse and methodologically variant collective volume offer a rich and multifaceted anthropological account of the effects of the current predicament on Greek people, society and polity. They explore the breakdown of the middle classes and the emergence of the ‘new poor’ (Panourgiá, but also Arapoglou et al. 2015), the institutional malaise and the deep legitimisation crisis that transfigures mainstream politics (Kallianos), the ‘migration/refugee crisis’ (Green) and the violence that it generates (Tsimouris and Moore) and the collapse of the dividing line between the official and the unofficial and the new forms of protest that it engenders (Bampilis, but also Papataxiarchis 2014c) They discuss the blurring of boundaries between the emergent social forms – the informal collective ‘initiatives’, the Facebook collectivities or the NGOs – and the ideological muddle that arises out of the mix of opposites – of ‘pure ideology’ with pragmatic concerns, of anti-consumerism with consumerism (Chatzidakis), of anti-hierarchical solidarity with philanthropy and the idiom of gift (Rozakou, but also Theodossopoulos 2016). They also address the semantic confusion between the spontaneous and the strategic responses to the current predicament, between the disinterested offer and the interested labour

(Rakopoulos), the increasing mixture of politics with morality and the generalized moral reframing of politics (Gkintidis), the recourse to metaphysical means of empowerment (Sutton, but also Bakalaki 2016 and Yalouri 2016) and the mental state of ‘national depression’ that pervades every corner of the country (Apostolidou, but also Davis 2015).

Yet trouble (and the subsequent confusion) has been productive. It has generated a massive response at the grassroots of Greek society and new spaces and potentialities of critique, revision and reframing. The chapters in this volume also unravel the incipient dynamism of these turbulent times. They report the energetic reaction of all different kinds of people to the challenge (Agelopoulos), not just the myriad of collective ‘initiatives’ that aim at dealing with the perils of austerity and the recovery of the social bond in an increasingly polarized and politico-ideologically divisive environment (Bampilis) but also the creative energy with which the shape of the ‘next day’ is slowly and steadily crafted: the new subjectivities (Papagaroufali) and ‘bodies-in-solidarity’ (Athnasiou), the new professions (Rakopoulos), the social and ideological experiments (Poulimenakos and Dalakoglou). The ethnographic fragments presented here are testimonies of these troubled, yet also exciting, times.

On the methodological front, the book exhibits the difficulties of doing ‘ethnography in unstable places’ (Greenhouse 2002). As long as the crisis unfolds, it is very hard to make good sense of the blurred picture. The deep disturbance that pervades all corners of social life is particularly manifest in our cognitive project and the very words with which we – as anthropologists – often try to make sense of the current Greek predicament. Trouble has invaded our epistemic domain, destabilizing our analytical vocabulary. The semantic terrain of terms such as ‘resistance’, ‘solidarity’, ‘neoliberalism’ or ‘crisis’, to take a few examples that are popular among critical anthropologists, seems to suffer from the same kind of flux that invaded the social and political processes.<sup>2</sup> As these terms, which often provide the cornerstones of our analytical framework, have been creatively absorbed in the everyday to become important politico-ideological markers, and as the boundaries between their analytical and popular usages have collapsed, their etic function has been increasingly undermined by the inflation of their emic value. The powerful mix of moral arguments and political agendas, which is deeply ingrained in their popular usages, dominates the sphere of analysis, resulting in a general confusion of the doing of politics with the task of analytical understanding.

Take ‘resistance’, for example, a term with a heavy ideological legacy, which is often reified into an endemic property of people or action, thus turning into a vehicle of romantic idealization rather than a tool of understanding. The emic emphasis on ‘resistance’ as opposition to something fails to acknowledge its constructive and conformist side, as Ortner (1995) once accurately noted.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the ‘compromising ambivalence’ (Theodossopoulos 2014b) of ‘resistance’ is a major analytical challenge.<sup>4</sup>

Or take ‘solidarity’. This key metaphor coming out of the current Greek predicament, a word that is all around has lost most of its semantic affinity with the sacred symbol of the structural functional, Durkheimian theory of society. In its folk usage it designates action rather than structure (Papataxiarchis 2016c). Its great popularity among the most diverse circles (Rakopoulos 2014b, Cabot 2016b) and its identification with a wide range of projects of engagement with the ‘crisis’ have opened up enormously its semantic terrain and seriously undermine its analytical usefulness.<sup>5</sup>

‘Neoliberalism’, the most prominent and challenging term, together with ‘market logic’, risks becoming a *passe-partout* in exercises of theoretical reductionism. The recent anthropological debate on neoliberalism in *Social Anthropology* (vol. 20, 2012) among structural (Wacquant), historicist/cultural (Hilgers) and governmentality (Collier) approaches is suggestive of the danger of reducing the crisis to ‘market rule’ or ‘neoliberalism’, the ‘big Leviathan’, ‘a macro-structure or explanatory background against which other things are understood’ (Collier 2012: 186). The methodological inflation of neoliberalism, which posits neoliberalism as a ‘context of contexts’, actually diverts us from the imperative of conducting the in-depth ethnographic analysis which would allow us to grasp what is particular in the crisis’.

Last, but definitely not least, the term ‘crisis’: in the case of Greece, *krisi*, which also means ‘judgement’, has become a most powerful trope in informal everyday discourse – a trope for collective mobilization and change at the national level (Knight 2013a) or for directing the blame at the victims of austerity and spreading uncertainty and fear at the European level (Knight 2013b). At the same time, it retains its prominent position in historical-philosophical theorizing as a designator of ‘a moment of truth’, suggesting a historical turning point, a ‘blind spot’ (Roitman 2013) that merely indicates ruptures and deep discontinuities. It should be clear that when we analytically adopt the term ‘crisis’, we indirectly acknowledge the dramatic upgrading of the present vis-à-vis the past that the acceleration of economic and political time has produced. Yet we face the danger of ignoring the historicity of the manifestations of the ‘crisis’.

Is it enough to be reflexively aware of the function of these terms in directing our imagination and framing our analysis? I would say it is not! Some of these terms, together with a few prominent others, capture the defiant spirit of the era. In this capacity, they belong to the core of what is to be studied rather than being the analytical means to study it. As anthropologists, we should pay close attention to local, on-the-ground usages of the above terms. To do so, we need another vocabulary, of distance, that would avoid the emic/etic confusion and allow us systematically to grasp the rich semantic terrain of the emic vocabulary of the ‘crisis’. This strategy of distancing becomes more necessary when the imperative of engagement dominates our cognitive project, as in the case of ‘engaged’ and ‘activist anthropology’.<sup>6</sup>

*(ii) Generalized trouble and the multiple temporalities of the 'crisis'*

In what ways, then, and with which words can we describe what has been happening in Greece since the signing of the so-called 'Mnimonio', 'Memorandum of Understanding' with the lenders, the European Commission, the ECB and the IMF, in 2010 and the beginning of an era of economic and political dependence on the country's creditors? How can we make sense of the instability and the flux that has prevailed in Greek society and politics since then, when the policies of 'structural adjustment' started being applied under a regime of 'supervision' by the lenders? One way to deal with this challenging task is by recognizing it and giving it space in one's analysis. This is what I have tried to do through the use of the term 'trouble' as an analytical metaphor (see Butler 1990).

I use 'trouble' as a multi-dimensional trope that allows the simultaneous consideration of many different facets – economic, social, political, ideological, mental/psychological – in the production of antagonism. I understand trouble as 'cognitive disturbance' and as a traumatic experience of exclusion or marginalization, as 'political disorder, materialized in actions destabilizing the normative and political arrangements, and producing disarray in the dominant taxonomy of actions, rules and representations' and as a 'structural unsettlement of all those powers subsuming individuals in the political order' (Papataxiarchis 2014c: 26). Trouble is both a deconstructive force and a generative power. As a rather descriptive term, with small theoretical intensity and modest analytical ambitions, it leaves room for the ethnographic investigation of the emic vocabulary with which Greeks speak about their predicament.

My main argument is that trouble has been around for a long time and that it preceded the 'crisis' (also see Dalakoglou 2013a). The current 'crisis' is the spread of the trouble that was long suspended in the sphere of the informal, the upgrading of trouble as an all-pervasive factor in the decomposition and/or reconfiguration of mainstream, official political and economic forms and the generation of new ones. In the course of the 'crisis', trouble deserted the social and political margins where it was contained and turned into a general condition. Since 2010, we, citizens and denizens of Greece, have lived in times of generalized trouble.

Thinking about the current predicament in terms of trouble allows us to situate it in medium- and long-term processes – to approach the 'crisis' in terms of both process and event. Trouble unfolded in accordance with the different temporalities<sup>7</sup> of the 'political' and the 'economic' (that is, the different ways in which they respond to change). In the course of the last decades and until 2010, formal political structures in Greece had shown a remarkable resilience and the bipolar democratic regime had exhibited an immense ability to cope with challenges – for example, the challenge of 'the moral corruption' that earlier had had destructive effects elsewhere in Europe. Its apparent endurance was due to its firm foundation in a 'regime of difference', which

is organized around the sharp and well-guarded differentiation between the informal/unofficial and the formal/official level (Papataxiarchis 2006), or, in Herzfeld's (1997) terms, between the lived experience and the official representation. This regime allows for the unofficial toleration of difference and dissent from the established social and political canon insofar as difference does not aspire to achieve formal recognition.

The disemic quality of the Greek regime of difference had historically offered great elasticity to the political system. It allowed it to cope with social and political dissent by accommodating it at the unofficial margins where it was reproduced, at best as an inchoate and, thus, politically non-dangerous alternative. Sociopolitical tensions and antagonisms were stored at the informal level, waiting there to be eventually settled or diffused in the middle term (Papataxiarchis 2014c).

The economy, however, had been much more responsive to short-term changes, and in this regard it became the catalyst in the generalization of the trouble that was lurking in the unofficial political margins. The crisis of Greek public finances – a phenomenon with multiple causes that was also a follow-up of the crisis in the global finance markets in 2008 and a symptom of the unequal core–periphery relations in the EU – and the neoliberal policies of ‘structural adjustment’ had a strong impact on the foundations of the democratic regime.

In Greece the debt situation was perceived as a symptom of the prolonged fatigue of the political system and thus backfired on the mainstream political actors, who were unable to deliver the ‘traditional goods’ and were held responsible for the bankruptcy of state finances. As the until-then firm articulation of the formal with the informal levels of political action broke down, the financial crisis quickly escalated into a crisis of political legitimacy of the two main parties, ND and PASOK, which had been running the country for 35 years. In this way, as a rich, multi-layered phenomenon, both economic and political, the Greek ‘crisis’ adopted its idiosyncratic character. This becomes more evident when we compare its developmental cycle with the relevant crises elsewhere in Southern Europe. For example, it is comparatively more prolonged because economic recovery has been entangled with the restructuring of the political system.

In this respect, one cannot ignore the long-term trajectories of the (post-capitalist) economy or the (liberal democratic) political system in Greece and their different temporalities. Nor can one diminish, the deconstructive and the formative power of an ‘event’ of such immense proportions as the near bankruptcy of the Greek public finances, the state of political and economic dependency and limited sovereignty into which Greece has entered after the signing of the ‘Memorandum’ with the lenders, in 2010, and the effects that the policies of ‘structural adjustment’ have had on Greek society. We have to achieve a theoretical economy that will score the right balance between the acknowledgment of long-term tendencies and the detection of the forces of change, while also remaining conscious of the multiple limitations of our

endeavour. The achievement of the ‘right balance’ between ‘the structural and the episodic/conjunctural’ (Rakopoulos 2014a) is not just a cognitive objective but also a political project – and a rather complicated one, considering the ambivalent ideological tones of the transformations that are under way. In these days of trouble, one cannot side with ‘change’ without taking into consideration that its direction is fiercely contested by opposed ideological agendas. The shape of the future is highly uncertain.

### *(iii) Alternative perspectives*

The Greek ‘crisis’ has attracted a lot of attention from many different disciplines, theoretical angles and epistemological paradigms. In terms of the handling of its temporalities, we could distinguish two schools of anthropological thought.<sup>8</sup>

*First*, the ‘short-term approach’: it clearly delineates the period that starts with the signing of the Memorandum in 2010 from the rest of the long epoch commencing in 1974 with the fall of the military dictatorship and the foundation of the Third Hellenic Republic; it delineates a separate phase, ‘the crisis’, with distinctive characteristics that contrast it with what was happening before. Depicting this period as a major break with the past and a new beginning and bracketing the experience of all that has happened in Greece since 2010 in the term ‘crisis’ is an analytical and a narrative strategy that privileges grasping what is assumed to be a unique characteristic of this phase: the breakdown of public finances, the generalized social unrest, the liquidation of major parties, the radical renewal of political personnel, etc. The short-term approach gives emphasis to the sudden speed-up of historical time and the subsequent flux of established social and political forms. It deals with the ‘crisis’ as a generative event and tries to capture its unleashed energy and the novel forms it produces.<sup>9</sup>

*Second*, the ‘long-term approach’: it analyzes what is happening in this period as an aspect of long-term processes of change, thus leaving ample room to detect continuities between the present and the past as well as to consider transformations and reconfigurations. It puts the current Greek predicament in historical context; it historicizes the crisis at multiple temporal levels, trying to unravel its multi-factorial causality by looking more deeply and in the long run. To the extent that it recognizes the ‘historical embeddedness’ (Kalantzis 2016a: 7) of the many different facets of the ‘crisis’, the long-term approach demands that we take seriously the past ethnography of Greece in order to discern the historically established ways in which Greek citizens cope with the current challenges and consider the old cultural materials that are put to new uses side by side with the cultural innovations that are currently generated.<sup>10</sup>

Both approaches have been applied in recent attempts to make sense of the Greek predicament, and both are represented in this volume. The first approach may lean towards exceptionalism; the second is more open to

comparativism.<sup>11</sup> Both have their weak sides, particularly as they are exposed to different kinds of reductionism – theoretical for the first, and cultural for the second. The short-term approach, particularly when it strives to be ‘critical’, is more open to deductive reasoning at the interface with political philosophy – thus leaving room for conversations with and borrowings from ‘high theory’ – whereas the long-term approach has a greater inclination towards inductive work of the kind we find in classical historiography or ethnography.

If the short-term strategy is to deliver the goods, it has to go into ethnographic depth – that entails systematic observation, problematization of emic categories, maintaining an analytical distance from the romance of resistance. Otherwise, it faces the danger of ‘ethnographic refusal’; can easily turn into a politico-ideological exercise and potentially become trapped in a solipsistic theoreticism. The long-term approach, however, also risks reifying the Greek predicament as a pathology that is endemic to the *longue durée* of Greek society and culture, reducing the ‘crisis’ into a kind of manifestation of long-term structure. Yet the cultural coordinates of action change as well. Only the ethnographic grasp of the generative power of the ‘crisis’ can counteract the cultural reductionism of the long-term approach.

Ultimately, short-termism suggests not only breaks on the ground but also paradigmatic shifts, a turn of the page at the cognitive level as well. If the ‘crisis’ is a big rupture, then past ethnography cannot provide us with the keys to unlock it. We need new tools to grasp this radically new reality. Long-termism, however, in depicting continuities acknowledges the value of past ethnography and, therefore, confirms the *longue durée* of Greek ethnography.<sup>12</sup> *We need the combination of the best versions of both approaches*, their synthesis at the meeting ground of solid, in-depth present and past ethnography. After all, the ‘crisis’ is an invitation for anthropological ‘revisions’ (Papataxiarchis 2013) that have to be ethnographically grounded.

In this afterword, I want to consider the contribution of the chapters of this volume in understanding the unfolding of trouble from the ‘social’ to the ‘political’, from the informal margins to the political ‘centre’. Also, I will comment on some of the themes raised in this book from the viewpoint of my current involvement on the frontline of the refugee crisis and my understanding of an ‘initiative’ of ‘refugee solidarity’ in Northern Lesbos. I am particularly interested in the ethos that governs the many different kinds of practical response to the ‘crisis’ and the social and cultural groundings of engagement.

## 2 Greek society in trouble: the challenge of austerity

### (i) *From ‘occupation’ to ‘squat’: forms of constructive ‘resistance’*

The revolt of December 2008 in Athens and other major Greek cities was the climax of a wave of massive protests that had started at the end of the

first Karamanlis government as a reaction to the dramatic failure of the state apparatus to cope with one of the worst natural disasters in the last 60 years – the forest fires during the summer of 2007. The informal margins, where for some time trouble was gradually contained, exploded against the government and the political establishment. The protests brought to the streets forces from the anti-globalization and anarchist movement as well as younger generations of disillusioned citizens from a wide political spectrum. They employed innovative practices as they relied on digital forms of mobilization and transcended traditional political party affiliations. When, in the aftermath of the December revolt, the editorial collective of a Greek critical review argued against the demonization of the revolt in acknowledging its thoughtful and imaginative side, we could not envisage the constructive aftermath of this massive and exceptionally violent demonstration of social discontent.<sup>13</sup>

The December revolt marked a turning point in the expression of the discontent that was accumulating at the margins of social and political life. During this conjuncture, a historical form of protest, the ‘occupation’, which originated in the emblematic Polytechnic uprising, and its offspring, the ‘squat’, a more permanent, spatialized structure of dissent, grew in popularity. Squats, as permanent occupations, suggested a deeper, more ideologically ambitious and politically energetic form of dissent than mere protest. They referred to alternative ways of being in an otherwise capitalist world that deserved a sort of spatial recognition, particularly in the more receptive urban context. Squatting became a trademark of the Greek anarchist movement under the influence of situationist ideas on the ‘liberation of everyday life’.<sup>14</sup>

Squats often became closely linked to the ‘autonomous stekia’ (informal, frequented place) and, later, to ‘self-administered’ alternative parks that spread in various neighbourhoods of Athens and other big cities. These alternative ‘spaces’ provided the ground for cultivating different socialities of egalitarian ‘solidarity’ and alternative values based on ‘autonomy’, ‘self-organization’, ‘horizontality’ and ‘disinterested-ness’. As the spatial points of reference of these values, they provided the constructive side of resistance.

Some of the chapters of the volume tell the story of the development of how squatting spread in urban, particularly student, quarters to the extent that they provided the tone of whole neighbourhoods such as Exarcheia. Out of these practices ‘counter-sites’ were formed, of the kind Foucault has called ‘heterotopias’, in which the anarchist utopia was effectively enacted in opposition to core values – such as the prevailing consumerism and monetary exchange.

Consumption has been one of the victims of austerity, despite the interesting exceptions of conspicuous spending of money in venues of accumulation of symbolic capital for the elite that were reproduced during the ‘crisis’. Chatzidakis examines how the decommodification and abstention from mainstream consumption during the ‘crisis’ gave a push to anti-consumerist collectives and practices (playing consumer fantasies) in Exarcheia and

strengthened its heterotopic identity as the place where core values are challenged.

Poulimenakos and Dalakoglou discuss one of the ‘spatial legacies of December’ (also Dalakoglou and Vradis 2011), the squat of K\*Vox, a multi-functional space at the very heart of the main square in the student quarter of Exarcheia. The authors analyse the developmental cycle of the squat, which in typical segmentary fashion revolves around two instances, ‘symbolic dilation’ and ‘contraction’. In the first, the squat reaches a high level of (moral) unity and encompasses the whole neighbourhood, thus turning it into an alternative (or ‘autonomous’) ‘village’. In the second, the squat regresses into typical segmentary opposition to other squats, thus retreating into itself.

### *(ii) The shift from protest to ‘initiatives’*

After 2010, these spatial contestations mixed more with constructive forms of resistant action, thus turning into sources of alternatives. They worked as ideological generators, providing alternative schemes of life that constituted the positive, constructive side of the wider disturbance of normality. The ‘crisis’ was another turning point for the informal margins, in many respects.

*First*, with the massive rallies against the ‘Memorandum’ and, later, the ‘squares’ movement, the informal margins, now saturated with ‘disobedience’ and ‘indignation’, were densely populated by an increasing number of ‘indignant’ citizens from the whole range of the political system who were deserting the mainstream political parties. Particularly in the ‘squares’, anarchists came together with activists from the Radical Left and people of varying ideological persuasions, a very challenging and eventually productive mixture. This ‘multitude’ – if I am allowed to use the term – became the human source for the recapturing of society.

*Second*, in the course of this period, protest was quickly transformed into positive action, in what has been coined as ‘protovoulia’ (initiative) – a term that captures the spirit of that era. The ‘crisis’ marked an explosion of informal as well as formal projects that aimed to deal with the ills of austerity. Prominent among them were the many ‘initiatives’, that often had cognate characteristics with the anarchist *stekia* – they were informal, had a loose organizational structure, usually operated on egalitarian principles and relied on digital forms of communication. They aimed, in some way, to deal with the ills of austerity, to provide the means of survival, particularly in the fields of sustenance and health, for those who were deprived of the essentials (see Douzina-Bakalaki 2016), but also to fill the vacuum, which was created by the failure of traditional clientelistic structures to deliver the goods and the subsequent break of the clientelistic bond. Anti-middlemen initiatives, such as the ones described by Agelopoulos and Rakopoulos, together with ‘social kitchens’, ‘social wardrobes’ or ‘social pharmacies’ (Cabot 2016a), increased in numbers. The term ‘social’ gained a new cur-

rency as a popular adjective with which these initiatives assumed their identity: the recapturing of society from the ‘bottom up’, as it fundamentally differed from its historic structuring from the ‘top down’, was equivalent to its remaking (see Rozakou 2016b).

‘Initiatives’ – both as concept and as practice – are particularly worthy of our anthropological attention. Their cognitive value definitely exceeds the grasp of some available theoretical frameworks. Projects of this kind often involved people who identified neither as *aktivistes* (activists) – they were newcomers to the *‘kinima’* (movement) – nor as *ethelontes* (volunteers). We need a ‘humble’ (Cabot 2016b) ethnography to listen to their low voices and grasp their inchoate identities. To classify them solely under the label ‘social movement’ does not do justice to the great diversity of motives, means and orientations that are energized in their context.<sup>15</sup> Equally so, to approach them as instances of ‘civil society’ misses their key characteristic: they are not spaces for dialogic, democratic deliberation but rather vehicles for highly interested and targeted action. I think that it is productive to approach them as indices of a long-standing cultural propensity for collective action, which was especially marked in the period after the dictatorship, of an extrovert way of dealing with social problems and of an insistence to do so together with fellow human beings who share the same predicament or pursue the same agenda.<sup>16</sup>

*Third*, despite the great diversity of their origins and their ideological foundations, ‘initiatives’ were often employing a single marker to identify themselves – the word ‘solidarity’, an umbrella term that opened so much that it meant practical interest in the predicament of the ‘other’ (which, after all, is my own predicament). ‘Solidarity’ grew in popularity to become the hallmark of the day. Its semantic terrain was expanded in many different directions. As Rozakou notes, among anarchist activists, the initial meaning of ‘solidarity’, as horizontal, egalitarian comradeship and support for jailed comrades was extended to a particular category of vulnerable people, the *sans-papiers*. Yet the term was also appropriated by many different actors – activists of different persuasions, Christian philanthropists, politicians, journalists, businesses, the church or NGOs – in order to describe a stance of support for the ‘victims’ of austerity (Rakopoulos 2016a, Papataxiarchis 2016a, Chatzidakis). And eventually, with the ‘refugee crisis’ of 2015, it was broadly applied to all categories of vulnerable people irrespective of ethno-national identity. The new ‘patriotism of solidarity’ with the refugees (Papataxiarchis 2016d), with the banalization of the once sacrilegious ‘solidarity with migrants’, was the highest point in the use of the term.

All this does not mean that the ‘multitude’ lost its agonistic orientation against the political forces, Greek or foreign, that were held responsible for the ‘crisis’. For some time after 2010, ‘solidarity’ was the other face of an important political struggle at the grassroots of Greek society. In particular the ‘social initiatives’ and other collective moves at the grassroots worked as a laboratory for the engineering of political alternatives that eventually

took the shape available within the democratic process – that is, the form of a political party, SYRIZA. Yet solidarity, particularly with migrants without documents, was also the ground of another battle, between the ‘solidarians’ and the xenophobic Right that was capitalizing on fear and insecurity to promote a purist version of the nation and a highly exclusionary vision of society (Bampilis, Rozakou and Papataxiarchis 2014a). We have to consider closely the developmental cycle of these social and political processes, particularly as they are affected by the changing articulation of the informal with the formal as well of the social with the political.

### **3 Greek politics in trouble: the reconstruction of the political system from below**

The ‘crisis’ as a distinctive phase, as a moment of rupture and discontinuity, is more recognizable from above (Papataxiarchis 2015). At the level of the political system, the institutions and formal policies, the signing of the ‘Memorandum’ in 2010 really marked a clear break, particularly because, under a rhetoric of ‘emergency’, the government compromised further the already limited sovereignty of the country, which was entering a prolonged state of dependence on its lenders. The functioning of the government, the parliament and important institutions of the democratic process, which were in a state of chronic post-political fatigue for some time, were among the first victims of the ‘crisis’. The country entered a state of institutional malaise in the name of ‘emergency’.

The signing of the first ‘Memorandum’ and the subsequent policies of austerity particularly affected the until-then stable articulation of the formal with the informal levels of political action and exposed the central political scene and the mainstream political parties to a fast-growing popular discontent. The system of ‘party clientelism’ broke down because of the inability of those in power to deliver the promised goods and the long standing ‘citizen-clients’ of the two main parties, which had alternated in government since 1974, deserted them in massive numbers. The rapid unaligning of voters from the major traditional parties led to the liquidation of PASOK and the multiple splits of ND.

The negative political energy, which was stored in the unofficial margins, was now multiplied as the middle strata joined the ‘infuriated’ in massive protests. Mixed messages, combining anti-parliamentarism or the totalistic and anti-institutional ‘rejection of all sorts of “debt”, individual and collective’, with the utopia of direct democracy, occupied the front stage of public debate. All this culminated in the spectacular, not to say ritualistic, upgrading of squatting in the so-called ‘squares’ – the programmatically peaceful ‘occupation’ of the emblematic Syntagma Square opposite the Greek parliament, from May to July 2011, by many tens of thousands of ‘indignant’ protesters, pursuing a wide range of demands ranging from ‘direct democracy’ to the destruction of the parliament itself, as well as the ‘occupation’ of squares in

other Greek cities.<sup>17</sup> As Athanasiou notes, new subjectivities and a ‘provisional, tenuous and groundless community’ of those without community were temporarily enacted. These new forms were mostly grounded on digital communication and were more prominent among the younger generations. The ‘indignant movement’ spread quickly, capitalized on the global ‘occupy’ protests and similar moves in Southern Europe, and, as it survived the suppression of the ‘squares’ by the government, went on exerting great pressure on formal political structures in the pursuit of ‘real democracy’.<sup>18</sup>

The deep crisis of legitimacy that threatened the political system with total collapse, and particularly the change in the balance of power between the grassroots and the formal institutions, created space for the strategic management of mass dysphoria by the Nazi Right (Papataxiarchis 2014a). The period 2010–2012 saw a spectacular rise in xenophobic violence. Violence was already a mark of that era, particularly because it was forcefully applied against the massive demonstrations and was eventually used to suppress the peaceful occupation of the squares. As Bampilis rightly notes, the Golden Dawn dressed its political messages in an almost ritualistic and thus highly publicized kind of murderous violence against its opponents. It primarily targeted Afro-Asian immigrants as a means of constituting a body politic fashioned in ethno-racial terms and obtained important gains from this strategy.

In this period, political dysphoria was unleashed in immense quantities, from the bottom up, threatening the symbolic foundations of the democratic regime and stretching for a while the political system to its limits. The apotropaistic rituals (e.g., the massive performance of *mountza*, a traditional, insulting and contemptuous gesture made with an open hand), which had been innovatively applied in the ‘squares’ as a means of expression of indignant feelings against impersonal entities, such as the building of the parliament, and other more violent manifestations of anger, were eventually directed towards the personal entities of members of the government and the parties in power. In this climate of discontent, the military and student parades of 28 October 2011, the national anniversary of the ‘No’ to the Italian invasion of Greece in 1940, turned into a terrain for the demonstration of anger that was now aimed at particular holders of public office. The reversal of the formal, public honouring of the resistant nation into the ritualistic dishonouring of its elected officials – particularly ministers and MPs – in person by the protesting citizens – even young parading students, who replaced the turn of the head, a formal gesture of honour to the officials who attend the parade, with a *mountza*, an informal gesture of dishonour – was the climax of a long period of aggressive protest. Trouble eventually reached the top (Papataxiarchis 2015)!

Yet the crisis of political legitimacy – a delayed symptom of the historical exhaustion of the consensual, bipartite, democratic regime – also had its productive side. Anger found an institutional way (that is, the electoral process) to express itself, and in this way the ‘crisis’ eventually touched the top level of the political system, the ‘central political scene’. In a short period of three

four years (2012–2015), Greek citizens went to the polls six times – four parliamentary elections, one municipal election that coincided with the elections for the European Parliament and one referendum. Political time accelerated: the lifecycle of governments and parties dramatically changed. First, as ‘consensual democracy’ was ritually deconstructed – primarily in the streets and the ‘squares’ – the Papandreou government fell and was replaced by a technocratic government. Then, after the landmark double elections of 2012 that formally confirmed the collapse of historical bipolarism, ND was forced into a coalition government with PASOK. And eventually the political parties that had been either produced or renewed and expanded in influence during the ‘crisis’ occupied prominent positions in the central political scene.

The political system was largely restructured from below – small parties from the left and right margins occupied prominent positions in the renewed political scene and new parties were formed. The only reminder of the old political order is ND, the foundational stone of the post-dictatorial democratic regime. ND remained as one of the protagonists of the political game, yet was now wounded by numerous splits primarily from the right. Golden Dawn capitalized on the xenophobic climate and in successive elections confirmed its third place in the parliament. Of course, the single most important outcome of the reshuffling of the party political system from below was SYRIZA. The party of the Radical Left expressed a broad coalition of the lower and middle strata that had suffered from the crisis. It capitalized on the social movements against the ‘Memorandum’, and, to the extent that it captured the resistant spirit of that era, it dominated the 2015 elections as an innovative force, promising a combination of social justice and political renewal with soteriological economics and vernacular aesthetics. With the coming into power of SYRIZA, a new phase of political re-legitimization began: the democratic institutions gradually regained some of their historical potency, indignation declined, the hold of the official over the un-official level was slowly restored and the re-alignment of voters with the main parties commenced.

The restructuring of the political system from below was realized in a climate of moralization of politics – from all sides, right and left, above and below. The political repositioning of pro-EU elites in a moral direction (Gkintidis) and their constructive, hegemonic moralism were directed against the allegedly ‘populist’ mentality of the left and the performative moralism of the Golden Dawn (Bampilis). The political debate became framed in the moralistic pair of ‘populism’ and ‘anti-populism’. This pervasive moralization of politics is one of the important legacies of the ‘crisis’.<sup>19</sup> This is not a novel phenomenon, nor is it restricted to the Greek context.<sup>20</sup> As the classic works of John Campbell (1964) and Peter Loizos (1975) have shown, the contractual foundations of clientelistic politics are sanctioned by the values that govern interpersonal sociality. The growth of politicized humanitarianism on a global scale is suggestive of the moralization of inter-state relations.

The new ‘patriotism of solidarity’ (Papataxiarchis 2016d) that emerged during the ‘refugee crisis’ in Greece draws upon the same cultural reservoir.

#### 4 Creative trouble: pragmatism against austerity

##### (i) *Platanos: squatting in ‘solidarity’ with the refugees*

The adventurous ‘negotiation’ of the debt arrangement between the new coalition SYRIZA-ANEL government and the ‘partners-lenders’ in the first half of 2015, and the massive entry of around 1 million displaced people from the ‘East’ into a crisis-ridden country in the course of the summer and autumn of the same year, could be regarded as the climax of the current Greek predicament. The coming of the refugees coincided with the defeat of the resistant ‘anti-memorandum’ illusions, after the historic compromise of SYRIZA with its lenders, and the change of course by the Radical Left government. The defeated government had to deal with hundreds of thousands of displaced people coming from Asia and the Middle East. This ‘crisis within the crisis’ eventually generated a lot of collective energy at the social grassroots level but also produced extreme forms of disruption, particularly at the Aegean frontline. In this regard, it is quite suggestive of the creative and the destructive sides of the ‘crisis’.

During the last two years, I witnessed the unfolding of the ‘refugee crisis’ in Skala Sykamnias, a small village community at the northern shores of Lesbos, from the viewpoint of Platanos (plane tree), a collective ‘initiative’ of support for the refugees.<sup>21</sup> In summer 2015, a small group of anarchist activists traveled from their urban base in Exarcheia to the frontline of the crisis in Lesbos, where they felt they were most needed. They were previously involved in various squats and had a lot of experience in the provision of assistance – food, clothes, medical aid – to the refugees in Pedion tou Areos, one of the big squares in the center of Athens. In Lesbos, they eventually settled in Skala, with the support of local activists and particularly the ‘Lesbian initiative’ (in which a number of my students were active), a local NGO and some of the inhabitants of the village, who offered them hospitality in their houses. Their mode of settlement in the village resembled their mode of existence in Exarcheia. They initiated, in other words, a culturally unique *experiment of rural squatting*. Their squat in a small ‘park’ near the sea expanded quickly into a small camp – with a number of tents, an ISO box with cooking facilities and a dispensary run by an international Christian NGO. Their infrastructure was complemented by a small ‘rescue boat’ and a few warehouses where donations from all over the world were kept. The successful use of social media and some press coverage offered them high visibility. They soon became one of the emblems of the grassroots mobilization in support of the refugees at the national level, attracting hundreds of volunteers who came from all around Greece and the world to ‘help’. Within a period of 10 months, the ‘camp of the misfits’, as they

jokingly called their squat, offered ‘solidarity’ to many among the more than 250,000 refugees who passed through this village.

The story of Platanos illustrates the immense transformations that are taking place on the ground in Greece during the recent period – the radical changes in ordinary lives, but also in wider ideological and political projects, and the conflicts that come with them. It is also a testimony to the politico-ideological mix that is characteristic of this era. Platanos was programmatically an anarchist project, resting on clear ideological principles: self-organization, ‘horizontality’ (that is, radical equality), ‘dignity’, distance from the state, opposition to interested forms of engagement. Despite its clear ideological origins – that were manifested both in its symbols, such as the anarchist flag at the entrance of the compound, and in its organizational practices, such as the regular assembly of its members in which by consensus decisions were made – the squat eventually came to rest on the broad alliance and actual cooperation between ideologically and politically heterogeneous actors – Greeks and foreigners, anarchists, Radical Left activists, communists, union members, even volunteer tourists. That was an absolutely unexpected and unprecedented exposure to the social milieu that was produced by the ‘refugee crisis’ at the frontline.

As an anarchist utopia, Platanos came into being in a multi-valent context that was foreign to its natal urban environment. Besides the masses of refugees who were passing through, the new environment involved the local rural community and the regional system of humanitarian governance that had started operating in Lesbos in October 2015 under the supervision of the UNHCR in close cooperation with the municipal authorities. The bilateral effects of the interaction between Platanos and this complex environment were unforeseen.

The squat actually turned into an advanced school in humanitarian work. Once in Lesbos, the activists and volunteers of Platanos found themselves working side by side with professional humanitarian workers as well as with volunteers from other collectivities, Facebook personalities or NGO officials. They mingled with the humanitarian crowd, became part of the ‘humanitarian village’ that was formed within the local community and shared the agonies and the joys with their fellow ‘humanitarians’. They ‘taught’ the foreign participants the Greek manners of sociality, and they were immersed in the cosmopolitan ethos of this international mobilization. Some of the core members of the squat, particularly those who had stayed in the village for most of the period, together with representatives of the many NGOs that operated on the island, participated in the division of humanitarian labour that was coordinated by the UNHCR and the other big international organizations, took part in joint meetings and shared responsibilities, thus becoming integrated into the official terrain of humanitarian governance. In the course of the crisis, the activists of Platanos developed new techniques and improved their skills in rescue at sea, first reception, medical aid, camp maintenance or management of resources.

The interaction of the members of Platanos with local inhabitants was more complicated. In this predominantly left community, some of the locals offered houses to the activists, others showed their sympathy, yet very few were actually involved in the project. The logic of squatting directly contradicted the rules of hospitality that required the consent of the host community as being sovereign over public space. The failure of the squatters to agree on a common line of action with the local authorities and their insistence on occupying public space despite the opposition of the local council, touched a sensitive nerve in connection with sovereignty. On the one hand, it produced a series of mini crises for the local authorities who eventually threatened the squatters with eviction. On the other hand, it had domestic repercussions as it alienated some sympathizers and brought friction and division in the ranks of the sizable group of friends and members of SYRIZA.

The exposure of the programmatically anarchist project to these complex circumstances also had important internal repercussions. ‘Plataniotes’ faced hard dilemmas. Accept external assistance by a Christian NGO or even a public institution in order to offer necessary services, such as medical aid, or restrict their functions and eventually perish? Receive monetary donations that opened the room for corruption, or restrict their field of appeal to items of priority? Keep ‘solidarity’ exclusively for refugees, or extend it to the village ‘poor’? Cooperate with the local authorities, or go on occupying the moral high ground as authentic agents of ‘solidarity’, thus risking their complete alienation from the local society?

As the project was progressing, made its own roots and started creating its own reality, and as it departed from its initial conception, the relation with the parent collectivities, which were attempting to supervise the project from a distance and make sure that it conformed to the original premises, became complicated. The project was riven by internal tensions between the ‘idealists’, who remained faithful to the ideological foundational principles even if this put the project at risk, and the ‘pragmatists’, who were open to compromises that would safeguard their project and ensure the successful realization of the ultimate task – the efficient rescue and reception of the displaced people. The harsh realities gave birth to challenging dilemmas. In some instances, ‘horizontality’ turned against *anthropia* (humanism), autonomy against cooperation.

The mixing of the utopian project with the objectives of the emergent humanitarian agenda became a source of anxiety. For a number of the activists, the ‘saving of lives’ – all lives, irrespective of the social status of the displaced people – and the proper reception of the refugees had a priority; it overrode the consistent application of the foundational principles of this otherwise anarchist project. This new hierarchy of values justified in their eyes the sacrifice of ideological principles in the name of operational effectiveness. After all, this was a noble cause.

These dilemmas were never fully resolved, particularly as Platanos led a multiple existence – in the squat and in the assemblies of parent collectivities

in Exarcheia, not to mention its separate digital life! They continued to puzzle its members, producing further tensions and internal splits that ultimately did not stop the ongoing transformation of the squat in unforeseen directions. In the squat, the duration of stay and the degree of commitment were making the difference and leading this project in a direction that facilitated the mutual accommodation of Platanos to the local environment.

From this brief account, it becomes clear that Platanos is a testimony to the generative event that the refugee crisis was. The ‘solidarian initiative’ worked as an agent of local change but also changed itself, yet change followed directions that radically differed from the ones initially envisioned by its architects. Once the project achieved its own, programmatically heterotopic spatiality, it was almost forced into a series of mutations in response to its heterogeneous environment. The anarchist project eventually brought together radically different, if not opposite, ideological forces; it transformed some activists into professional humanitarian workers; it turned into the birth place of new NGOs; and it was eventually added to the wide conglomeration of sites of ‘gift worship’ as it attracted a large number of donations.

### *(ii) Pragmatism against austerity*

This short detour to the frontline of the refugee crisis has taken us to the heart of the matter. If the ‘crisis’ is a generator of resistant yet constructive praxis, then it is an important factor of change. Under such conditions, a society in crisis is inevitably a changing society. The logic, the form and the direction of change, particularly in the social field, are the key issues. Do we have the invention of new forms, or the reconfiguration of old ones? To what extent do the innovative activities born of the ‘crisis’ remain faithful to their ideological premises? In which direction are the historically available contexts and forms reconfigured as they accommodate the disturbance brought by the crisis?

This volume offers interesting evidence of the confusion and the ideological tensions that underlie the energetic responses to the ‘crisis’, of the ideological battles on the direction of change. This is more than apparent in the ongoing confrontation over the migration issue. It has been equally strong and painful within the many grassroots ‘initiatives’ that flourished particularly in the last two years during the ‘refugee crisis’: they are haunted by the internal strife between ‘ideologists’ and ‘realists’, between those who faithfully stick to the ideological principles of self-organization and disinterestedness and their comrades, who opt for the necessary ‘compromises’ that will make their project feasible. This internal conflict echoes the tension in the Exarcheia squats between those who aim at an ‘opening . . . to the wider society’ and those who stick to ‘a very specific radical ideological and political stance’ (Poulimenakos and Dalakoglou) and becomes sharper when the energetic involvement in the ‘refugee crisis’ reshuffles the value hierarchies

in the humanitarian direction. Such tensions echo the conflictual and often divisive dilemmas that are haunting the central political scene, particularly after the historical compromise of the SYRIZA government; they are endemic in the blurring of ‘clear’ categories and the confusion that comes with the ‘crisis’.

Some of the chapters in this volume are particularly suggestive of the ways in which similar tensions are resolved on the ground. Rakopoulos describes how the members of the ‘anti-middlemen initiative’ are busily trying to make ‘remunerative cooperatives’ out of their informal networks. They strive for ‘immediate’, not ‘fair’, trade, and ‘lower’, not ‘transparent’, prices, and they look for formal recognition and protection from the state.<sup>22</sup> Chatzidakis shows how the anti-consumerist network eventually turned into a site of over-consumption. A rather conservative imperative seems to override the anti-capitalist ethos of the activists of Skoros. His remarks remind us of the imaginative reconstruction of philanthropic giving – in ‘social wardrobes’ or other places – into a conventional form of consumption through the application of the market language that turns gifts into ‘commodities’, or the equally powerful, imaginative reconstruction of ‘soup kitchens’ as continuations of the home through the application of hegemonic notions of the household. These workings of the imagination, which are so vividly described by Douzina-Bakalaki (2016), are governed by the longing for normality.

It is evident that as utopias and other ideological projects of engagement with the ‘crisis’ were applied in specific contexts, they were pushed in directions other than the ones initially envisaged by their initiators, they became ‘domesticated’ in their particular fields of application and they were re-signified and eventually normalized (that is, accommodated in conventional forms that prevailed in each particular field). These otherwise new, innovative practices reverted to historical forms in the course of adjustment to difficult circumstances and employed the old, established language of ‘labour’, ‘commodity’, ‘profession’, ‘NGO’, or ‘recognition’ and symbolic capital.

This book, therefore, reports a struggle that is particularly salient when our interlocutors are active in movements and schemes that promise alternatives. It is the struggle between two programmatically opposed temporal dispositions: between recapturing a *glorious past* of economic security, employment and consumption and pursuing an *alternative utopian future*.

In this contest between nostalgia and utopia, the drive for survival in an age of generalized trouble apparently prevails. It encourages adjustment to the new circumstances through the employment of old, available means. In this sense, the past gains leverage over the future. Even in ‘initiatives’ in which the future, in a utopian form, is given priority, the past has the last word. Yet, the recapturing of the past equals its remaking. The application of historical forms, or even of their illusion, in these new circumstances has effects – it leads to reconfigurations, to changes in the content of the old forms. The systematic understanding of these reconfigurations is the most challenging

task of future research, a task that requires the adequate historicization of the ‘crisis’.

What is the driving force behind this often imaginative and unpredictable recapturing of the past? The subjects of all these ‘initiatives’ seem to have a thorough understanding of personal vulnerabilities, of limited resources, of the very predicament that haunts their lives, of the ‘need’ that governs their engagement with the ‘crisis’.<sup>23</sup> They are also sensitive to the effects of their actions and particularly aware that these ‘*initiatives*’ make them agents, in the full sense of the word, in a conjuncture that forces them to futile inaction or ineffective reaction. On that ground, they are open to the un-envisioned effects of praxis, even if they contradict certain ideals, as long as these are morally justifiable.

Under these conditions, the *determination to act* prevails. Initiating solidaritarian initiatives through putting elementary means – primarily one’s own agency – to ends that are justifiable, and, eventually, finding a way out of the current predicament, rests upon a determination that puts pragmatic considerations over ideological concerns.<sup>24</sup> In one word, in the Greek age of generalized trouble, *pragmatism triumphs!*

What is particularly interesting in many of these ‘initiatives’ is the disinterested form that pragmatism adopts as it is being put in the service of empowerment. The pragmatic engagement of the ‘solidarians’ with the crisis remains in touch with allegedly disinterested motives, it dresses altruistically in keeping with the ‘other in need’ and not the private self as a point of reference: it is interested action in disinterested form. Disinterestedness is thus employed as a symbolic source of moral justification of the otherwise egoistic pursuit of survival. In the paradoxical shape of disinterestedness, ‘solidarian’ pragmatism is carrying with it an endemic tension between interest and its opposite; it is torn by an anxiety over motives. Next to the contradictory symbiosis of nostalgia with utopia, another source of ambiguity is added to the ‘solidarian’ project.

The agonistic pragmatism, which originates in the struggle for survival, against austerity, and remains committed to the recovery of the social bond as its foundational condition, is the actual horizon of the future. This emerges as the most important legacy of the Greek ‘crisis’. Will it be sufficient for getting us out of trouble?

## Notes

- 1 I would like to thank the editors of the volume, Georgios Agelopoulos and Dimitris Dalakoglou, for the invitation to participate in this project and for their comments. Many thanks to Efi Avdela, Jane Cowan, Olga Demetriou, Charles G. Gore, Murat Erdal Ilhcan, Lois Labrianidis, Panos Papadimitropoulos, Effie Plexousaki, Marica Rombou-Levidi and Katerina Rozakou for comments on an earlier draft.
- 2 The same applies to other concepts – for example ‘austerity’ or ‘populism’ – that came into prominence during the recent ‘crisis’. On the ‘global life of austerity’, see Rakopoulos (2017).

- 3 Theodossopoulos (2014a: 416) argues in favour of the analytical rescuing of 'resistance' through its 'de-exoticization' and 'de-pathologization'. On the mixing of 'resistance' against austerity and romantic sources such as 'defensive nationalism' and 'indigenism', also see Kalantzis (2015).
- 4 Also see Bakalaki (2008).
- 5 Rakopoulos (2016) suggests using 'solidarity' as a 'bridge concept', whereas Douzina-Bakalaki (2016) takes a greater distance and speaks about 'modalities of engagement'.
- 6 On a recent appraisal of 'activist anthropology', see Ortnier (2016a).
- 7 I should clarify that here I employ the term 'temporality' not from the perspective of temporal reasoning but from the angle of duration and rhythm of change – not as subjective understanding of past, present and future (that is, as historicity) but as a property of structures. On the 'historical consciousness' of the 'crisis', see the very interesting work of David Knight (2015a). Also see Knight and Stewart (2016). On the political manipulation of time, see Streinzer (2016).
- 8 This brief review of the anthropological literature of the Greek 'crisis' cannot be comprehensive. The big anthropological interest in the 'Greek crisis' is reflected in a number of special issues. See *History and Anthropology* (vol. 27, no. 1, 2016), *Social Anthropology* (vol. 24, no. 2, 2016), *Visual Anthropology Review* (vol. 32, no. 1, 2016) and *The Unfamiliar* (vol. 2, no. 2, 2012). Also see the special section 'Beyond the 'Greek crisis': histories, rhetorics, politics' in the 'Hot spots' of *Cultural Anthropology* (2011). For a brief yet insightful review of 'crisis anthropology' in Greece, see Kalantzis (2016a).
- 9 This approach has been particularly productive in the study of the workings of the (discursive and visual) imagination. For example, see Alexandrakis (2016), Kalantzis (2016b), Knight (2015b), Papailias (2012), Theodossopoulos (2014b) and Yalouri (2016).
- 10 For example, see the work of Heath Cabot (2016) on the reconfigurations of care and citizenship in 'social pharmacies' in Athens; Phaedra Douzina-Bakalaki (2016) on transformations in gender, kinship and affect in soup kitchens in Xanthi; Katerina Rozakou (2016b) on the reformation of sociality among volunteers in Athens; and Dimitrios Theodossopoulos (2013) on the application of the, historically available, blame-evading tactic by Greek 'indignants' in the context of the 'defensive nationalism' that pervaded the protest against austerity. Also see the study of the reconfigurations of the 'migrant' by Sarah Green in this volume.
- 11 The most theoretically elaborate version of the thesis that the Greek crisis is exceptional rests on the 'state of exemption' argument. For a systematic discussion of this argument, see Athanasiou (2012). For a critical assessment of the Eurocentric bias and the exoticizing thrust of the 'exceptionality paradigm', see Rakopoulos (2014a).
- 12 Michael Herzfeld (2016) makes a similar call to consider the 'ethnographic genealogy' of the response to the crisis and to 'pay close attention to the earliest ethnographic descriptions' (201).
- 13 'Irregular mind /Atakti Skepsi', *Synchrona Themata* (vol. 30, no. 103, 2008). See, for example, the critical agency that was generated among graffiti writers in the aftermath of the December revolt (Alexandrakis 2016). Also see Astrinaki (2009), Dalakoglou and Vradis (2011) and Kallianos (2013).
- 14 See Kritidis (2014) and Papadogiannis (2015).
- 15 This does not mean that 'initiatives', particularly those that identified as 'social', did not intersect in many ways with the social movements of the last two decades – the anti-globalization, the ecological or the feminist movements.
- 16 On solidarity initiatives as a creative grassroots response to austerity, see Arampatzi (2016).

- 17 For an ethnographic approach of the ‘squares’, see Papavlou (2015). Also see Stavrides (2012).
- 18 On the ambivalent feelings concerning indignation, see Theodossopoulos (2013).
- 19 Also see Herzfeld (2016).
- 20 On ‘humanitarian reason’ as ‘a mode of governing’ precarious lives resting on the ‘fantasy of a global moral community’ and the general moralization of politics on a global scale, see Fassin (2012). Also see Muehlebach (2012).
- 21 For a first account of the ‘refugee crisis’ in Northern Lesbos, see Papataxiarchis (2016a,b).
- 22 On the ‘pragmatic dimension’ of cooperativism in Greece, also see Rakopoulos (2014a). Rakopoulos understands cooperativism as a perspective on the future that unleashes ‘new forms of consciousness’.
- 23 ‘Solidarity came out of the need’: this is how volunteers in social pharmacies studied by Cabot (2016b: 152) understand their involvement in these informal formations of welfare. Also see Agelopoulos (2015).
- 24 See Knight (2014) on the innovative strategies with which people cope with chronic uncertainty.

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