Dimitris DALAKOGLOU, Georgios AGELOPOULOS (eds) | *Critical times in Greece: Anthropological engagements with the crisis*, New York, Routledge, 2018, pp. 277.

This edited volume consists of a wide array of ethnographic accounts of the Greek society being in crisis. The book is divided in four sections, which "examine transformations at the structural level, transformations as a praxis and both together". The common thread linking the papers is the assumption that crisis is "a moment that both creates and reveals".

The first section – "The State" – focuses on crisis as a form of governance and on the state's transformations under the pressure of crisis and neoliberal structural adjustments. Beyond the economic restructurings, Athena Athanasiou shifts the attention to how crisis had produced neoliberal forms of governmentality. Interestingly, she suggests that the neoliberalization of the Greek State produced a resurgence of conservative ideals which she names neo-conservativism. Dimitrios Gkintidis explores how the EU funds shaped the moralities of the Greek-EU relations in times of crisis. His research focuses on the Greek pro-austerity technocrats who stress the fact that Greece, and Greek people as a whole, had benefited from the EU funds, yet failed to make good use of them. As Gkintidis presents, they hardly ever refer to specific developments, fail to acknowledge how those funds had enhanced capitalist exploitation and accumulation by dispossession processes while they homogenize "Greeks" in their discourses. Yannis Kallianos suggests that in times of crisis the Greek State had been re-engineered to facilitate neoliberal adjustments and re-establish its legitimacy. Since the implementation of austerity, the legitimacy deficit of the Greek State increased and as a result, the austerity governments in order to manage the disorder facilitated fear and uncertainty to legitimize their role. The witty point here is that – as Athanasiou mentions – neoliberal and

conservative ideologies go hand in hand, as they have had in the past in South America, Africa and Asia. The conservatism, inherent in the Greek State's structures, stands as a bedrock to counteract the destabilization and the crises which the neoliberal restructurings have produced.

The conservatism which had historically shaped the Greek Nation-State is analysed by Tryfon Bampilis in the next section "The Nation", where he deals with the emergence of the Neo-Nazi party of the Golden Dawn and its election to the Greek parliament in 2012. He aptly deconstructs the neo-nazi ideology and exposes its internal contradictions along with a rich ethnographic and historical account of the party's activities that date back to the 1980s. Instead of a rational explanation, he employs a cultural, performative analysis to elaborate why and how Golden Dawn, out of a sudden, had become appealing to the challenged populations of the Greek crisis. Giorgos Tsimouris's and Roland S. Moore's chapter draws a parallel between the Golden Dawn practices on attacking "immigrants of color" with the numerous deaths in the Greek borders. They show that the Neo-Nazi agenda was adopted by the Greek government of Samaras in an attempt to attract the popular right wing voters, while this notion was backed up by the EU and its policies towards the refugee crisis. David Sutton examines folk narratives in the island of Kalymnos about hidden treasures which he connects with the recent discoveries of oil and gas reserves in the Greek EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone). Finally, Sarah Green argues that the official recognition of "immigrants" in Greece had appeared belatedly in 1990s, when it was firstly coined as a legal status of a person who lived in Greece. Until then, the category of "the migrant" was informed by the Greek economic emigrants in the advanced economies of the West.

In the next section – "Subjectivities" – Anna Apostolidou correlates the economic depression of crisis with discourses about the mental and emotional health of the Greeks and how pathologizing discourses are interchangeably used to refer both to mental health and economic problems. Neni Panourgiá follows the living arrangements of a 30 year old man in his effort to make ends meet in the harsh reality of the recent austerity crisis. She shows how austerity had rendered his whole existence vulnerable when several misfortunes occurred. Andreas Chatzidakis examines how economic scarcity has led to a certain failure of the consumption practices of Athenians, producing ruptures in the way subjectivities, in the capitalist society, are (re)produced. He compares these failed consumption practices with anti-consumerist initiatives which had flourished in Athens during the pre-crisis years. Eleni Papagaroufali focuses on the rally of young people to

fill in their CVs in order to have better chances of finding employment and examines how the self is being (re)constructed by the linear structure of the CV.

The last section – "Confronting the Crisis" – deals with organized grassroots initiatives tackling social alienation and proposing alternative models of socio-economic action. Giorgos Poulimenakos and Dimitris Dalakoglou examine the organization of K*Vox Squat in Exarcheia, Athens, and how their members understand, project and situate their activities in the wider social realities. The squat operates as a multifunctional oasis of sociality, hosting various disalienating acts and events for socially excluded and isolated people (both locals and immigrants) in the area. In the same line, Katerina Rozakou follows groups who stand in solidarity with the undocumented migrants under detention and about to be deported. These groups, self-identified as "solidarians", besides providing legal and material support, help immigrants to socialize and feel acceptance as human beings. Theodoros Rakopoulos examines solidarity through a different grassroots initiative which had gained popularity during the first years of crisis. The anti-middlemen movement created various groups all over Greece which distributed goods by bypassing the formal market structures. By doing so they attempted to bring people together and to socialize on the basis of an alternative mode of distribution. Yet as he shows the cohesion of the group was challenged with the possibility of formalization (and hence normalization) into a cooperative and the option of offering paid labour positions to their members. Lastly, Georgios Agelopoulos explores the viewpoint of those who opposed the anti-middlemen movement, namely police officers and middle-men. His paper is autoethnographic and discusses the so called "potato movement" which laid the foundations of the nation wide anti-middlemen movement that followed.

The volume offers a rich ethnographic collection of papers with diverse theoretical engagement that deal with a wide array of key issues which enhance the understanding of the crisis experiences. However I cannot but notice that there is a dis-appropriate number of papers which ground their findings in Athens, and many of those in the areas around Exarcheia square, Syntagma square and Omonoia square, hence producing a false, romanticized image of Athens as a city that resists. I do believe however that a bit of romanticism is always needed and it can be inspiring. I can understand also that in Greece, which has no other big city, the minorities (refugees, "solidarians", anarchists, activists, LGTBQ persons) which this book aims to express are hard to be found and in many instances are invisible and much less organized in smaller cities where they can hardly

form a critical mass to voice their claims. Even Golden Dawn centres its activities mostly in Athens, where it has in absolute numbers a stronger base of active supporters and can easily hide in the anonymity the big city offers. Lastly the book is far too focused on the migration/refugee crisis which does not affect the Greek society as a whole but rather it is confined to specific places and areas where migrants are "hosted". The book finishes with an afterword by Eythimios Papataxiarchis who suggests that we replace the problematic term of "crisis" with "trouble". He provides several arguments to support his view, based on his own ethnographic work in the island of Lesvos – which had been vastly affected by the current refugee crisis – and the research presented in this edited book.

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