Surplus Citizens
Struggles in the Greek Crisis, 2010–2014

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the social struggles that occurred between 2010 and 2014 during the crisis in Greece: labour struggles, the movement of the squares, demonstrations and riots, neighbourhood assemblies, solidarity projects and economies, local environmental struggles, and anti-fascist and migrants’ struggles. It discusses their internal and external limits in the historical specificity of the contemporary crisis and class relation.

Drawing critically on Théorie Communiste’s periodising schema, these struggles are framed, first, through a shift in the dynamic of the class relation effected by the crisis and the restructuring, which is a continuation of the first phase of ‘neoliberal’ restructuring in the 1990s. This shift intensified a central capitalist contradiction: while the capital relation imposes most violently the absolute dependence of subsistence on the wage, the wage relation fails to guarantee subsistence and integrates proletarians as surplus to capitalist reproduction. Second, the struggles are framed through the deep political crisis of state sovereignty and the relation between state and civil society, caused by the relentless imposition of the restructuring in conjunction with supranational institutions. These historical transformations are traced through the mutual constitution of international tendencies and the development of class struggle in Greece, against theories of dependency and underdevelopment. Ideological responses to the financial crisis and the logic of the restructuring are interrogated by employing theories of value, fetishism, and the state influenced by the German ‘value-form’ debate. Foucault-influenced conceptions of governmentality and sovereignty are also deployed to examine the restructuring’s forms of imposition and the biopolitical crisis-management strategies of the state, which reinforced the racialised and gendered constitution of civil society.

The thesis argues that these two elements, the changing dynamic of the class relation and the crisis of the state and civil society, defined the struggles of this period, in which two core characteristics can be identified. First, labour struggles confronted the dilemma between the necessity and inadequacy of the wage through an ambivalence between their attachment to work and their estrangement from it. This ambivalence did not question the terms of the dilemma posed, which were only questioned fleetingly in riots that interrupted the normality of commodity exchange. Second, the deep political crisis provoked struggles defending democracy, with the disempowered ‘Greek citizen’ as their central subject, which constitutively excluded migrants. The splitting of these struggles between leftwing anti-imperialist and rightwing anti-immigration nationalism, and into a struggle between fascism and anti-fascism, were not able to challenge this constitutive exclusion, which was only questioned by migrants’ own struggles. Nationalism and the drive to reinforce unsettled social hierarchies played into the governmental effort to contain the political crisis, through the state’s biopolitical management of the migrant and marginal, racialised and gendered surplus populations produced in the crisis.
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VI. Conclusion

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## List of Abbreviations

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<th>Meaning</th>
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<tr>
<td>ADEDY</td>
<td>Anōtati Dioikisēs Dimosion Ypalliloun [Higher Administration of Public Employee Unions]</td>
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<tr>
<td>AK</td>
<td>Astikos Kodikas [Civil Code]</td>
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<tr>
<td>AN.EL.</td>
<td>Anexartitoi Ellines [Independent Greeks]</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANTARSYA</td>
<td>Antikapitalistik Aristeri Synergasia gia tin Anatropi [Anticapitalist Left Cooperation for the Overthrow]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ar.</td>
<td>Arthro [article of a law or statute]</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASOEE</td>
<td>Anotati Scholi Oikonomikon Kai Emporikon Epistumon [Athens University of Economics and Business]</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATA</td>
<td>Automati Timarithmiki Anaprosarmogi [Automatic Inflationary Readjustment]</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIAS</td>
<td>Dikyklia Astynomousi [Motorcycle-Mounted Police]</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIMAR</td>
<td>Dimokratiki Aristera [Democratic Left]</td>
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<tr>
<td>DELTA</td>
<td>Dynamis Elieghou Tacheias Antidrasis [Rapid Response Force] (Greek Police)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAM</td>
<td>Ethnikos Apeleutherotikos Metopo [National Liberation Front]</td>
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<tr>
<td>EEAM</td>
<td>Ergatikos EAM [Workers’ EAM]</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECB</td>
<td>European Central Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>EKPA</td>
<td>Ethnikou Kapodistriotikou Panepistimio Athinon [National Kapodistrian University of Athens]</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELAS</td>
<td>Ethnikos Laikos Apeleutherotikos Stratos [National Popular Liberation Army]</td>
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<td>ELME</td>
<td>Enosi Leitourgoun Mesi Ekpaideusis [Union of Secondary Education State School Teachers] (regional union)</td>
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<td>EL.STAT</td>
<td>Elliniki Statistik Archi [Greek Statistical Authority]</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENEK</td>
<td>Eniaio Ethnikistikia Kini [Unified Nationalist Movement]</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPEN</td>
<td>Ethnikis Politiki Enosis [National Political Union]</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERT</td>
<td>Elliniki Radiofonia Kai Telora [Greek Radio and Television]</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>EYP</td>
<td>Ethnikis Ypiresia Pliroforion [National Information Service] (1986–)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEK</td>
<td>Fyllo Efimeridas Tis Kyverniseos [Official Gazette]</td>
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<tr>
<td>GD</td>
<td>Golden Dawn (Chrysí Augí)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GSEE</td>
<td>Geniki Synomospondia Ergatwn Ellados [General Confederation of Workers of Greece]</td>
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<tr>
<td>GSEVTEE</td>
<td>Geniki Synomospondia Epaggelmation Viotechnwn Emporwn Elladas [Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftspersons, and Merchants]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IKA</td>
<td>Idryma Koinonikon Asfaliseon [Institute of Social Security]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Organization/Institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>INE-GSEE</td>
<td>Instituto Ergasías GSEE [Labour Institute of GSEE]</td>
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<tr>
<td>IME-GSEVEE</td>
<td>Instituto Mikróν Epicheirišeόν GSEVEE [Small Enterprises Institute of GSEVEE]</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>KKE</td>
<td>Kommounistikó Kómma Elládas [Communist Party of Greece]</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAOS</td>
<td>Laíkós Orthódoxos Synagermós [Popular Orthodox Rally]</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Nomos [Law or Statute]</td>
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<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>Nέa Dimokratía [New Democracy]</td>
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<tr>
<td>OAED</td>
<td>Organismós Apaschólišiš Ergatikoú Dynamikoú [Organisation for Labour Force Employment]</td>
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<tr>
<td>OLME</td>
<td>Omospondía Leitourgóν Mésis Ekpaideúšis [Federation of Secondary Education State School Teachers]</td>
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<tr>
<td>OVES</td>
<td>Omospondía Viomichanikón kai Ergostasiakón Sómateión [Federation for Industrial and Factory Trade Unions]</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAME</td>
<td>Paneragatikó Agónistikó Mítópo [All Workers Militant Front] (KKE labour union)</td>
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<td>PASO.K</td>
<td>Panellínio Sosialistikó Kínima [Pan-hellenic Socialist Movement]</td>
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<tr>
<td>PEKOP</td>
<td>Panattikí Énòsi Katharistrió̊n kai Oikiakoú Prosòpikoú [Pan-Attica Union of Cleaners and Domestic Staff]</td>
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<tr>
<td>PK</td>
<td>Poinikós Kódi̊kas [Penal Code]</td>
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<tr>
<td>POE-OTA</td>
<td>Panellínio Omospondía Ergazoménōn Organismón Topikís Autodioikisís [Panhellenic Federation of Local Government Workers’ Associations]</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEK</td>
<td>Sosialistikó Ergatikó Kómma [Socialist Workers’ Party]</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEO-115</td>
<td>Kínisi tôn 115 Synergazómenón Ergatoypallilikón Organóseón [Movement of 115 Cooperating Workers’ Organisations]</td>
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<tr>
<td>SKYA</td>
<td>Synéleusí gia tín Kykloforía tôn Agóníōn [Assembly for the Circulation of Struggles]</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOVA</td>
<td>Sómateio Vási̊s Anérγon &amp; episfalós ergazoménōn [Grassroots Union of the Unemployed and insecurely employed]</td>
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<tr>
<td>STET</td>
<td>Sýndesmos tôn Ergatikón Táxeon tis Elládōs [Association of the Working Classes of Greece]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syn.E.Ko.Ch.</td>
<td>Synéleusí anérγon kai Ergazoménōn se prōgrammata Koinofeloús Charakti̊ra [Assembly of Unemployed and Employed in Public Benefit programmes]</td>
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<tr>
<td>SY.RIZ.A.</td>
<td>Synaspismós Rizospastikí̊s Aristerás [Coalition of the Radical Left]</td>
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<tr>
<td>TC</td>
<td>Théorie Communiste</td>
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Transliteration Map

All transliterations use the ISO 843 System, which allows full reversibility, to assist the reader in locating original Greek titles.

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Acknowledgements

The very subject of this thesis—social struggles in Greece—exists only because of the collective critical practices and thinking that have taken place in the crisis. Indeed, the best part of doing this research was questioning the premises of my approach several times, in light of these collective practices and the reflections emerging from them. I was also fruitfully challenged by discussions and texts exchanged among political and theoretical networks, in their majority outside academia. I am enormously indebted to all of the friends from reading groups, discussion groups, and journals, for all the long discussions, the research, and theoretical work they have shared, whose influence on this thesis has been defining. In fact, I feel that the text that follows is to an important extent the product of collective work, despite the fact that I am its sole writer.

More than a simple mention is due particularly to those who had the kindness and patience to read and comment on parts of this thesis. Special thanks go to Dimitris, who, in addition to his love and his daily emotional and practical generosity, continues to enrich my knowledge and sharpen my critical thinking in more ways than he knows. I also thank Themis, whose substantial knowledge and experience provided invaluable information and a unique perspective on Greek history; Zacharias, whose careful reading helped me to tighten Chapter V; Sam and Simon, who picked out weaknesses in an early draft of Chapter V; and Larne, for her attentive comments on Chapter II.

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I. Introduction

BETWEEN SOCIAL STRUGGLES AND COMMUNISM

Since the global financial crisis broke out in 2008, discussions around class struggle and communism have been reinvigorated in response to mass expressions of social discontent. In 2011, there was a peak in social struggles internationally: large demonstrations in Europe resisting austerity, resolute uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East that toppled decades-long dictatorships, and, inspired by this ‘Arab Spring’, a self-organised movement in the squares of Europe and the USA. In Europe, struggles were most persistent in the Eurozone periphery (Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Greece), where a restructuring mostly by way of austerity measures targeting direct and indirect wages was imposed by IMF and European institutions, in return for bailouts to keep the countries solvent. But this new sequence of struggles did not have the form of a straightforward resurgence of class struggle: these were struggles that were not located in workplaces or led by a re-empowered labour movement. They occupied public spaces, demanding democracy and practicing self-organisation, while frequently breaking out in riots.

In the case of Greece, the most heavily indebted country of the Eurozone periphery, where the most severe austerity was also imposed as part of bailout conditionality, social struggles attracted significant interest, not only due to their intensity and the extensive riots that accompanied them, but also because of the graveness of what was at stake each time: if protests succeeded in their demands against austerity, supervisory institutions and governments claimed, the country would default, and that would be even more catastrophic. Yet, over these five years of austerity, which struggles failed to hinder despite their persistence, unemployment rose to over 25%, and, from 2010 to 2013, the purchasing power of the average wage fell by 21%. By the time of writing this introduction, in the summer of 2015, Greece is still on the brink of financial collapse, with its debt load still unsustainable, and yet more austerity being demanded by the representatives of Greece’s creditor countries in the EU.

In this context, with little room to move within the shackles of debt and the Eurozone project, that is, within the imperatives of capitalist reproduction in the crisis, the struggles resisting austerity in Greece also displayed these new characteristics. In the ‘Aganaktisménoi’ movement of public square occupations, which was inspired by the occupation of Tahrir Square and Spain’s Indignados and lasted for over two months, party-mediation was unwelcome. In the squares there was an attempt to self-organise and develop the movement’s own language on a daily basis. In the large demonstrations resisting new austerity measures, ferocious riots expanded, involving increasing numbers of demonstrators. After the peak of these struggles, in early 2012, and a new right-wing-led coalition government, which was formed to counter the unprecedented electoral rise of the left, international headlines were made by the smaller, but significant, empowerment of the neo-

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Nazi party Golden Dawn, and by the racist violence it perpetrated. There was an anti-fascist response, yet the energy of 2011 had disappeared, and the prior movement appeared to have been split along political lines. The broader left found itself in an even more defensive situation, reduced to fighting against the drive to legitimise racist victimisation and murder. Political parties were again dominating public discourse, each offering its own solution to the crisis and the management of capitalist reproduction.

What tools do we have to understand this sequence of struggles? The theories that became most fervently discussed in the beginning of the crisis conveyed a great deal of anticipation, while having to deal with the fact that, after the unravelling of ‘really existing socialism’ and the demise of the social-democratic project, for decades, the labour movement has been on the defensive and its ranks have been diminishing. The very existence of the ‘working class’ has been put into question, dissolved, as it has been, into a disparate proletarian population with no political project of its own, let alone it being able to achieve political hegemony or formulate an alternative programme. In this context, in the face of a wave of struggles whose political language has made little reference to a class subject, and in the face of the weakness of the labour movement, does it mean that an analysis of the class relation and the critique of political economy is now irrelevant to an understanding of contemporary struggles? And if we can show that they are still relevant, how can we account for the atrophy of class-based discourse or practice in struggles that directly impact on the wages and the means of subsistence of those who struggle? To speak of an ‘absence of class consciousness’ would be a mere tautological remark that explains little.

This thesis, in examining the struggles that took place in Greece in the crisis period from 2010 to 2014, strives to sharpen existing tools of analysing contemporary struggles, as much as it is an exercise in identifying these struggles’ immanent limits. It does this through a critical analysis that avoids the easy application of received Marxist theoretical schemas. Instead, it is alert to the theoretical problems raised by struggles themselves and the need to extend or criticise those schemas. It specifically deals with the problem of identifying the historical specificities of these struggles, by contrasting them to struggles in previous crises and periods, as well as contextualising them in the current crisis, and in the Greek and European context, in order to more accurately flesh out and explain the aforementioned contemporary characteristics: lack of class discourse or labour-movement hegemony, self-organisation and a distancing from mainstream politics, citizenism, democratism, nationalism, and the empowerment of particular left and far right tendencies.

Discussion about contemporary struggles from the point of view of a Marxist, that is, at heart, communist, critique, also has to deal with the delegitimation of communism, in its early 20th-century meaning, as a living political project. If contemporary Marxism wishes to offer an immanent critique of the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production, which also points towards its overcoming, without resorting to the forms of determinism and economism that have plagued ‘traditional’ Marxism, it also has to deal with the question of how contemporary social struggles, which do not define themselves as communist, relate to and could produce this overcoming, communism. Recent responses to this problem have chosen one of two routes: either to redefine com-
munism as an idea, or, on the contrary, to seek its new meaning in contemporary struggles and their practices.

Alain Badiou’s notion of communism as an ‘Idea’ inspired the former reconceptualisation. This approach accepted the disappearance of a political class subject, and replaced it with the notion of a struggle of the ‘people’ for universal equality and justice. This notion of communism signalled a return to a ‘popular voluntarism’ that tried to distance itself from ‘statism’ and the ‘party form’ of historical varieties of communism, but also from the critique of political economy. This was, instead, a fundamentally political concept of communism, defined on the basis of an ideal of universality, as opposed to its negation of and difference from capitalist social relations. As Badiou put it in a paper at an international conference on ‘The Greek Symptom’, ‘our contemporary impotence’ lies in the fact that this ‘Idea’ has not emerged in contemporary struggles. Struggles used the ‘langue de bois’, the ‘wooden language’ of the state, without developing an alternative language, political organisation, or perspective. The negation of the existing is not enough. The new positive language of communism for Badiou would denote the abolition of private property, free association, and the collectivisation of production, driven not by a proletariat but by a non-fascist and non-juridical notion of ‘the people’.

Contributing to the same debate, and keeping to a political-philosophical conception of communism, Costas Douzinas has countered that the idea of communism cannot bear an event without the existence of injustice (‘adikia’) and outrage against it. Communism exists in the resistance to the injustices of capitalism and the capitalist state, and, following the Marxist critique of rights, it is a form of justice that sublates ‘rights culture’. In this spirit, Douzinas has defended the riots of December 2008 from their likely Badiouian classification as merely destructive ‘immediate’ riots that ‘destroy and plunder without a concept’, without an idea of ‘Truth’. Instead, he puts emphasis on the emergence of new subjectivities in struggle, in the discussions that took place among rioters during December, and in the ‘demos’ of the assemblies in Syntagma square. He reads the sequence between the December riots, the 300 immigrants’ hunger strike in March 2009, and Syntagma square as a series of sublations, with a higher self-consciousness emerging when ‘[t]he Syntagma citizen exercised the right to resistance’. For Douzinas, the latter emerged as a common and inclusive popular subject, which also included immigrants. He finds no connection between the popular nationalism of the squares and the empowerment of Golden Dawn, deriding such a notion as an intentional media smear against popular resistance.

3 Douzinas and Žižek, The Idea of Communism, ix; Badiou, Rebirth, 13.
6 Ibid., 46–47.
9 Ibid., 152.
But how can ‘the people’ be disentangled from the limits of ‘the nation’ in a contemporary world consisting of nation-states? In the Greek struggles until 2014, ‘the people’ was rarely disentangled from the Greek citizen, giving rise to chauvinistic or anti-imperialist types of nationalism, both of which remained, as we will see, confined to a ‘popular’ solidarity founded on ethnicity. How can ‘the people’ be the subject of the ‘collectivisation of production’ on which Badiou insists, if they are not workers? And how can this ‘collectivisation’, driven by a ‘people’, be carried out without a state that both delimits a nation and imposes labour as a condition for subsistence, as was the case in the failed socialist attempts of the 20th century? If we cannot wait for the state’s ‘withering away’ this time, as Douzinas points out, how can we be certain that the ‘constituent demos’ of self-organisation cannot become, or appeal to the creation of, a new state? These unanswered questions suggest that communism, as an abstract ‘Idea’ or language of struggle, and even as democratic practice and self-organisation, is powerless if it cannot convincingly show that it is not the reproduction of capitalism, of existing social relations of exploitation, and of forms of state and national-ethnic divisions—not to mention gendered divisions, which, as we will see, became invisible in the crisis and in the struggles and discourse that resisted the restructuring.

From a perspective closer to the Marxian problematic of class struggle and the critique of political economy, post-autonomist approaches, similarly seeking forms of communist politics outside the state, put forward a conception of communism as the expansion of the ‘commons’, and of crisis as the result of working class agency. According to this view, supported most strongly by George Caffentzis and Silvia Federici, the crisis was a result of prior working class struggles that forced capital to provide credit to the working class in order to avoid wage increases. The crisis is capital’s opportunity for a counteroffensive which aims to further control the working class through debt, to push down wages and to privatise ‘common’ resources. This crisis is then not so different than previous capitalist periods insofar as capital has continued the process of ‘primitive accumulation’, which appropriates everything that is ‘common’—welfare, public-owned enterprises and land—while forcing a larger number of the non-employed population into the labour market through workfare. The future of struggles, according to this view, depends on their ability to reclaim those ‘commons’. The strengthening of such movements would be able to create and expand common spaces and communities where the development of non-capitalist social relations—another struggle of self-transformation in itself—would create the conditions for a passage towards communist society. In short, this view has aligned itself with a displacement of the locus of struggles from workplaces to the space of the ‘common’, where ‘reproduction’ takes priority, as capable of not only forming new communities and subjects of struggle, but also producing communism.

We might ask here a similar question as above. What ensures that the space of the common is or can become an ‘anti-capitalist’ space? What defines a space as ‘anti-capitalist’? Caffentzis

11 Douzinas, Philosophy and Resistance, 156.
12 Midnight Notes Collective and Friends, Promissory Notes: From Crisis to Commons, 2009.
and Federici assert that a ‘common’ equally accessible space or resource is not capitalist, as long as it is communal, is regulated through egalitarian decision making, and is not used for commercial purposes, while warning against its appropriation by a capitalist outside. But problems with this conception become clearer when we come to the examples: solidarity economies, the self-organisation of work, the Occupy movements, struggles to prevent privatisation. The use of these examples often does not extend to a critical analysis of the specific social relations that develop within these groups and communities, their relationship with their outside, and, in the end, whether they share and/or live up to these theoretical aspirations, or whether these projects also contain the possibility of reproducing the very relations they aim to fight against. Such a possibility would constitute the internal limits of struggles centred on self-organisation and the creation of commons. Could these common spaces or communities ‘reproduce themselves collectively’, independently of proletarian dependence on the wage? Can such communities become autonomous when the capital relation dominates life everywhere else? How different is their form of communal property from private property? I discuss these questions by examining the propagation of these types of projects in Greece, alongside the movement of the squares, in Chapter IV of this thesis.

In contrast to these two conceptions of communism as Idea and communism as the expansion of autonomous ‘commons’, another perspective also gained currency in radical theoretical circles in this period, that of the theory of communisation, and specifically the version proposed by the French theoretical group, Théorie Communiste (TC). This conception should be distinguished from the concept of communisation proposed by Gilles Dauvé, whose views have been influential for much longer among workerists, post-autonomists and the ultra-left. Similar to TC, for Dauvé, communism is a movement to ‘communise’ social relations born out of the misery that capitalism generates. It is not a programme to be established but the movement that abolishes capitalism in the present, in line with Marx’s definition of communism as ‘the real movement which abolishes the present state of things’. Yet TC’s contemporary influence was that, unlike Dauvé, it rejected a transhistorical conception of class struggle, the class relation and communism. The group’s most striking contribution to the discussion was that, while they emphasised the ‘end’ of a workers’ movement founded on an affirmative workers’ identity, they proposed that the strug-
gles of the post-restructuring period announced a new ‘content of the revolution to come’, that of communisation.22

Descending, like Dauvé, from the post-1968 discussions that emerged in France, but also influenced by Althusserian anti-humanism, TC do not permit any autonomous agency to the proletariat other than that produced by its contradictory relation of mutual implication with capital—an asymmetrical relation in which labour is subsumed under capital. That is, for them, the proletarian subject cannot become autonomised from its relation with capital—so long as it is a proletarian subject. TC’s analysis makes the class relation historically relative, focusing on the ways in which the dynamic of capitalist accumulation in the period since the late 1970s has reshaped the relation between labour and capital, and the proletariat itself: the working class can no longer affirm itself in the face of capital by having its demands integrated into capitalist accumulation. This is the period TC call the ‘second phase of real subsumption’, in which proletarian reproduction is entirely dependent upon capitalist reproduction, and where there is no longer an ‘outside’ from the fully capitalist society. In this period, the wages-productivity deal ended, the labour movement and its demands were delegitimised, and labour began to be dealt with as a mere cost, as variable capital, a mere category of capitalist reproduction. In this situation, proletarians can no longer find something to affirm in their relation with capital, and this is why, for TC, the condition of being proletarian becomes itself a limit to be overcome. The implication of this approach is that, rather than being a question of consciousness, strategy or a political decision on the part of the subjects of struggle—a question posed by the ‘programmatism’ of the period when an affirmative workers’ identity defined the communist horizon as a workers’ society—the practices of struggle are born out of the contradictions that define the present condition of the proletariat and its social relation with capital. Subjects of struggle do not pre-exist, and the political work involved in recreating the workers’ revolutionary subject is meaningless, since there is no longer an objectivity to which it corresponds. Instead, TC look towards the potential emergence of subjects of communisation out of proletarian practices that hit against the limit of proletarian existence.23

That the affirmation of labour in class struggle is the affirmation of capital; that labour is not the transhistorical essence of Man’s relation with Nature that communism will liberate; the notion of the class contradiction as a relation of mutual implication between capital and labour, are very similar to the understanding of the class relation in the Open Marxism school, as well as Moishe Postone’s critique of labour.24 The difference is that, for TC, this is not an eternal truth that workers’ past revolutions ought to have recognised. This argument is only possible post festum, after the victories of historical class struggles and revolutions, and the defeat of the communist ideal of a

transitional socialist worker-managed society, which turned out to have been a capitalist society, in which exploitation and class continued to exist, and the ‘withering away’ of the state never arrived. Influenced by the Camattian rejection of communism as either a new workers’ society or a new mode of production, TC view communisation—a process of struggle that violently dissolves capitalist society through overcoming its own limits—as the only possible way out of a society really subsumed under capital. For this position, TC have been accused of catastrophism, of using a philosophically and historically unsound notion of subsumption, and of making an undialectical critique of capitalist society that leaves no space for embracing the positive advances of modern technology. Indeed, while TC maintain a notion of contradiction and historical overcoming, they reject the concept of Hegelian aufhebung, and, with that, any notion that the negation of the old world must also conserve it. In their own words, ‘Marx rejects that negation is conservation. This negation / conservation, the dialectical aufhebung, is rightly criticised by Marx as a religious sublimation of finite and sensible existence. There is no general substance which, as an (absolute) concept completes and maintains itself in its negation (man, labour, etc.).’ TC insist that the abolition of labour they speak about is not compatible with an abolition as aufhebung, which, in earlier texts such as the German Ideology, according to TC’s interpretation, denoted the liberation of labour from the ties that unite the world of capital, and not the abolition of the proletariat.

But while TC’s total critique of capitalist society may give no answers for the future, leaving no space for the traditional conception of communism as a just and rationally planned world that can be achieved through solid organisation and effective strategy, it does help identify the aporia, highlighted by this thesis, that is faced by contemporary social struggles in Greece: on the one hand, the dependence of proletarians for their subsistence upon the wage relation, with capital treating them as a mere cost to capitalist reproduction; and, on the other hand, the creation of increasing numbers of proletarians integrated into the wage relation as surplus, unable to constitute themselves as a class in the face of capital. The creation of extreme levels of unemployment in Greece over the crisis period, in conjunction with an increasing population of migrants attempting to enter Europe via the country, reflects this condition. Even though the class contradiction deepens, struggle and disparate social antagonisms no longer take the overt forms of class struggle that they used to when mass uprisings took place around the horizon of a worker-managed society.

Instead of decrying the lack of class unity, in a counter-intuitive move, TC have also argued against the traditional left common-sense of building unity as a pre-requisite of a successful strug-

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25 Jacques Camatte, ‘Against Domestication’ [In French], Invariance VI/II, no. 3 (1973).
26 ‘Über Die Kommunisierung Und Ihre Theoretiker’, Kosmoprolet, no. 3 (Fall 2011).
In the theory of the ‘swerve’ (l’écart), it is the internal distance in the practices and aims of struggles that is able to push these struggles beyond their internal limits.\textsuperscript{31} With class unable to be constituted on the basis of wage-labour and demand struggles, unity—and the universality of communism—can only be produced through the process in which the proletariat abolishes itself, through struggles that overcome their limits of identity; that is, the social separations reproduced by the capital relation. Such struggles may involve internal conflict, before these separations can really be overcome. This resonates with feminist, anti-racist and intersectional approaches to struggles that have advocated separatism as the way forward, as opposed to the political imposition of a unitary identity: unity cannot pre-exist in the mere idea of a common humanity, but it can only be produced through social transformation that really overcomes existing social divisions. One of the misunderstandings of this proposition of TC is that it suggests a voluntary abandonment of proletarian identity.\textsuperscript{32} On the contrary, TC diagnose the loss of class unity as the result of material social divisions, which can only be overcome through struggle. In this sense, their approach to gender similarly speaks of an abolition of gender not through women’s voluntary adoption of another identity in everyday life, but through the critique of the patriarchal relation between men and women, the gendered division of labour, and capitalist societies’ need to control proletarian populations through the control over women’s bodies, all of which reproduce women as women.\textsuperscript{33} TC then look towards communisation as a process of struggle that abolishes classes and genders, together with all the determinations of capitalist society.

In Greece, TC’s analysis resonated with the riots of December 2008,\textsuperscript{34} and with struggles in the early phase of the crisis, when parties and other forms of political mediation failed to carry much sway within emerging movements. Research for this thesis then began by engaging critically with the theoretical and methodological insights and assumptions of TC concerning the periodisation of class struggle, and the dynamic of the class relation in the crisis, which seemed to highlight the limits faced by struggles in the current period, as well as their potential. In doing so, however, it was necessary first to question the Eurocentrism and historicism of TC’s periodisation, since Greece’s history did not fit the narrative of a long social-democratic period in which labour demands were legitimised via a wages-for-productivity deal. Chapter II carries out this kind of criticism, while developing a periodisation specific to Greece, identifying cycles of struggle in recent Greek history. The chapter also serves as a response to theories of dependency and underdevelopment of the Greek economy and society, according to which Greece simply lags behind in developments that begin in capitalist ‘core’ countries. This attempt to understand Greek historical struggles leading up to the present crisis both at a local and within an international context already began

\textsuperscript{32} John Roberts, ‘The Two Names of Communism’, Radical Philosophy, no. 177 (February 2013).
\textsuperscript{34} They offered their own analysis of the riots in Théorie Communiste, ‘Le Plancher de Verre’ [The Glass Floor], in Les Émeutes En Grèce, ed. Théorie Communiste (Marseille: Senonevero, 2009).
to break with an approach according to which social struggles, and the relationship between the economic and the political, are explainable through abstract analysis of the capital relation.\textsuperscript{35}

After mid-2012, TC’s downplaying of ideology and politics in their analysis, and their limited theorisation of racialised domination as ‘contingent’ and less ‘essential’ than class and gender relations,\textsuperscript{36} began to seem even more problematic. As unformed political discourses that already existed in the squares hardened and polarised, practices of struggle in whose critique of social relations much hope was invested subsided, and mass demonstrations that rejected political parties were replaced by political representation, outspokenly racist nationalisms, and solidarity economies as welfare of last resort. TC themselves, similarly influenced by the failure of the ‘Arab Spring’ and the rise of far right and conservative tendencies in Europe, responded to these events by beginning to emphasise the moment of ideology, without, however, admitting that ideology was already important from the start, and, again, without a theory that could explain the rise of racism beyond references to ‘nostalgia’ for social democracy and the figure of the old patriarchal worker.\textsuperscript{37}

\textbf{FETISHISM AND IDEOLOGY}

How might we then approach the ideological mediation of struggles? More importantly, is it possible at all for the practices of struggles, through the immediacy of their social critique, to break through the veil of their actors’ self-understanding? If struggles indeed transform consciousness and produce new forms of subjectivity, this ought to be true to some extent. But perhaps the ‘new’ subjectivity produced through struggles is not necessarily closer to overcoming their ideological mediation. Here, persisting with an approach that would avoid what I see as a purely political or ideological understanding of struggle that is disconnected from a critique of the political economy (for example, the approaches of Badiou and Douzinas), I have attempted to understand ideological mediation by beginning from a conception of fetishism founded on practice, social validity, and the notion of the objectivity of ‘appearance’.

This concept of fetishism cannot be found consistently in Marx’s work itself, and, as I will show in discussions of class, value, and fetishism through the thesis, Marx’s inconsistent conception of the relationship between essence and appearance has been reproduced in Marxist uses of the concepts of fetishism and value. This inconsistency has been made clear in the analysis of the value-form and commodity-fetishism emerging from the Neue Marx-Lektüre school’s detailed analysis of Marx’s manuscripts since the mid-1960s. Specifically, Helmut Reichelt’s work, which is indebted to Adorno, has shown that Hegel’s conception of reality as appearance, as ‘objective

\textsuperscript{35} This is in contrast to the state-derivation debate, which will be briefly discussed below, as well as TC’s implicit assumptions about the political forms that corresponded to the period of growth up to the end of the 1960s, assumptions also implicit in some regulationist approaches. For further discussion see Chapter II.

\textsuperscript{36} Théorie Communiste, ‘Notes de lecture sur le Black Feminism’, Théorie Communiste, no. 24 (December 2014).

appearance’, and of an essence that is inconceivable beyond its appearance,\(^{38}\) is frequently contradicted throughout Marx’s oeuvre, from his early work to the famous section on fetishism in Capital Vol. 1 (in the discussion of Robinson Crusoe). In such moments, the content, or essence, is frequently conceived independently from appearance, or there is a view to its redemption from appearance. Nowhere has this inconsistency propagated itself more evidently than in the traditional interpretation of Marx’s conception of value, which, for Hans-Georg Backhaus, despite Marx’s most radical insights, does not fully move beyond the simple Ricardian measure of value by labour-time, which fails to distinguish between private and socialised labour (concrete and abstract labour).\(^{39}\) In the Ricardian conception, value becomes an essence as labour time, which can be conceived separately from its form, money.

Yet, as Backhaus strongly argues, money is not a mere appearance that distorts the reality of value as labour-time. ‘For Marx, money is no “mere sign” but semblance and reality at the same time: the objectified social connection of isolated individuals. “It (money) itself is the community and can suffer no other standing above it.”’\(^{40}\) The strength of the concept of fetishism and the associated concept of ‘real abstraction’, as offered by Alfred Sohn-Rethel, lies in the notion of objective conceptuality and of a social validity that goes beyond intersubjective validity, beyond the simple opposition between an ideal subjectivity and a material objectivity. The commodity-fetish is not a merely false appearance of a commodity that ‘hides’ its real essence, the reality of the labour process and exploitation. The appearance of the commodity, as the object exchanged with money, is produced by the very ‘act of exchange’.\(^{41}\) It is this social practice, mediated by money, which socialises the concrete labour of each individual, establishing the equivalence between different commodities, and, by extension, between qualitatively different labours. The social relations between private producers are an effect of the general exchangeability of goods, established in capitalism, positing a quantitative relation between qualitatively different commodities and types of labour. This sociality is mediated and effected by money as a universal equivalent that embodies the exchange value of commodities. The ‘real abstraction’ of abstract labour is, then, not produced by a mental abstraction or conceptualisation but through the generalisation of a social practice that establishes the mutual exchangeability of all the products of private labour, through their exchange as commodities, as a social fact. Abstract labour is not a quantifiable substance congealed in the commodity—Marx calls such an idea ‘absurd’\(^{42}\)—but nevertheless the act of exchange equalises


\(^{40}\) Ibid., 113.


\(^{42}\) When I state that coats or boots stand in a relation to linen, because it is the universal incarnation of abstract human labour, the absurdity of the statement is self-evident. Nevertheless, when the producers of coats and boots compare those articles with linen, or, what is the same thing, with gold or silver, as the universal equivalent, they express the relation between their own private labour and the collective labour of society in the same absurd form.’ Ibid., 80.
different types of labour and labour times expended in commodity production as if they were a substance.\textsuperscript{43}

Another important consequence of this is that abstract labour, the general concept of labour as expenditure of human energy or as ‘human interchange with nature’, is a concept that emerges only when the mutual exchangeability of all the products of labour is established as a global ‘social fact’—and this only takes place in capitalism,\textsuperscript{44} where commodities are already set equal in relation to money.\textsuperscript{45} Labour in general, labour conceived as quantifiable productive activity divested of all qualities, is not the eternal relation between ‘man and nature’ but only emerges in capitalist society.\textsuperscript{46} Understanding generic, quantifiable ‘labour’ as a historically relative concept and not as an essential feature of humanity is important if the content of ‘human’ is not to be taken as given but to be left open ended in the definition of communism.

The concept of fetishism as defined in the above explanatory digression recommends a break with the distinction between real material relations and social practice on one hand, and their ideal interpretation on the other. Hence, we can no longer merely speak of the ideological ‘mediation’ of struggles, or limit ourselves to ideology critique, but we also ought to seek the social validity of such ‘appearances’ in the social relations and social practices that form a part of capitalist reproduction.\textsuperscript{47} Seeking to understand the social validity of appearance orients us towards clarifying the links between the political and ideological tendencies emerging in social struggles, and the conditions and specificities of the current crisis that validate them (a crisis of financialised capitalism, of sovereign debt, of a monetary union), including the specific ways the crisis has been dealt with (monetary control, the devaluation of labour power). Based on this approach, I have then not aimed to offer a superior explanation for the crisis, which would demand a great deal of economic research that is beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, in Chapter III, I have been alert to the ways in which the fetish-forms of capital have been dealt with in oppositional analyses of the crisis. Many analyses, including Marxist ones, have at times left room for forms of fetishistic anti-capitalism, often precisely because of their tendency to separate value-as-essence from its monetary appearance, and concrete production from abstract value. But this fetishistic anti-capitalism is validated by the role of financial capital in the crisis. Here I have drawn on the contributions of

\textsuperscript{43} See also Michael Heinrich’s discussion on this in \textit{An Introduction to the Three Volumes of Karl Marx’s Capital}, trans. Alex Locascio (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2012), 49–52.

\textsuperscript{44} Karl Marx, \textit{Capital, Vol. 1} (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2003), 78–79.

\textsuperscript{45} Backhaus, ‘Dialectics’, 105.

\textsuperscript{46} On this there is an agreement, here, with TC, Moishe Postone and Werner Bonefeld.

\textsuperscript{47} This conception of fetishism can be difficult to distinguish from a materialist conception of ideology like the one proposed by Louis Althusser, defined as ‘the “lived” relation between men [\textit{sic}] and their world, or a reflected form of this unconscious relation’. Unfortunately, clarifying this relation is beyond the scope of this thesis. A start, however, has been made in the debate between Dimoulis and Milios, and Mike Wayne, in \textit{Historical Materialism}, Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar, \textit{Reading Capital} (New Left Books, 1970), 352; John Milios and Dimitri Dimoulis, ‘Commodity Fetishism vs. Capital Fetishism: Marxist Interpretations Vis-À-Vis Marx’s Analyses in Capital’, \textit{Historical Materialism} 12, no. 3 (15 August 2004): 3–42; Mike Wayne, ‘Fetishism and Ideology: A Reply to Dimoulis and Milios’, \textit{Historical Materialism} 13, no. 3 (1 August 2005): 193–218.
Michael Heinrich, and of Sotiropoulos, Milios, and Lapatsioras’s recent analysis of finance as both capital-fetish and a mechanism of governmentality.

**THE STATE AND THE CITIZEN, RACE AND GENDER**

The fact that the struggles in the Greek crisis, in the period examined, referred to themselves as democratic struggles, or as struggles of citizens (the civil society) against unrepresentative government, in conjunction with the state’s central role in implementing the restructuring and policing these struggles at a time when its sovereignty is in crisis, made the discussion of the state essential to this thesis. A Marxist approach to the state and its role in managing crises following state-derivation and regulation approaches, and particularly the contributions of Joachim Hirsch, proved useful in highlighting and explaining, to an extent, the more active role of the state in class struggle and the intensification of policing during crises. Yet the theorisation of the capitalist state as a form of abstract domination, which overcame the personal domination of prior modes of production, seemed unable to explain the permissiveness of the Greek state towards the vigilantism of Golden Dawn, that is, its permissiveness to direct, unlawful violence as an instrument of social control. This permissiveness lasted at least until September 2013, when Golden Dawn leaders were arrested for the murder of a Greek anti-fascist. The ethnic exclusivity of the subject of the citizen in the struggles of this period, and the rise of racist nationalisms, nationalist forms of anti-fascism, and gendered forms of social marginalisation and policing from 2012 onwards (see Chapters IV and V) signalled that an approach to the state, the citizen and civil society founded exclusively on an analysis of the capital relation would not be sufficient. The theory of governmentality that Sotiropoulos et al. bring forward in their work on finance, as a form of social power that transcends the state and contributes to its lack of autonomy and its crisis of sovereignty, already points beyond existing Marxist approaches to social control and the state, without necessarily being incompatible with them.

I have attempted to answer these theoretical problems and analyse this conjuncture by employing Foucauldian and Agambenian insights on biopolitics and state sovereignty, as well as the critique of law and right in the Marxist tradition, specifically that of Evgeny Pashukanis. Reinforcing sovereignty and the relationship between citizen and the state in the crisis, given supra-national financial governmentality, the shifting dynamic of the class relation caused by the restructuring, and the associated production of domestic and migrant surplus populations, comes to concern explicitly the separation of the ‘healthy’ political body, from a ‘diseased’ and abject marginal body that is racialised and gendered. The crisis has posed to the state the problem of the subsistence of a proletarian population superfluous to capitalist reproduction. This is a problem for capital as well as the state, to the extent that it deepens the economic and political crisis. The state’s attempt to manage the problem in this period was via reinforcing the traditional figure of the Greek male citizen,

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which, while failing to solve the political crisis, managed to bring it under temporary control. This approach highlights the limits to an assessment of this period’s struggles that remains uncritical towards their foregrounding of the subject of the citizen and celebrates the notion of a unified ‘people’, neglecting to problematise the forms of unity that both produce exclusions and enshroud existing forms of social domination under the liberal notion of equality implied by the concept of the citizen.

Despite the rise of anti-fascism after 2012 in response to Golden Dawn’s racist terror, in Chapter IV, I show that Greek solidarity towards migrants’ struggles left much to be desired, revealing the limits of political anti-fascism. Questions of gendered domination remained even less visible in the struggles of this period than those of racism, without many significant mobilisations questioning the worsening position of women in the crisis, as the dissolution of remaining welfare structures reinforced dependency on patriarchal family support structures.50 Protests against the increasing victimisation of non-heterosexual and non-cis-gendered persons were similarly marginal. As a result, the invisibility, or naturalisation, of gender in these struggles is also conspicuous in this thesis. In those struggles where gender played a role, with women taking initiatives, as in the local struggle against the Skouries goldmine, or in the struggle of laid-off public sector cleaners, women were united by their social role as carers, confined within the gendered division of labour.

Why might this have been the case? Not only the appearance of the crisis as an attack on the Greek nation as a whole, but also the hyper-masculine reaction, exemplified by Golden Dawn, to the emasculation of the ‘male provider’ in the crisis, meant that men were the most visible ‘victims’ of crisis, either as angry young men or as middle-aged male suicides.51 The figure of the citizen par excellence, the male (head of household) Greek national, was in crisis. This disguised, in a rather predictable way, the much higher rates of female unemployment, the extra work women were forced to carry out in the home, and their loss of benefits such as maternity leave, free healthcare when in labour, and access to free childcare.53

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50 The minute literature that exists to discuss gender in the Greek crisis has been inevitably discussing the invisibility of gender in studies of the impacts of crisis, as well as in the movements against austerity. Efi Avdelá, ‘To Fýlo Stín (se) Krísi Í Ti Symvainei Állos “Gynaikes” Se Chalepoús Kairoiús’ [Gender in [the] Crisis, Or, What Happens to “Women” in Hard Times], Sýgchrona Thémata, no. 115 (December 2011): 8–17.

51 This has been often called the ‘feminisation’ of the labour market. The concept is particularly telling if taken to signal the emasculation of the male provider in the crisis, which research by Konstantinos Konstantinidis in Greece has found to be associated with less sexual contact and increased male violence against women. This is also probably associated with the conservative backlash against feminism in many countries in the crisis, for example France and Poland. Konstantinos Konstantinidis, ‘The Impact of Memorandum Shock to the Sexual Behavior of Greek Population’ (5th Pan Arab Congress of Sexual Medicine, Dubai, UAE, 20 April 2013); Louise Morley, ‘Misogyny Posing as Measurement: Disrupting the Feminisation Crisis Discourse’, Contemporary Social Science 6, no. 2 (2011): 223–35.

52 The statistical data on the gender impacts of crisis are meagre. However, it is clear that in the crisis female levels of unemployment have been higher than those of men, more family members have been forced to share a household, more households have required in-house care for children and the elderly due to lack of welfare, and more women have been forced by employers to resign from their jobs when pregnant. Efi Avdelá has suggested that, for this reason, the crisis may have tended to ‘re-naturalise’ gender. Avdelá, ‘To Fýlo Stín (se) Krísi’, Maria Karamesíni, ‘Krísi, Gynaikes, Andrikí Tautótita’ [Crisis, Women, Male Identity], Kyriakí Augí, Enthémata, 29 October 2011.

53 The austerity measures have included the increase of patient contribution in public hospitals for childbirth to €800 for unemployed women (not covered by health insurance) and to €1,700 for migrants without papers.
As compounding the invisibility of struggles and questions around race and gender, here I would add the limits of Marxist approaches which reduce racialised and gendered domination to forms of appearance of the contradictions of capital. Although race and gender are naturalisations of existing social relations, and hence they concern to a great extent aspects of culture and ideology, the attempt to reduce, theoretically and ontologically, all social roles, conflicts, and struggles that occur in capitalist societies (as ‘appearances’) to the capital relation (as their ‘essence’) presumes that they are all equally explainable by an analysis of the circuits of the production of value, when they cannot be. More problematically, it may also imply that struggles in one sphere already and by definition benefit other spheres, as, for example in the assumption that class struggle creates the possibility to also question gendered and racialised domination, when in fact it can be actively reproducing those relations by affirming traditional social roles. TC’s theory, for example, while avoiding the latter error, speaks of two ‘essential’ contradictions (of class and of gender) emanating from the contradictory dynamic of capital, and relegates racial divisions to a ‘non-essential’ level. This approach is also evident in formulations that, in opposition to TC, insist that there is a single ‘logical’ contradiction, the moving contradiction of capital, which gives rise to the multiple social antagonisms of class, race, gender, and others.

These approaches seem far too neat. Eschewing an analysis of the aspects of these relations that are not explainable by the movement of capital, they tend to place inordinate weight on the logic and historical development of capital, and to set aside an engagement with histories of struggle around gender and race, or with those aspects of the relations that are affected, but are not fully explainable, by labour and capitalist reproduction. The attempt to understand how capitalist crisis impacts upon relations of racialised and gendered domination cannot focus exclusively on questions of labour, exploitation, and unpaid work, because that would leave out, for example, the role of direct violence in the reproduction of particular gender and sexual relations; the mechanisms of racialisation and of the development of racial identity, and the psychic processes that produce the forms of annihilating hatred and abjection associated with racism and sexism.

In this thesis I have taken a few first steps beyond this type of Marxist approach, pointing at the racialised and gendered constitution of civil society by drawing on the historical formation of race and ethnicity in the case of Greece. However, a consistent non-reductive theory of the interdependence of social relations of exploitation and domination is still very far from being achieved. This will require further research in the future that should combine historical and psychosocial approaches to racism, homophobia, and misogyny, which are only touched upon here.

Kindergartens have also been under pressure due to lack of funding and understaffing, so that fewer children have had access to kindergartens. Lína Giánnarou, ‘Ī “agórā” toketoú stín Elláda...’ [The childbirth ‘market’ in Greece...], Kathimerini, 9 July 2014; María Líliopoúlou, ‘Thesmo proscholíkísilikías se periódó krisís: paidíkoi statthmoi tou dimou tís Athínas’ [Pre-school institutions in crisis: Athens kindergartens] (Athens: Bodosaki lectures on demand, 2013).

54 R.S., ‘Conjuncture’; Théorie Communiste, ‘Black Feminism’.
THEORY AND EMPIRICAL STUDY, THEORY AND PRACTICE

The approach to researching social struggles that this project has adopted was the result of the broadness of the questions it posed and the fragmented nature of the struggles in Greece in the period examined. When the research project was at the proposal stage in 2011, during the movement of the squares, it had appeared feasible to carry out participatory action research informed by ‘movement-relevant’\(^\text{56}\) approaches to inquiry elaborated through research on grassroots social movements in Latin America, and particularly Argentina during the crisis of 2001–2003.\(^\text{57}\) This approach attracted me because I appreciated its attentiveness to the theory and problematics produced by social movements themselves, its orientation towards co-producing the knowledges that emerge from political praxis, and its attempt to break with the distinction between the researcher-as-subject and the object of research. According to that approach, researchers would have to challenge reflexively their own hypotheses, theoretical framework, social position and subjectivity; but also remain critical, without idealising social movements, fitting them into a predefined political-theoretical model, or providing intellectual leadership. Instead, the researcher would have to understand oneself as part of the situation and the social relations investigated. This method would enable me to examine the situation not as an external observer but as internal to the struggle while recognising the contradictions of my own position.

In practice, I soon discovered that this approach had a number of limitations in relation to what I wished to achieve. First, the movement of the squares, which had brought together previously separated elements of Greek society and political culture, was over by the time I began my research, and had become fragmented into a large number of local assemblies and other small projects. These constituted only one aspect of the struggles that took place during the crisis. There were also workers’ struggles, student mobilisations, local ecological struggles, and, soon, an anti-fascist movement and significant migrant uprisings in detention camps. It would be unfeasible to develop relationships with all of these movements, and a case study would probably not provide a representative picture of social struggles in the crisis.

The second limitation was epistemological. Participatory research assumed that, by analysing what people discussed and experienced within particular struggles and ‘co-producing’ research, a more genuine picture of the creativity and theoretical production of struggles would emerge. But although such experience undoubtedly provides important insights into processes of struggles, as well as into processes that transform political subjectivity, the ethic of the participatory research of struggles, akin to the activist ethic that rejects all forms of critique of struggles by non-participants, is based on a number of empiricist assumptions: (a) that the participants in a struggle are the only ones capable of theorising and contextualising their struggle because of their direct experience; (b) that the theory produced by struggles is only that discussed by participants within the struggle; (c)

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that one ought to develop immediate relationships with struggle participants before any critique of their discourse and practices can have any validity. Such empiricism would evidently make it impossible to carry out any kind of analysis of waves or periods of struggles without the accusations of theoreticism and of objectifying other people’s struggles. Indeed, this is a common accusation among militants, and it is one that anyone can launch against anyone, since no-one can ever participate in every struggle. Yet there is always the intellectual need to generalise in the process of self-criticism that is theory.

To carry out the more abstract theoretical work of discovering common threads and tendencies among the numerous smaller struggles that took place in this period, attempting a broader critical analysis that sets struggles in their context of social relations and historical conditions, I then based my research on limited insights from experience and discussions with movement participants, and a lot more on accounts and discussions found in blogs, forums, and political journals. There is, certainly, always the possibility of error and misapprehension of the internal conflicts and dynamics of movements through this route. This is why Chapter IV, on struggles, attempts to make up for this possible weakness by putting a lot of emphasis on supporting every generalising claim with several examples, despite this resulting in a rather lengthy text.

Yet the question of the limitations of producing a critical theory on struggles, which, in this case, is inevitably separated from the self-critical process of struggles, by existing within an educational institution, has not been answered. A social researcher can be in a position of power—particularly when one’s research is associated with mechanisms of the state and makes policy recommendations—reproducing the power relation between a capitalist government and the population that is its object. Academia is not an innocent safe haven of objectivity and of the disinterested pursuit of knowledge, but, to the extent that it is implicated with the state and its policies, it partakes in social relations from a particular position of power. Becoming disassociated from this relation of power is not a matter of choice or consciousness for an academic researcher. The dominant framework within which academic research is judged, the limits of its form, and the limits of the types of questions it can pose, are the limits of what ‘knowledge’ comes to mean within the restrictions of a capitalist society where intellectual and manual labour are divided, where ‘knowledge’ is a commodity produced by waged labour, and where the state can use this knowledge with a population as its object, regardless of the researcher’s subjective intentions.

Coming to the present research effort, the question then emerges of where it fits in this order. The broad philosophical and methodological background of this research, which is positioned both at a theoretical and at a social level, is not a general, universally accepted ‘apparatus of thought’, and it is far from being dominant even within the Marxist tradition. At a broader level, this tradition itself has historically come into conflict with a lot of what is taken as the standard modus operandi of the social sciences. Thus, my research, its theory and methodology, is obliged to make a case for itself in relation to two levels, two traditions of the ‘theoretical mode of produc-

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58 Althusser and Balibar, Reading Capital, 44.
tion’ in which it finds itself: first, in relation to the social sciences more broadly, and, second, in relation to the Marxist tradition. In a certain sense, it follows a heterodox trajectory whose aim is to be critical towards the dominant approaches.

In attempting to do so, this research project also faces an antinomy at the level of social relations. On one hand, it is located within the social division of labour that separates the activities that produce intellectual from those that produce material commodities. On the other hand, from the very start it locates itself within the problematic of communism. Having to negotiate this tension is also a negotiation of the relation between the researcher as subject and the ‘struggles’ as the object of knowledge. This tension cannot be overcome by means of a mere inversion of the subject-object relation by making the struggles—that is, the people who are involved in them—into the ultimate subject of activity and knowledge, as is often attempted in action research. Struggles do produce theory, but this theory is local and still subject to critique. Perhaps, the only critical way to subsist within such an antinomy is to problematise the autonomy of both the subject of the researcher and the subjects of struggle, in order to avoid as far as possible the fetishism of the individual decision-making subject, while admitting that the subject-object relation in the process of the production of theory and knowledge is an element of capitalist social relations that cannot be overcome short of the abolition of these social relations.

But the criteria of critique, and the relationship between theory and practice, within a problematic of communism today also have a historical aspect that turns this already difficult question into an aporia. If the practice of communism as ‘the real movement which abolishes the present state of things’ is what immanently critiques capitalist social relations, and not theory, in the form of the ideas and speculations of an isolated theoretician, where is this ‘real movement’ to be found today? Contemporary struggles, unlike the struggles of the past, including those of the late 1960s and early 1970s, do not refer to themselves as having any kind of horizon of overcoming capitalist social relations. Even in the most radical tendency of the anti-globalisation movement of the late 1990s and early 2000s—beyond its dominant radical democratism—anti-capitalist activism targeted banks and international institutions, distanced from a reality of weakened struggles for the transformation of social life, such as strikes. The anti-globalisation movement showed the limits of activism, that is, mobilisation in favour of ‘causes’ disconnected from the forms of exploitation and oppression experienced at an everyday level. What is, then, the ‘real movement’ which allows theory to speak of communism today? Current struggles, unlike those of the anti-globalisation movement, are to a great extent responses to an affront on labour and proletarian subsistence by those affected by it, and they encompass attempts to transform everyday life. However, they do not identify themselves as class struggle against capitalism. TC reasoned that proletarian practices are capable of going beyond their self-consciousness and ideology. However, during this crisis, practic-

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59 Ibid., 56.
60 These limits were identified by parts of the movement itself, as expressed in a pamphlet distributed and discussed in London and across Europe. Reclaim the Streets, Reflections on June 18. Contributions on the Politics behind the Events that Occurred in the City of London on June 18, 1999 (London, 1999).
es of struggle did find a limit in their self-understanding and ideology, as well as in the social conditions that reinforced and naturalised their dependence upon capitalist reproduction.

Aiming for an immanent critique, under such conditions, is difficult. It poses the question of how the Marxian problematic is internally relevant, and not arbitrarily and ideologically imposed, to the analysis of social struggles that are not the labour movement, and whose self-understanding does not involve the dimension of class. If we keep with the position that this self-understanding is not an ‘appearance’ to be dismissed as false consciousness, but, instead, maintain that the content of these social struggles ought be understood through the social experience and self-understanding of those who struggle, then the critique that questions this self-understanding must also proceed in the terms that are posed by it. This is what I have attempted to do through the analysis of the struggles of this period in Chapter IV, despite the difficulty of distinguishing between the social questioning posed by the struggles themselves and my own ethical stance, in my attempt not to overshadow the former by the latter. The movements themselves were not univocal but contained multiple voices, ethical stances, and internal disagreements, each of which faced different internal limits, dilemmas, and contradictions. My aim has not been to take sides, but to examine how these positions have been produced in this crisis, and how their participation in the reproduction of capitalist social relations posed obstacles to their ideals and highlighted their internal limits. The Marxian critique of political economy then proved itself apposite, despite the paucity of class-identification, just like feminist and anti-racist forms of critique were useful despite the lack of a feminist orientation in struggles. This is because the questions posed by struggles, which can form the basis of immanent critique, are not produced only by their critical discourse and self-awareness. They are also produced by the relation between their practices and discourse, and the broader (capitalist, patriarchal, Euro-suprematist) social relations in the historical conjuncture that forms their context.

Carrying out such a critique may not have made it easier to defend the view that the potentiality of an overcoming of exploitation and oppressive social relations can be identified as an immanent, though hidden, possibility of the practice of ongoing struggles. Yet the fact that, despite their defeat, struggles continue, and they do emerge at their strongest at times of capitalist crisis, suggests that this is a process whose emancipatory potential cannot be either reliably forecast or hastily dismissed. Carefully studying—and participating—in such struggles is the closest we will ever get to knowing.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW
Critically following the insights of TC’s approach to the periodisation of the capital relation, Chapter II aims to examine how the class relation developed in Greece in recent decades, through an examination of social struggles after the Metapoliteusi (1973). More specifically, it aims to trace the gradual decline in labour’s ability to launch successful demand struggles. In order to do so, it first attempts to develop a theoretical basis through a discussion of the history of capitalism that avoids the problems of TC’s Eurocentric historicism and its concept of subsumption, as well as the notion of peripheral temporalities that either lag behind, are dependent upon, or are entirely independent
from the history of the ‘centre’. The key is finding a balance between recognising the progressive element in capitalism’s historical expansion, while avoiding a progressivist view of history: capitalism’s expansion does not entail the disappearance of relations of production that are reminiscent of slavery, nor does it entail the progressive domination of the world by political forms that have been associated with capitalism, that is, the bourgeois liberal democratic form. Those parts of the world that do not conform to the ideal of what capitalism is meant to be, modelled upon countries like Britain, France, and Germany, are not undeveloped anachronisms, but they are local modes of adaptation to contemporary capitalism. The aim here is also to show that these local modes of adaptation are dependent upon local and international class struggle, and are not passive recipients of invasive capitalist expansion, but they are constitutive of transformations in global capitalism.

This is the perspective through which the rest of the chapter examines the case of Greek capitalism in the international context, discussing the formation and transformation of Greece’s particular class structure (after defining class through a criticism of Richard Gunn’s conception of class), and challenging theories of dependency and underdevelopment. Overall, the chapter attempts to show that the specificities of Greek capitalism can nevertheless be interpreted as synchronous with Western European developments because they are particular responses to those developments, and they together constitute the broader history of the European region. The local history and dynamics of class struggle in Greece have meant that the relative empowerment of labour through social democracy was only a temporary break. The dynamic of the class relation began to be reshaped in Greece through a neoliberal-style restructuring that started in earnest in the 1990s, and which mostly affected the younger generation, deepening the segmentation between an increasingly low-paid, precarious, and deregulated private sector, and a relatively protected, but increasingly outsourced, public sector. This restructuring was opposed by struggles that themselves changed in character through this period, in that they increasingly took place outside the sphere of production, culminating in the uprising of December 2008.

Coming to the current crisis, Chapter III examines how Greece’s sovereign debt crisis, including its economic and political aspects, and the restructuring that was imposed supposedly to address it, produced radical social and political transformations, as well as fetishistic forms of anti-capitalism. It considers theories of crisis, focusing on the debates around the falling rate of profit, financialisation, and critiques of the European Monetary Union. Following the critiques of Michael Heinrich and Sotiropoulos et al., it interrogates approaches that use a substantialising or personifying theory of value and capital, linking these personifications of financial capital with the anti-capitalist politics that emerged in the crisis. The appearance of finance as an external, international, parasitical force might be associated with the nationalism, citizenism, and democratism of the struggles against the restructuring. Drawing on Bonefeld’s analysis of the ordo-liberal foundation of the EMU, and the discussion of financial governmentality by Sotiropoulos et al., the chapter tries to explain the logic of the restructuring and question its appearance as purely imposed by forces outside Greece. Finally, the chapter considers how the restructuring further reshaped the class relation’s dynamic, class struggle and social struggles more broadly.
Chapter IV is the core chapter of the thesis: it is an account of the struggles that took place from 2010 to 2014, looking at their specificities and innovations compared to the struggles of prior periods, while offering a critique of their limits by placing the terms of their own self-understanding in the contemporary context of capitalist social relations. It consists of six sections.

The first section concerns labour struggles, and identifies, in the weakness of struggles, a distance between the ideal of self-management and the practices of workers’ blockades of workplaces in the inability to organise strikes. It discusses their respective relation to the workplace and how in the latter case there is a precarious, as well as ambivalent, relation towards it, betraying the central contradiction faced by proletarians in the crisis: while proletarian reproduction is entirely dependent on the wage relation, capital increasingly not only fails to guarantee this reproduction through that relation, but it also integrates proletarians into it as surplus to the requirements of capitalist reproduction.

In the second section, the squares movement and the mass demonstrations and riots that followed it until early 2012 are discussed. In the squares movement, a heightening of the level of protesters’ violence betrayed a crisis of politics and an ideological fluidity, which, nevertheless, never challenged the common—although fractured—subject of the Greek citizen. Self-organisation, occupations, and rioting were legitimised and spread beyond the squares. The demonstrations and riots in the months after the squares movement made clearer a division that had appeared in the squares between, on one hand, a questioning of financial institutions and politicians, and, on the other, a temporary interruption of private property and commodity exchange in riots. Yet the national element remained prominent in all the protests and riots, which cannot be said to have been ethnically inclusive.

The neighbourhood assemblies that multiplied after the movement of the squares are discussed in the fourth section, alongside self-organisation initiatives and ‘solidarity economies’. The questions of unity and internal divisions in interclass neighbourhood organising are highlighted as limits that led to their weakening. The meaning of solidarity in ‘solidarity economies’ is also interrogated through a critique of exchange relations and economic rationality. In the cases where forms of equivalence were surpassed, as in solidarity health centres and collective kitchens, this practice did not and could not evolve into a broader criticism of economic rationality.

The fifth section discusses the local environmental struggles of Keratea and Skouries, setting them in the context of the crisis, in which they unquestionably belong. Keratea can be seen as a precursor of the squares movement, with its anti-political discourse, its interclass composition, its ordinary patriotism and its level of violence. In Skouries, the contradiction between the proletarian need for the wage and capital’s destruction of basic resources for living was expressed in a fierce conflict between an anti-mining movement that cited environmental degradation, and pro-mining workers who defended their employers in return for jobs.

Finally, the last section discusses immigrants’ struggles as constitutively excluded by the anti-restructuring movement’s dominant subject, the national citizen. The split that followed the 2012 elections produced, on one side, a section of anti-austerity nationalism that turned against immi-
grants and won votes for Golden Dawn (GD), and, opposed to it, a section engaged in—frequently also nationalist—anti-fascism. This anti-fascism operated mostly at a political level, building true solidarity with immigrants’ struggles in only a few exceptional cases. Migrants’ struggles, in the face of extremely violent forms of policing and repression, questioned the racialising institution of citizenship, which the restructuring had thrown into crisis, by taking up public space, rioting in detention camps, and going on hunger strikes.

Chapter V considers the role of the nation-state as both an internal and an external limit of struggles: internal as nationalism, as appeal to the state, and as self-policing; and external as the state’s repressive apparatus and the persistence of international hierarchies. The undeniable rise of nationalism after the elections of 2012 was in the form of a retrenchment into two competing nationalisms, a leftwing anti-imperialist and a rightwing anti-immigration nationalism, both of which referred back to the civil war. This took place in parallel with an escalation of the state’s repression of struggles, attempting to isolate them as a ‘left’ phenomenon. The chapter provides the context of GD’s empowerment through a history of the Greek far right and its rise through the 1990s as immigration into Greece increased. The rise of GD in the crisis, however, is both attributable to a spontaneous rise in a nationalism, and to the active cultivation of racism and blatant legitimation of GD’s vigilante violence by this period’s governments and mainstream media. Here I look at nationalism not merely as an ideology, but as presupposing a specific nexus of asymmetrical social relations that are part of the process of capitalist reproduction, and which flared up in conflicts as part of its crisis: the capitalist division of labour, the relation between the dominant subject of the citizen and its exclusions, as well as relations produced through processes of racialisation and the reproduction of gender. State repression and social policing tended, in this period, to police the balance of power in the social relations that were disturbed by the crisis.

The state’s permissiveness towards vigilantism, and its own initiatives at victimising immigrants, non-mainstream genders and marginalised populations is interpreted as a crisis management technique, concerned with the biopolitical control of populations integrated as surplus into the wage relation. The concern with managing these populations was at the same time political, economic, and biological, to do with controlling their potential for civil unrest, and ensuring at least the impression, if not the reality, of combating potential threats to the health of the nation’s ‘body’, itself threatened with disintegration by the restructuring. The drive to protect this body, emphasised by the figure of the male national citizen and patriarchal head of household, also explains the more ‘grassroots’ concern to reinforce social hierarchies between ‘Greek’ and ‘foreign’ surplus proletarians, and to marginalise further non-heterosexual and non-cis-gendered persons, as well as female sex workers. In these tensions, what appears to be at stake is precisely those hierarchies, as the crisis disturbs the social statuses that previously stabilised them.

The thesis concludes that the struggles of this period in Greece were defined by the changing dynamic of the class relation effected by the crisis and the restructuring, which is a drastic deepening of the neoliberal restructuring already started in the 1990s. This shift has intensified a core capitalist contradiction: while proletarian reproduction is entirely dependent on capital and the
wage relation, capital not only fails to guarantee proletarian reproduction through that relation, but it also expels proletarians from it. In the face of this contradiction, the struggles of this period have responded ambivalently, failing to overcome its dilemmas. Weak labour struggles continued to seek a secure reintegration into the wage relation, while dominant struggles with the ‘Greek citizen’ as its core subject, continued to seek reintegration into a now-defunct social contract. The rise of the citizen-subject and of two competing nationalisms, a leftwing anti-imperialist and a rightwing anti-immigration nationalism, were responses that failed to surpass this impasse, facing the nation-state as their internal and external limit. Migrant struggles were then not only constitutively excluded by the movements against the restructuring, but the reaction against the unsettling of social hierarchies also played into the governmental effort to contain the political crisis, as well as its biopolitical management of immigrant and marginal, racialised and gendered surplus populations. The formation of a coalition government between SYRIZA and Independent Greeks in 2015 reflects, rather than betrays, the movements against the restructuring and the fetishisms that characterised their forms of resistance.
II. Periodising Greek Capitalism: Considering a ‘Semi-Peripheral’ Temporality

INTRODUCTION

This chapter attempts to address the question of the periodisation of capitalism and the class relation, and the place of Greek capitalism within such a history. The purpose of this periodisation is not to formulate an economic history but to understand historical shifts in the class relation and in class struggle in Greece, which I attempt to locate within the history of capitalism, not as an ‘exception’ but as a constitutive differentiation. I consider debates around Eurocentrism and historicism, as well as—briefly—the concepts of ‘subsumption’ and ‘primitive accumulation’. I argue that differential temporalities ought to be understood as becoming constitutively related to one another as global capitalism comes into being. Seeking a subject of resistance in a temporality ‘external’ to capitalism is flawed. The focus must then be the mutual constitution of the ‘model’ temporality of Western Europe and the USA, and Greece’s differential temporality, not only in terms of the development of the productive forces and cycles of accumulation, but also in terms of the dynamic of the power relations between classes as internal to those processes.

History will not be used here to look for historical precedents, but in order to identify the differences that help understand the present. Looking for patterns in historical precedents, with the unspoken assumption that history repeats itself, as is the case, for example, with journalistic comparisons of Greece in the early 2010s with Weimar Germany, would forestall a more complex understanding of the particular social dynamics of the present period. Avoiding an understanding of the present that is based on analogies with the past suggests an approach to history as the active social process that has come to produce the present, inevitably interpreted from the point of view of the present, while avoiding the progressivist notion of the present as a higher stage of development.

This entails a focus on everything that has changed: capitalism has not remained the same since the early 20th century and neither has the class relation. The global balance of forces has changed; there is no ‘eastern bloc’; industrial production is no longer solely located in the capitalist ‘centre’; social welfare is not promoted as an aspect of western civilisation but has been in a process of dismantlement; workers are losing access to the state as a mediator for the negotiation of the price of labour power; the value of labour power itself has been in decline in the ‘centre’. The fragmentation—even disappearance—of class identity that we notice today is then not a mere repetition of past weak periods of the labour movement but it is a product of the particular way in

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1 See, for a relatively sophisticated example, Paul Mason, ‘Love or nothing: The real Greek parallel with Weimar’, BBC News Europe, 26 October 2012.
2 See Chapter V for further discussion.
3 Talking about the declining value of labour power refers to the fact that, by and large, in the past 30 years, the wage, in order to be able to maintain the quality of life of proletarians, has had to be supplemented by credit. It also refers to the shrinking of the indirect wage received via welfare.
which capitalism has developed in the past 40 years, through crises and conflicts. This means that we therefore cannot reduce the history of class struggle to a series of victories and defeats as repetitions of the same power dynamic, between the eternal ambition for human emancipation on one hand and the machinations of capital on the other, the only difference being the balance of forces—in other words, a quantitative difference. The point of periodising is to identify these changes as central to the kinds of social contestation produced in different historical periods, as defined by their demands and real or imaginary horizons, and to avoid the notion either that their meaning is always the same, or that the only changes take place at the subjective level, due to ‘lessons learned’ or differential levels of ‘class consciousness’, ignoring material transformations.

This chapter is then an attempt, first, to trace this development by examining current theories and debates around the periodisation of 20th century capitalism and its methodology, and identifying some of the problems these approaches encounter. Second, it is an attempt to understand Greece’s history in relation to periodisations of global capitalism, which by definition lack local detail. The difficult task will be to contextualise the local specificities of Greece and understand what part they play in these global tendencies. Finally, in the following chapters, I will use these insights in attempting to draw some conclusions about the relationship of current struggles and social conflicts with their past, through an understanding of the specific kind of capitalism and the social and political history of Greece.

Looking at the relationship between the ‘centre’ and the ‘periphery’, and the position of Greece in particular, I will try to show that a contemporaneity should be assumed among various local capitalisms, rather than a mere coexistence of different unrelated temporalities. Contemporaneity does not suggest homogeneity, but that the internationalisation of capitalism imposes a degree of unity and interdependence in the production of differences, which develop simultaneously. Thus, a developmental teleology of more or less ‘developed’ regions, who differ with regard to their ‘advanced’ or ‘backward’ position along a linearly progressive time, must also be rejected: the fact that Greece coexists with Germany, and Uganda coexists with the USA, is not the result of differential rhythms of capitalist ‘development’ but rather the latter is a mere description of the local configuration of the class relation and model of accumulation developed in each region in response to international relations of trade, histories of colonialism, and other conjunctures. The fact that Greece is less ‘developed’ in terms of economic and industrial indicators does not render it a less relevant or a less paradigmatic example of the present. On the contrary, it is a particular example of

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4 For further discussion on this point, see Théorie Communiste’s critique of Gilles Dauvè’s When Insurrections Die (Antagonism Press, 1979), which sparked several responses and counter-responses (all of which are translated and published in Endnotes no. 1). Théorie Communiste take issue with the normativity of Dauvè’s history of struggles, whose limits are ‘defined in relation to Communism (with a big “C”) rather than in relation to the struggles of that period.’ The history of capitalism, then, for Dauvè, is understood in terms of ‘a contradiction in history’, that between ‘man and community’. Avoiding to look at the actual ambitions of struggles in each period he examines, Dauvè projects onto them a given Communist horizon, and interprets democratic reforms as betrayals by reformist unions and parties and as missed opportunities. This is precisely the type of history this thesis wants to avoid. Théorie Communiste, ‘Normative history and the communist essence of the proletariat’, Endnotes, no. 1 (October 2008), 76–89; Gilles Dauvè, ‘Human, all too human?’, Endnotes, no. 1, 90–103.
a capitalist society in a particular interconnected position within the hierarchy of national states. An analysis of the present is not the analysis of the ‘most developed’ capitalist state or region.

Postcolonial studies have addressed similar questions in the past few decades, criticising the historicism of a centre-periphery model that follows the logic of ‘first in Europe, then elsewhere’, in a ‘denial of [the] coevalness’ and mutual constitution of these different temporalities, conceiving of Europe as the ‘origin’ and the ‘elsewhere’ as the passive recipient of capitalist social relations. Chakrabarty’s work is relevant in that respect. He promotes a ‘subaltern historiography’ that can account for the pluralism of the history of power in ‘global modernity’, against ‘universalist narratives of capital’ which assume that ‘capitalism necessarily brings bourgeois relations of power to a position of hegemony’. Chakrabarty is interested in the non-elimination of cultural difference and ‘non-rational’ political and cultural forms in global capitalism, arguing that the self-presupposition of capital does not subsume all of living experience. He calls this living experience a ‘history 2’, a ‘politics of human belonging and diversity’ which coexists with capital’s logic conflictually or indifferently. Yet Chakrabarty problematically isolates this ‘history 2’ as a purely subjective and even a general anthropological phenomenon (the relation between ‘humans and tools’), independent of the objectivity of life in capitalism, understanding politics as a question of subjectivity. This becomes clearest when he criticises as ‘historicist’ E. P. Thompson’s argument that time-discipline will be imposed in the ‘developing world’ sooner or later. Chakrabarty argues that this has struggled to take place, citing the stereotypes of Indian ‘laziness’ and lack of a protestant work ethic. He fails to grasp the imposition of time-discipline as not a matter of ethic but a matter of force. Those who today work in India’s industrial areas, or even those who work for the micro-capitalists of slums, are subject to a time-discipline that is immensely stricter than what may be imposed on European workers nowadays (and perhaps this is a difference that we should be more concerned about). Time discipline is not a matter of culture, subjectivity, and ethics, but a matter of local modes of value production and values of labour power.

Universalism, then, does not necessarily have to mean a monoculture but we have to investigate the precise ways in which the becoming-universal of capitalism does not produce sameness but multiple particularities, which are, nevertheless, still capitalist. These particularities should not be understood as exceptions to a dominant form of capitalism, but as themselves defining what capitalism is today. If today’s capitalism is conceived as a dynamic whole that has been historically produced through its tendency to become global through the expansionist tendency of market competition, it becomes increasingly difficult to conceive of local differences as indifferently coex-

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7 Interestingly, this ideology is reversed by Greek nationalism which places its ‘ancient heritage’ at the heart of the project of the Enlightenment, and claims its ownership, even though during the Enlightenment Greek nationhood had barely emerged, essentially only as an idea and a desire for the Greek merchant-bourgeois-intellectual class.
8 Chakrabarty, ibid., 14.
isting alongside each other, or as mere exceptions. Rather, these differences become reshaped in a conflictual and constitutive relation to each other, producing a complex and multiply contradictory capitalist totality. Similarly, we could argue that ‘corrupt’ states that do not seem to follow all the rules of the bourgeois rationality of citizenship and rights—with many European states fitting that description, including the Greek state—follow a different rationality: one constituted by legal exceptions, arbitrary mechanisms of domination and ‘irrational’ populist discourses, which are nevertheless rationally adapted to local social, cultural, and political histories, by reconstituting existing differences within and as part of a globalising dynamic of accumulation. ‘Peripheral’ states and regions may have entered this globalising dynamic contingently, through a series of colonial and post-colonial wars and struggles; but once they are part of this dynamic, social reproduction in each state or region depends on capitalist accumulation, and so, social life in it cannot be said to have an independent history or temporality.

A closely related debate, also reignited most recently by Massimiliano Tomba’s book on the temporalities of capital, concerns the use of the concepts of formal and real subsumption to designate historical periods of capitalism. One reason why controversies around the concept of subsumption continue is because Marx’s own definition is unclear, or unsatisfactory. On one hand, Marx outlines a historically progressive subsumption of labour under capital, moving from ‘transitional forms’, whereby a pre-capitalist labour process is unaltered by the capitalist; to formal subsumption, defined by the generalisation of the wage relation and the prolongation and intensification of ‘pre-existing’ labour processes under the economic compulsion of this relation; to the real subsumption of labour under capital, which he calls ‘the capitalist mode of production proper’, and where the labour process is revolutionised scientifically through the development of production technologies. Real subsumption ‘develops the productivity of labour, the amount of production, the size of the population, and the size of the surplus population.’ At the same time, Marx implies that these labour processes can coexist temporally and spatially, either as residues (merchant capital) or, again, progressively: real subsumption can become the basis for formal subsumption as capitalism expands into new areas of production, in order to then proceed again to the stage of real subsumption.

Given such a definition of the forms of subsumption, the notion of a ‘period’ of real subsumption appears absurd. It is obvious that today low-technology capitals still exist. Entire sectors of the economy depend on labour processes that are best described as formally subsuming labour (for example, the South Asian garment industry), while sectors that could be described as really subsuming labour, such as China’s electronics industries, heavily depend on the extraction of absolute surplus value. Yet this notion may become slightly less absurd if we speak of the subsumption of society under capital, not just labour. This is a departure from Marx, for whom the impact of the transformation of the labour process on social transformation is unclear, although he does mention

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10 See also Chapter V.
briefly that with formal subsumption the ‘general form of society’ is shaped by the wage relation, a relation of economic compulsion and not direct domination. Writers such as Camatte, Adorno, Negri, and Théorie Communiste (TC) have written about the real subsumption of society or life under capital.

TC’s account, which is more relevant to this discussion, identifies the shift to real subsumption in the beginning of the 20th century. Their argument is that, in the period of formal subsumption, there was a possibility for labour to organise itself as an autonomous subject for itself, because proletarian reproduction was not yet fully integrated with the circuit of the reproduction of capital. Once this change began to take place, not only with the expanded extraction of relative surplus-value, but also with the ‘disappearance of small-scale agriculture’ and capital’s domination over the means of consumption (department II), it affected ‘all social combinations, from the labour process to the political forms of workers’ representation, passing through the integration of the reproduction of labour-power in the cycle of capital, the role of the credit system, the constitution of a specifically capitalist world market (not only merchant capitalist), the subordination of science’, amounting to a real social transformation. This social transformation, which they call the real subsumption of society under capital, turned capitalist reproduction into an organic system that creates its own presuppositions, instead of merely dominating already existing systems of reproduction. It entailed the integration of the circuits of reproduction of capital and of the proletariat, meaning that the latter can no longer posit itself as an autonomous subject. The class relation is reshaped into one of mutual implication: the proletariat cannot affirm itself as a revolutionary subject without at the same time affirming capital and its own existence as proletariat, that is, as the exploited class.

This conception of subsumption has been heavily criticised recently, on the basis that, first, formal subsumption is a logical prerequisite of real subsumption and therefore still coexists with it, and, second, that the idea of the subsumption of society under capital is conceptually absurd, since society cannot be said to be subsumed under capital in the same direct way in which the labour process becomes identical with capital. Society is transformed as a result of real subsumption, but it does not itself become subsumed, as this would entail the identification of all life and subjectivity with capital. A further argument against TC’s periodisation concerns its schematicity and lack of precision. Endnotes have employed Brenner and Glick’s arguments against the periodisation of the regulation school, to address this schematicity. Brenner and Glick’s historical analysis shows that

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13 Ibid., 427. I return to questions of direct domination in the labour process in Chapter V where I discuss the labour of immigrants in Greece.
14 Jacques Camatte, Capital and Community (Unpopular Books 1988), 43.
18 Ibid., 109.
19 R.S., ‘Present Moment’.
20 Endnotes, ‘The history of subsumption’.
21 Ibid.
neither the disappearance of small-scale agriculture nor the cheapening of consumer goods can be historically linked with the extraction of relative surplus value, which the regulation approach has described as part of the Fordist period.23

Similarly, Tomba’s work on multiple temporalities, grown from a debate within Italian post-autonomist Marxism, challenges periodisations that use the concept of subsumption, arguing against Eurocentric historiography. Agreeing with Chakrabarty,24 he argues that the identification of formal subsumption with manufacture and real subsumption with industrial capital, and hence, the use of the concepts of formal and real subsumption to describe historical transition, is historicist. Tomba emphasises the different coexisting temporalities of capitalism, and quotes Marcel van der Linden’s assertion that slavery is not an anomaly in capitalism. Capitalism is compatible with different forms of labour, including slavery and non-waged labour.25 He puts it convincingly:

[T]he introduction of new machinery is not a pre-determined route in the history of all countries; rather, on the contrary, different capitals in head-to-head competition with each other in the world-market must seek-out or create geographical areas with different labour-powers having different wages and productive powers. If the reciprocal implication of the various forms of surplus-value are [sic] grasped, then it is only out of faith in some progressive and Eurocentric philosophy of history that it is possible to consider some forms of production as ‘backward’, and [formal modes of] wage-labour, extended to the whole world, as residual.26

Similarly, Tomba quotes George Caffentzis’ argument that “new enclosures” in the countryside must accompany the rise of “automatic processes” in industry, the computer requires the sweat shop, and the cyborg’s existence is premised on the slave.27 Different modes and intensities of exploitation co-exist simultaneously. Temporal ‘exceptions’ and differentials are constitutive of capitalist competition and the international hierarchy of the division of labour: global capitalism by definition cannot exist as homogeneous. These exceptions are not external to the dynamic of capitalist expansion but are necessary parts of it.

These critiques are convincing. TC’s conception of the succession of cycles of struggle is problematically historicist: each new cycle is said to be an ‘overcoming’ of the limits of the previous cycle, though this can only be asserted from the ‘point of view’ of the new cycle looking back. As mentioned earlier, the active social process that has come to produce the present is inevitably interpreted from the point of view of the present; however, this does not necessarily need to entail the

24 Chakrabarty, Provincialising Europe.
construction of a history that leads up to the present progressively. Yet the point to emphasise here, and perhaps to draw from TC’s periodisation, is a methodological one, and it concerns the mutual constitution of the class relation and the development of the productive forces. TC’s concepts of the ‘cycles of struggle’ aligned with ‘cycles of accumulation’ identify historical turning points in periods of deep crisis, which have sparked equally deep restructurings, affecting not only the labour process but also the forms of reproduction of the class relation and of society itself. In this way, TC’s method usefully draws attention to historical breaks in the configuration of the relation of exploitation and the forms that class struggle has taken as part of this configuration. The importance of crises in their periodisation leads them to identify the crises at the start of the 20th century and in the 1970s as the two major turning points, corresponding to the changing character of class struggle after the October revolution and after ’68. After the latter crisis, in the phase of the ‘neoliberal’ restructuring, a contradiction emerges, as labour is both fully dependent on capital for its reproduction and at the same time it is pushed out of production. In the cycle of struggles of this period, TC highlight instances of desperate proletarian struggle that culminates in riots and factory burning: no longer able to affirm workers’ demands, these struggles come to face proletarian identity as an ‘external constraint’. 

The present crisis of the class relation is then said to have been produced after the crisis of the 1970s. To examine this further, it is not necessary here to enter into the debate among Marxist theories concerning the causes of the crisis: the falling rate of profit, overaccumulation, underconsumption, or disproportionality. I agree with Simon Clarke that a Marxist analysis of crisis need not privilege the site of production, or look for one single ‘causal’ contradiction, but ought to look at the limits to the entire circuit of capitalist reproduction. Beyond a general theory of crisis, and despite objections to characterising the prior phase as ‘Fordist’, an important shift did take place in the 1970s, and it is crucial to examine the elements of the previous model of accumulation that underwent a crisis and the characteristics of the new model that replaced it. Again, the analysis of the regulation school has been the most influential, and its impact on TC’s account is evident. Aglietta’s concept of ‘regimes of accumulation’, defined as historically-dominant forms of surplus-value production, is mirrored in TC’s ‘cycles of accumulation’, in that it also focuses on the wage relation and the modes of articulation between production and consumption. The regulation analysis, in its various tendencies, has focused on economic transformations and their international variations in ‘core’ and ‘peripheral’ economies, but its great credit has been its linking of trans-

29 They call this phase ‘the second phase of real subsumption’, which is similarly contestable—and contested, by Endnotes.  
30 These instances, for TC, in their questioning of proletarian existence, announce the possibility of ‘revolution as communisation’. R.S., ‘Present Moment’, 95.  
33 Aglietta, Capitalist Regulation.  
formations in the sphere of accumulation to social and political transformations at the level of state and its institutions, which aim to increase compatibility with the market (‘modes of regulation’). A strand that was particularly concerned with the ‘post-Fordist’ forms of politics and state was developed by Joachim Hirsch, Josef Esser, Roland Roth, and Bob Jessop, as a continuation to the ‘state-derivation’ debate, and was called the ‘Reformulation of State Theory’.35

According to the regulation and reformulation approaches, the economic, social, and political transformation, mediated by the crisis of profitability of the late 1960s and early 1970s, involved the following aspects, which, by today, are immediately recognisable as part of the neoliberal project. (i) The transition from a model founded on linking mass production and mass consumption to one where production and consumption are decoupled.36 (ii) A rise in the organic composition of capital through the introduction of new types of technologies: computers, new communication technologies, microelectronics, and biotechnology.37 The cost of this rise pushes for a respective reduction in the costs of variable capital. (iii) State regulation of the wage relation via collective agreements and social security (direct and indirect wages to those unable to work) is dismantled via labour market deregulation and the marginalisation of unions. The state partakes in reducing the cost of labour power’s reproduction, in response to the difficulty of maintaining wage increases below rises in productivity.38 (iv) The organisation of labour is fragmented through de-industrialisation and privatisation, as well as through the creation of a segmented labour market, consisting of a ‘core’ unionised labour force and a ‘peripheral’ precarious, flexibilised, low-paid and non-unionised workforce. The peripheral segment is associated with an increase in unemployment and irregular work, and the expansion of a self-exploitative informal or co-operative sector.39 We might add outsourcing and the introduction of individual contracts as contributing to the atomisation of workers. (v) The replacement of welfare by workfare, that is, at a more abstract level, the subordination of national social and labour market policies to international competition.40 (There will be more discussion on this, in terms of the regulating role of finance, in Chapter III.) (vi) The privatisation, or subjectation to commercial criteria, of state-owned industries because bureaucracies are said to pose barriers to technological innovation.41 Today we can say that the effect of this was a further reduction in direct and indirect wages and the downward redistribution of costs for basic infrastructure.42 (vii) A new international division of labour that produces new industrial centres in ‘newly industrialising countries’, where production is outsourced, and declining de-industrialised

36 Aglietta, Capitalist Regulation.
38 Ibid.
41 Aglietta, Capitalist Regulation, 430.
42 James Meek, Private Island: Why Britain Now Belongs to Someone Else (Brooklyn: Verso, 2014).
cities, which the state attempts to regenerate through culture and gentrification.\textsuperscript{43} (viii) The ‘post-Fordist’ state form abandons the ‘Fordist’ consensual mode of social integration and, in addition to bureaucratic surveillance, it tends towards more repressive methods of social control. Despite its anti-statist discourse, this is characterised as an authoritarian form of state with totalitarian tendencies.\textsuperscript{44}

The regulation approach sparked earnest debate between its adopters and critics, the latter coming mostly from Open Marxist and workerist perspectives. The core critiques—which nevertheless accept regulation as the most sophisticated account of this historical shift—can be summarised as follows: (a) the account is structural-functionalist in that it asks how regulative forms are functional and overlooks contradictions in the social relations that impinge on their forms of mediation;\textsuperscript{45} (b) it disarticulates structure and struggle, and undermines the agency of workers’ struggle;\textsuperscript{46} (c) a strategic concern—‘[p]arts of the British left use this debate in such a way as to condemn militancy (for example, the miners’ strike) and to abandon “ambitious demands”’.\textsuperscript{47} The charge of defeatism is perhaps the least convincing of these critiques: in Britain, the movement against Thatcher’s neoliberal restructuring was defeated indeed; not only did the New Right win, but its mode of economic management won, notably through its continued implementation by New Labour. The regulation school analysis provides a way of understanding how this was not merely a temporary ideological victory but the establishment of a new logic of state economic management and hence the management of class struggle. While the Open Marxist anti-functionalist insistence on the role of class struggle in changing the course of these tendencies is correct, attention to the role of struggle in transforming modes of accumulation, state management and the class relation demand also attention to \textit{historical shifts in emerging forms of struggle}. ‘Working class struggle’ cannot be taken for granted as an agent of change in a predetermined direction; its content and aims cannot be taken as given, and this is precisely why an examination of the role of social struggles in these transformations is necessary. It is here that we can see the strength of TC’s approach: historical shifts in cycles of accumulation coincide with cycles of struggle, and the latter are not simply understood as the classic struggle between capital and labour, but are taken to undergo qualitative change from one cycle to the next.

While, then, specifying the dominant labour process in each of the periods identified always involves an error-prone generalisation, it is not contestable that the two major crises of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century were important turning points for the paradigms of capitalist accumulation and corresponding modes of restructuring that followed them. TC’s diagnosis of the condition of the proletariat in the ‘neoliberal’ period seems insightful, considering the treatment of labour rights, wages,

\textsuperscript{44} Aglietta, \textit{Capitalist Regulation}, 386; Hirsch, ‘Postfordismus?’, 335.
\textsuperscript{45} Bonefeld, ‘Reformulation’, 46–47.
\textsuperscript{46} Bonefeld, ‘Reformulation’; Ferruccio Gambino, ‘A Critique of the Fordism of the Regulation School’, \textit{Common Sense}, no. 13 (June 1996); Clarke, ‘Crisis of Fordism’;
\textsuperscript{47} Bonefeld, ‘Reformulation’, 37.
and social welfare (the indirect wage) as impediments to capitalist accumulation, in opposition to the prior ‘wages-productivity’ deal. Yet TC’s regulation-influenced conceptualisation of a global cycle of struggles might be a little too uniform, concentrating, as it does, on transformations that were characteristic of the post-WWII period in Northern Europe and the USA. Again, this experience does not always correspond with that outside this ‘core’ area, and not with that of Greece, which is our interest here. In this respect, TC have not paid enough attention to particular histories of class struggle and politics outside the ‘core’ and their inter-articulation with ‘core’ history, in a way that would recognise their constitutive role in the production of international tendencies.

This type of work with regard to Southern Europe has been partially undertaken by one of the regulation school proponents, Alain Lipietz. He used the concept of ‘peripheral Fordism’ to discuss industrialisation and corresponding political forms in countries outside what he called ‘central Fordism’ (mainly Northern Europe and the USA), but more industrialised than those of ‘primitive Taylorism’. Peripheral Fordist countries, for Lipietz, were Fordist because their home market played an important role in their accumulation regime, but they fell short of developing their own skilled manufacturing and engineering, and demand in them was not institutionally adjusted to productivity gains. Looking into the cases of Portugal, Spain, and Greece, Lipietz compared with central Fordism each country’s agricultural and manufacturing exports and their productivity/wages ratio in the 1960s, when all three economies underwent rapid growth and industrialisation. This growth declined with the ’70s crisis, allowing him to speak of a crisis of Fordism also in these cases. Yet Lipietz attributed, in a functionalist way, the dominance of dictatorships during the ‘Fordist’ period, and their almost simultaneous fall that coincided with the crisis, to the emergence of a bourgeoisie who wished to impose the political form that presumably matched Fordism: social democracy. Lipietz’s categorisation then does not help us understand these cases as much more than exceptions to the Fordist rule that had to come back into line, even as late as in the moment of crisis. Local specificities still remain unexplained and are insufficiently articulated with the dominant history.

Yet if we are to move beyond a global homogeneous history and a progressivist historicism, as well as abandon an imprecise concept of subsumption, it is also important to avoid articulating the local and ‘peripheral’ as dependent upon the ‘central’ mode of production or regime of accumulation, or even as somehow forming a kind of pre- or anti-capitalist externality. The notional ‘permanence’ of primitive accumulation has been used to support such arguments. Originating in the Luxemburgian tradition, the permanence of primitive accumulation has fed into anti-imperialist theories of dependency, whereby class struggle cannot be distinguished from the competition between national capitals, as will be further discussed in the next section. In a similar vein, in the post-autonomist line of thought, permanent primitive accumulation denotes a continuing struggle be-

48 Théorie Communiste, ‘Communization in the present tense’, 43.
49 Lipietz, Mirages, 69–112. ‘Primitive Taylorist’ countries are called those whose economy is driven towards exporting the products of a labour-intensive production process (and a low paid labour force) such as textiles and microelectronics.
50 Ibid., 113–130.
tween the violent imposition of the wage relation through dispossession and the persistence or creation of ‘commons’, i.e. resources and communities that permit subsistence outside the wage relation. Tomba, for example, follows Caffentzis and Bonefeld in arguing for the permanence of primitive accumulation, defined as the state violence that synchronises ‘different temporalities … to the world-rhythm of socially-necessary labour’. There is no doubt that such violence exists and that capitalist reproduction is not only maintained through the automatic compulsions of capitalist accumulation but also through active strategies of dispossession (consider the ongoing proletarianisation of Chinese and Indian peasants, or the privatisation of natural resources). However, to call this process a permanent ‘primitive accumulation’ has further implications. Because of its Marxian use to describe the capitalist domination of pre-capitalist modes of production, the concept of primitive accumulation presupposes the externality, and thus the revolutionary potential of the ‘different temporalities’ and ‘commons’. Indeed, Caffentzis advocates struggles that resist this ‘continuing primitive accumulation’, for being, or at least for having the capacity to create, ‘common’ social spaces and relations outside of the capitalist logic. Yet the championing of struggles that defend access to the land or of self-managed communes can be uncritical if it fails to look at how such struggles may often in fact reproduce aspects of capitalist social relations. This is not merely a question of external co-optation. For example, struggles of small property owners in village communities against the devaluation of their land by industrial capitalist projects are not strictly anti-capitalist but often defend a different type of ownership and capitalist exploitation. Self-managed projects (alternative economies) can also easily become self-exploitative or reproduce existing inequalities. Such projects and struggles, which emerged quite prominently in Greece during the present crisis, are discussed in detail in Chapter III.

To risk a diagnosis, this attachment to the concept of ‘permanent primitive accumulation’ is perhaps based on the assumption that struggle is not possible unless it emerges from or has access to a non-capitalist ‘outside’ on which it can draw, or to which it can escape. This transhistorical ‘outside’ might be subjective or objective in character and has been many things in the history of Marxian and Marxist thought: ‘human interchange with nature’ (Marx of the early manuscripts), the human community (Camatte); the commons (Caffentzis); social reproduction as the reproduction of ‘life’ (Federici); the human subject (Holloway). The problem with such an ‘outside’ is that it makes the class relation into an external relation between the logic of capital on one hand, and the human on the other. It either fails to recognise the social as a capitalist social or it seeks a non-social externality in which to locate revolutionary subjectivity. But social reproduction, human needs, human exchange with nature, natural human powers or natural drives cannot be asserted to exist as

52 Tomba, ‘Historical Temporalities’, 56.
53 Caffentzis, Blood and Fire, 88–92.
54 Camatte, ‘Against Domestication’.
pure, unaltered givens outside capitalist reproduction, capitalist needs, capitalist wage-labour, capitalist and patriarchal naturalisation, and market-produced desires; and this is because all of these things were always already social, and are characteristic of contemporary sociality.

While the concept of subsumption may then be unsuitable to periodise world capitalism, and any attempt at a global periodisation will always be an imprecise generalisation, it might still be useful to speak of the domination of the logic of capitalist accumulation over all kinds of seemingly non-capitalist or pre-capitalist social relations (even though the latter may coincide with a variety of political forms), and to assert the fictional status of a natural, genuinely human or pre-capitalist externality as the source of resistance. Capitalist domination came into being over time through a process of primitive accumulation that has virtually ended, and has been succeeded by a process of internal capitalist transformation. The critique of the capitalist world is also of this world; it is generated by it, and it faces its own limits within it. This may help explain the near-impossibility of creating communities of flight that can survive outside capitalist social relations, as well as our contemporary difficulty to even imagine a future non-capitalist world that also does not reproduce failed socialist models of the past. Accessing alternative means of subsistence to avoid wage-labour or creating self-organised ‘common’ spaces is then not the creation of non-capitalist enclaves, but it is an attempt by supernumerary proletarians to adapt to a new condition where neither the wage, nor the indirect wage (welfare) guarantees their subsistence any longer (see also Hirsch’s argument on the growth of informal and co-operative sectors in ‘post-Fordism’).

After discussing all of the above propositions and caveats, we may be a little closer to a methodology of periodisation of the class relation and social struggles in their contradictory complexity, which can help contextualise historically and internationally the struggles in the crisis period considered. The attempted partial periodisation of Greek capitalism will then not be conceived solely from the point of view of economic and political history or of the modalities of exploitation. Conceiving of capital as a historically evolving social relation, the focus becomes a periodisation from the point of view of the relationship between the dynamics of this relation and social struggles. In this sense, the turning points that define the periodisation relevant here are periods of crisis and significant shifts in the conduct of social struggles. Critically starting from TC’s attempt to periodise cycles of struggle alongside cycles of accumulation we can then attempt to identify the relationship between an admittedly Eurocentric, singular history and the ‘exceptions’ and variable temporalities found in Western Europe’s ‘periphery’ and particularly in Greece.

GREEK CAPITALISM AND CLASS STRUCTURE

The Case of Greece

Coming to the case of Greece, the first thing to note is that within Greek Marxist historiography itself, the debate of how Greece’s capitalism relates to the Western European history of capitalism is far from resolved. Two polarised positions have persisted in the past three decades. The first, and

57 Hirsch, ‘Postfordismus?’. 
most traditional, position argues that Greece’s capitalism, and Greece as a nation-state, has always been in a relation of dependency with the imperialist capitalisms of the West, a relation which has caused and reproduced Greece’s less-developed capitalism. This has been the official anti-imperialist/left-nationalist position of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) and of many Marxist-Leninist academics, but it is a view that also draws on the long history of theories of imperialism that use the centre-periphery model, from Luxemburg to Wallerstein. The second perspective minimises the different characteristics and differential timing of the development of the productive forces in Greece, arguing that those differences are not significant enough to warrant a separate periodisation. The view of Milios and Sotiropoulos is the most extreme of the latter, and perhaps the most unusual, in entirely rejecting theories of dependency and centre/periphery models, as well as theories of globalisation, without, however, doing away with a Leninist theory of imperialism. Milios and Sotiropoulos, insisting on the Althusserian concept of the ‘social formation’ that contains multiple modes of production, and on a concept of social capital that does not exceed national boundaries, maintain that the international realm consists of the interrelationships between ‘developed’ social formations that compose an ‘imperialist chain’ and ‘undeveloped’ social formations that contain pre-capitalist modes of production within them. For them, class struggle takes place within every social formation and, again, does not exceed the boundaries of social formations, despite Milios and Sotiropoulos’ own best insights regarding the mediating role of the market and finance (to which I will return in the next chapter). The political debate behind this polarisation is one between the nationalist anti-imperialism of traditional Greek communism and an anti-nationalist criticism that emphasises the power of Greek capital and its own imperialist character in the Balkans and the Mediterranean.

The problem that none of these positions addresses satisfactorily is that of the dynamic between the different temporalities of capitalism in Greece and in more politically and economically powerful states. The first position offers as an explanation a relationship of dependency that fails to distinguish between capitalist competition and class struggle, while the second denies that such

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58 The most influential proponents of this view have been Vergopoulos and Mouzelis. For example see the collective work: Kóstas Vergópoulos, Nikos Mouzelís, et al., To Krítos ston periferiakó kapitalismó [The state in peripheral capitalism] (Athens: Exéntas, 1985).


62 For Marx, total social capital is an abstraction that refers to the totality of capitals, ‘made up of the totality of movements of these autonomous fractions, the turnovers of the individual capitals’. This concept is an essential abstraction for understanding the ceaseless movement and general tendencies of capital. Understanding it sociologically as only existing within the boundaries of every nation-state appears to be merely a more partial abstraction rather than a more convincing one. Total social capital is by definition the interconnections of all the individual capitals in the world, so it is by definition global, discounting the national origin of each capital. Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. 2 (London: Penguin, 1992), 427.

63 Milios and Sotiropoulos, ibid., 199–203.
differences (which they tend to minimise) amount to relationships that can take priority over the internal class relations in each country. The latter are decisive on each country’s levels of capitalist development. What is missing is an account of capitalism whose historical change does not simply ‘develop’ from absolute to relative surplus value, or from transitional forms to formal subsumption to real subsumption in a linear way, but which reproduces all three forms of accumulation depending on the economic and political conjuncture that determines the viability of each form of exploitation. The view is taken here that forms of exploitation that do not extract relative surplus value are not forms of ‘underdevelopment’ or ‘pre-capitalist’ remnants, but modes of adaptation that allow local capitalist reproduction within given conditions in an international market. Class struggle definitely has a lot to do with how these modes of exploitation develop, but as we shall see in examining the case of Greece, this struggle does not only concern the immediate struggles of workers within the country. Looking at the case of Greece, we will see that there have also been ‘external’ factors to do with the dynamics of international markets and the political relations of the Cold War, which have also compelled the Greek state to facilitate (or impose by force) particular modes of capitalist reproduction and social management that went against the trends in Western Europe.

For the purposes of this project, which focuses on the most recent historical shift located in the crisis of 1973, as well as a new shift located in the present crisis, we are forced to only touch on the far-from-settled debate concerning the transition from pre-capitalist to capitalist modes of production in Greece and its relationship to nation-state formation. Suffice it to say, in this summary, that the view that capitalism was merely ‘imported’ by imperial powers to Greece, as a ‘semi-peripheral’ nation state, and that Greece lacked in ‘indigenous capitalism’ is false. Powerful Greek merchant and shipping-shipbuilding capitals were operating in the Balkan area at least a century before the revolution against the Ottoman Empire (1821), and, particularly in Southern Greece and the islands, they had subsumed local production imposing the demands of international trade.

There was also a clear bourgeois-enlightenment expansionist-nationalist character in the ideology and demands of the Greek revolution, which was developed by a Greek middle-class of intellectuals and merchant capitalists in the Ottoman Empire with strong cultural and economic connections with the Western-European bourgeoisie. While the existence of capitalist forms of exploitation does not indicate a fully-formed capitalism, it did entail the emergence of early forms of proletarian class struggle (in shipbuilding on Aegean islands, 1800–1815), as well as a war for a territory that would allow the full establishment of a bourgeois state. It is indicative of the emergence of a capitalist class relation that labour organisations appeared before the turn of the 20th century, not only within the newly-formed Greek state, but also within the territories that still belonged to the

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64 Such claims are implicit in theories of transition which only recognise the development from feudalism to capitalism as an endogenous process, while other pre-capitalist societies such as ‘asiatic’ ones are supposed to not have had their own indigenously-developed capitalism. The historical and theoretical work of Jairus Banaji in *Theory as History* most radically challenges this view, while also questioning the supposed homogeneity of the ‘asiatic’ modes of production. Jairus Banaji, *Theory as History: Essays on Modes of Production and Exploitation* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010).


66 Ibid., 123.

67 Ibid., 132.
Ottoman Empire and which Greece wished to claim as its own (centred around the major port of Thessaloniki that had undergone an industrial boom in the 1870s). Yet the fact that there was an indigenous, ethnically Greek merchant capitalism in the area of the Balkans and Asia Minor, and that capitalism was not merely ‘imported’ into the area, in no way belies the uneven power relation, competition, as well as collaboration, between Western European and Greek capitalisms (both economic and political). This relationship gave shape to a particular type of capitalist development, while interacting with the dynamics of class relations in the region.

The debates concerning the character of Greek capitalism and the peculiarities of the class structure in the country are similarly unresolved, entangled as they are in political debates, many of which concern the restructuring currently under way. The views involved could be characterised as follows. Theoretical models of dependency tend to present Greek capitalism as suffering from underdevelopment and a weak bourgeoisie that is unable to drive development forward, because of pre-capitalist ‘patrimonial’ and clientelist forms of government, as well as because of the very dependency on foreign capitals. Underdevelopment is also attributed to strong state intervention in the economy and to an ‘extensive’ rather than ‘intensive’ mode of development that has tended to spawn a large number of small capitals instead of a few large ones. Despite this emphasis on underdevelopment, orthodox Marxist-Leninist writers have paradoxically also tended to overemphasise the relative numerical size of the working class in the country, predicting that its inevitable increase would create the conditions for a revolution. An alternative view is given, again, by the work of Milios, which places more emphasis on the internal class struggle within the country. Most revealing is the picture presented by historians of social struggles in Greece, whose accounts locate the formation of an industrial working class as early as in the second half of the 19th century, and bring to light the importance of political class formation that was attuned to international events of class struggle. I will attempt to examine these views through a discussion of the formation of Greece’s class structure.

On Class

Before embarking on a class analysis, the contested definition of ‘class’ demands a lot of caution. According to the most-used classic Marxian definition, proletarians are those who are separated from the means of production, and are dependent on selling their labour-power to gain the means of subsistence. The political community of proletarians is formed in its opposition to the capitalist


70 Dimitris Sarlis, I ergatikí tàxi kai o rolós tis sti sineríni ellinikí koinónia [The working class and its role in present-day Greek society] (Athens: Sýghroni Epochi, 1980).

71 Millios, Ellinikís koinónikís schimatismís.

72 For example, see Dimitris Katsoridas, Vaskoi stathmoi tou ergatikou-syndikalistikou kinimatos stin Elláda [Key moments of the workers’ and unions’ movement in Greece 1870–2001] (Athens: Aristos/GSEE, 2008).
class, the owners of the means of production who appropriate the surplus value produced by proletarian labour. The political project of the working class constitutes it as a ‘class for itself’. This distinction has also provided a role for communist theory: to define the political project of the working class on the basis of ‘objective’ class analysis. This distinction between ‘class in itself’ and ‘class for itself’ has been criticised from two opposing perspectives. Poulantzas has censured it as economism, for implying the primacy of economic position over the political formation of a class. For him, “[s]ocial classes coincide with class practices.” But one of the strongest opponents of Poulantzas, Werner Bonefeld, also criticises the distinction. For him, the class in-itself is not a critical category, because it is reduced to socioeconomic observation, while, equally problematically, the class for-itself implies that class consciousness—which ought to be be instilled by revolutionary leadership in its Leninist or Lukácsian sense—is a prerequisite for class struggle. Bonefeld charges, in a similar vein to TC’s notion of reciprocal implication, that these conceptions understand class affirmatively, not recognising that class also exists ‘against itself’, as its existence is presupposed by its exploitation.

Here, I do not wish to reproduce this distinction in the Leninist mode, but rather to point out that, if neither political practice nor economic position alone can define class, there has to be a conceptualisation of class which allows us to think through the present situation of the proletariat. With the political project of the working class to take over the control of society having all but disappeared today, thinking through these two aspects both together and separately, through a historical examination of social struggles, appears necessary. Otherwise, if we follow Poulantzas’s suggestion, we would have no way of speaking about proletarian struggles that do not have an explicit political expression. Equally, as I will show, if we follow Bonefeld’s suggestion, and the Open Marxist view of class, we could end up with poor tools to analyse and criticise particular historical instances of it, or to identify changes in the dynamic of the class relation. To identify such changes, a concept of class is necessary that is not static but allows the deciphering of complex historical processes by which, to use Ellen Meiksins Wood’s terms, ‘class situations’ become (or do not become) ‘class formations’. Following E. P. Thompson, the view is taken here that class is ‘something which in fact happens’: classes become, but this becoming can also unravel and new formations can emerge from what is left.

To carry out the historical discussion of classes in Greece as I propose to, I should first address a likely criticism against this approach, a criticism of what is termed a ‘sociological’ conception of class. According to this view, put forward most strongly by Open Marxism, and enjoying a

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73 ‘Economic conditions had first transformed the mass of the people of the country into workers. The combination of capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interests. This mass is thus already a class against capital, but not yet for itself. In the struggle, of which we have noted only a few phases, this mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class for itself. The interests it defends become class interests. But the struggle of class against class is a political struggle.’ Karl Marx, ‘The Poverty of Philosophy’, in Collected Works, vol. 6 (New York: Lawrence and Wishart, 1994), 105–212, 211.
74 Nicos Poulantzas, Classes in Contemporary Capitalism. (London: NLB, 1975), 129.
degree of respect in Anglophone Marxist debates, class cannot be conceived as a social group with particular characteristics. The proletariat is not every person whose subsistence is dependent on the wage, neither is it their political organisation. Instead, class is a social relation that cuts through all individuals and social situations in capitalist society. The founding text of this position, which was written to criticise Althusserian Marxism in particular, was Richard Gunn’s ‘Notes on Class’.

Using the classic definition of a proletarian, it would follow that those who own the means of production for their own work, and whose work is not mobilised to valorise someone else’s capital, are not proletarians, even if they happen to live in poverty. At the same time, they are not capitalists, since they do not profit from labour’s exploitation. It might then be concluded that there can be a class that is neither proletarian nor capitalist: a middle class. For Gunn, however, conceptions of the middle class are ‘theoretical figments generated by an impoverished conceptual scheme.’ He proposes instead that ‘the class relation (say, the capital-labour relation) [structures] the lives of different individuals in different ways. It allows the line of class division to fall through, and not merely between, the individuals concerned.’ Gunn illustrates this as a series of human figures whose heads are differentially divided by the capital/labour contradiction. At one end of the range there is a preponderance of ‘labour’ and at the other end of ‘capital’. But, Gunn says, these are only limit-points that do not exist in reality.

If each ‘individual’ is a site of class struggle for Gunn, it is also noteworthy that what is divided by the class relation in his illustration is individuals’ heads: for him, taking a side in class struggle is a ‘choice’ each individual has to make, which is not predetermined by social places or roles. While, however, taking a side may not be predetermined, and ethics, ideology, and politics may play a significant role, it is also not a ‘choice’. It is precisely not a ‘choice’ when someone takes part in a fight to prevent being laid off, or when a business owner lowers his workers’ wages in response to market competition. Gunn counters that workers’ struggles, using mystified terms such as ‘low wages’ instead of surplus value, show how individuals’ ‘heads’ ‘breathe’ in bourgeois ideological clouds. It is precisely to Gunn’s conception of ideology, or fetishism, that I wish to draw attention here. For Gunn, ‘[s]ocial roles are mediations of class struggle, i.e. they are modes of existence of class struggle … In this sense, something quite like class in its sociological meaning does indeed exist in capitalist society, but only as “appearance” or in other words as an aspect of the fetishism to which Marxism stands opposed’. He then accuses ‘sociological’ (i.e. Althusserian) Marxism for taking ‘appearances at their face value’ like ‘vulgar political economy’. It is not my aim here to examine whether Althusserian Marxism deserves this criticism—although I do criticise Poulantzas’s class analysis in the next section—but rather to probe into the premises of such criticism. Gunn’s attack on ‘appearance’ betrays an inconsistency in dealing with

79 Ibid., 17.
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid., 21.
82 Ibid., 18.
83 Ibid., 20.
84 Ibid.
the concept of fetishism and the relationship between essence and appearance. Certainly, in Gunn, as well as in Bonefeld’s recent work, the definitions are unequivocal. Appearance is ‘objective’; it is a ‘constituted reality of definite social relations’. Though the role of critical theory is to ‘demystify’, it ‘does not reveal some hidden reality’. Indeed, the concept of objective appearance (Schein), which Marx inherits from Hegel, does not denote a false, but a real, socially produced appearance. Since the essence cannot exist independently from appearance as in a Platonic two-world ontology, there is also no causal relation between essence and appearance, in the sense that appearance would be the result of essence or vice-versa. Yet Gunn’s formulations often suggest a unidirectional causal relation between the concept of class struggle and its ‘appearance’ in the form of social roles and groups: ‘insofar as revolutionary conflict takes the form of a conflict between groups … this has to be understood as the result of class struggle itself’. Similarly, Bonefeld, quoting Simon Clarke, asserts that class ‘is the “logical and historical presupposition for the existence of individual capitalists and workers, and the basis on which the labour of one section of society is appropriated without equivalent by another””.

So, while this approach accepts that the appearance is real and that the essence ‘has to appear’, it does not consistently recognise that the essence is inconceivable separately from appearance. Gunn and Bonefeld’s formulations often posit the ontological precedence of class as essence over the ‘existence of individual capitalists and workers’, as their ‘logical and historical presupposition’. The concept of class not only preceedes logically (because it is presupposed by) the existence of proletarians (which we might accept if we follow the argument that capital’s autonomous logic reproduces the conditions of existence of proletarians, i.e. their dependence on the wage relation) but it also preceeds causally their historical emergence. I argue that the latter assertion is inadmissible. If the class relation, or ‘class’ preceeds the historical emergence of proletarians, what is, then, the class struggle, and where does it exist, if not in in the very practices of social groups in an antagonistic relation?

Here we have the autonomisation of a concept from its appearance, and the attribution to it of the historical production of reality as ‘appearance’. Marx indeed discusses in Capital the autonomisation of a concept, value, through its ability to be accumulated above and beyond situational exchanges of commodities, and we can agree that the social forms developed by his analysis tend to be autonomised from social practice, imposing their logic upon it. Yet these insights are less useful in the case of class struggle, because it does not refer to an autonomous social form that imposes its logic, but to the process of transformation or undoing of class. Thus a concept of class as an essence that transcends and precedes the ‘appearance’ of the actions and struggles of social groups

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86 But see Reichelt, *Social Reality as Appearance* for a detailed exposition of Marx’s inconsistencies in this respect, with regard to whether essence can be conceived independently. We do find, mostly in early Marx, but also in Capital, a conception of essence to be liberated from inverted forms of appearance.

87 Ibid., 21.


90 Ibid., 64.
and ‘individuals’ is an ahistorical conception of class, which inadvertently renders actual processes of struggle ontologically incapable of effecting historical transformations. I argue that there have been historical transformations, and they have effected changes in the class relation as well. These transformations cannot be attributed solely to the autonomous motion or the self-presuppositions and contradictions of the concept of capital, but they are also the product of social struggles, and the collective actions of capitals and states. If the latter are not merely the result of an unfolding essence but a constitutive part of shifts in the class relation, then historical research is crucial to understanding how class formations come into being, change, or unravel over time.

Reducing the social roles created by the division of labour and by the relations of production—‘proletarians’ and ‘bosses’, ‘petit-bourgeois’ and ‘middle classes’, the stratifications of the division of labour—to ‘appearances’ in order to deny these concepts any methodological validity because they are ‘fetishistic’ also does not help us understand how identities of struggle or how internal conflicts within struggles emerge. When class is conceived as a conflict existing within each individual, and when class ‘disunity’ can only be understood negatively, as something that ‘entails coercion as the condition of social reproduction’ in Bonefeld’s terms,91 it becomes impossible to recognise ‘disunity’ among proletarians as not only the corrupting symptom of competition, but also as part of the struggle against the intra-class hierarchies produced by the social division of labour and other forms of domination. Such a struggle can produce new class formations and alter the course of class struggle.

On the methodological question, then, I argue that it is impossible to understand class only at a level of conceptual abstraction that rejects the lived and historically changing social designations, roles, and identities on the basis of which social relations are experienced. ‘Class’ is not the conceptual or essential critical key that sheds light to the mystification of designations such as ‘middle class’, ‘proletarian’ or ‘bourgeois’ (or indeed “man” or “woman” or “citizen”).92 ‘Class’ has no existence beyond these designations, and can only be examined through them.

Having said that, neither Gunn nor Bonefeld essentialise class to the extent that they would reduce gender and race relations to the class relation—and neither should my focus on class in this discussion be interpreted as my aim to do so here. The class relation is an abstraction that pertains to the relation of exploitation, which concerns labour, production, and capitalist reproduction. On one hand, the capitalist relations of production, of circulation, of exploitation, the modes of social reproduction and the varieties of culture that have evolved historically in capitalist societies, including gendered and racialised relations, all these modes of social relating, are specific to the capitalist society; they are all in some way historically and reproductively inter-articulated with the reproduction of capital, that is, with exploitation. On the other hand, not all social relations of capitalism are reducible to the dynamic of capital as understood and developed in Marx’s works. One has to engage with the social categories in their specificity before they can be theoretically and practically subjected to critique. This means that the contradictions of capital are not the hidden

91 Ibid., 107.
essence behind ‘men’ and ‘women’ and the relation between them, or behind racialised forms of domination: these categories have to be criticised precisely in all the facets of their history, and of how they are lived, reproduced, and naturalised. In the case of gender, beyond housework and childrearing (the main concern of Marxist-Feminist analyses of gender), there is the patriarchal family dynamic, sexuality and love, psychic processes, personal domination, and violence, all subjects that Marxism has very underdeveloped tools to explore. Similarly, processes of racialisation cannot be reduced to or fully explained by capitalist exploitation. On the contrary, their importance to the slave trade and colonialism arguably establishes them as historically foundational elements of capitalism that are constitutive of the bourgeois civil society.93

The historical account of Greek capitalism and struggles that follows, departing from a Marxist problematic, aims to provide the background for an examination of the contemporary class relation in the Greek crisis. It has thus focused on the emergence and development of class relations in the region and the Greek nation-state, and less on the racialising and gendered constitution of Greek civil society. The latter is discussed in Chapter V, although more detailed and dedicated research to provide a historical presentation of the interpenetration of these relations is an urgent project for the future, which has re-emerged through the concerns of intersectional critique.94

The ‘Traditional’ and ‘New’ Petite-Bourgeoisie

The continued existence and reproduction of a sizeable ‘petit bourgeois’ class has been a characteristic of Greek capitalist society that has complicated the debate on its class structure, so it is worth beginning with this discussion. Defining this class is a far from simple task. ‘Petit bourgeois’ is the term traditionally used in Marxist theory to describe small-holding peasants and small urban businesses organised around family units, with very few, if any, employees. Yet the term is often problematic and unclear. The Greek discussion has been deeply influenced by Poulantzas’s work on classes,95 which expands the term to include a section of waged workers (the ‘new petite bourgeoisie’, public sector and white-collar workers), while presupposing a rather straightforward relationship between the petit-bourgeois class position and a conservative politics and culture.96

First, even if, theoretically, patriarchal family production is associated with a traditional way of life and culture that can tend to bind small producers with conservative politics, this is only the case to a certain extent. It is true that this model of production has been an obstacle for the develop-


95 Poulantzas, Classes.

96 As is clear in Milios’s sympathetic summary, Poulantzas supports his classification of the ‘new’ and ‘old’ petit bourgeois sections into the same class by arguing that they have the same ‘pertinent effects’, that is, similar ideological and political expressions, which tend to be conservative. Giannis Milios, ‘To zitiqa ton mikroatoston: Eniaa taixi i dyo diakriti taxikia synola?’ [The Question of the Petit Bourgeois: A Unitary Class or Two Distinct Classes?], Théseis, no. 81 (2001).
opment of the feminist movement in Greece. However, examining the history of struggles of the Greek peasants’ movement reveals that their political orientation is not straightforward. The mere defence of their own interests has historically turned these social groups alternately to the national-ist left, the centre left and the right.

Second, a definition of class that does not reduce it to either economic or political position, I would argue, is also one that does not sharply separate between its ‘structural’ and ‘conjunctural’ (i.e. concerning strategic class formation in a specific conjuncture) determinations. The latter is a separation Poulantzas makes, which undermines the historical element in his analysis, insofar as, for him, the conjunctural cannot alter the structural. It is on such a distinction that the category of the ‘new petite bourgeoisie’ rests, defined primarily on the ‘structural’ basis of its ‘unproductive labour’ in services and the public sector, or its managerial and supervisory work (here, engineers and technicians are included despite being employed in industrial sectors). The distinction from the working class is made in terms of the mental/manual labour division. Workers employed by revenue (the state), Poulantzas himself concedes, as well as the lower ranks of workers involved in mental labour, can be subjected to the socially-set time-discipline of the production process and expend surplus-labour in order to save revenue, even if they do not produce surplus value. Thus, their relationship with their employer is one of exploitation. Still, he insists on including all public-sector workers in the same class as supervisory and higher managerial workers, even though the latter dominate other workers in the interests of capital; are, by-and-large, not exploited by capital, with their salaries often being reinvested as productive capital; and have historically opposed workers’ mobilisations. In doing so, Poulantzas effectively recasts the division of labour (intellectual and manual labour; the production of services and material commodities) as a class distinction. His justification for locating all intellectual workers in the petite bourgeoisie is that mental labour is involved in the capitalist production of knowledge (which is always ideological), and participates in the bureaucratic management of capitalism, while its higher status is ‘encased in a whole series of rituals, know-how and “cultural” elements that distinguish it from that of the working class’. However, raising this social distinction (or ‘class barrier’ in Poulantzas’s terms) above the relation

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98 Poulantzas, Classes, 14–16.
99 Unproductive labour is a category in which Poulantzas, contorting Marx’s argument, includes all service workers, since he wishes to argue that only the producers of ‘material commodities’ are productive workers and belong to the working class. He uses a quote from Marx to prove his point: ‘Every time that labour is purchased, not in order to substitute it as the living factor in the value of variable capital, but in order to consume it as use value, i.e. a service, this labour is not productive labour, and the wage labourer is not a productive worker’ (Poulantzas, Classes, 213). However, Marx, here, does not refer to the service sector, but rather to labour employed as a service by an individual and paid for by revenue; not labour employed by a capitalist to make a profit. Marx continues, in the same text, to make his point clearer: ‘A singer who sings like a bird is an unproductive worker. If she sells her singing for money, she is to that extent a wage labourer or a commodity dealer. But the same singer, when engaged by an entrepreneur who has her sing in order to make money, is a productive worker, for she directly produces capital. A schoolmaster who educates others is not a productive worker. But a schoolmaster who is engaged as a wage labourer in an institution along with others, in order through his labour to valorise the money of the entrepreneur of the KNOWLEDGE-MONGERING INSTITUTION, is a productive worker.’ Karl Marx, ‘Chapter 6: Results’, 448, italics and small caps in the original.
100 Poulantzas, Classes, 258.
of exploitation, and hence dividing the exploited into separate classes, only has any relevance for analysis if it has played a consistent role in social struggles. For example, the participation of clerks, employed privately or in the public sector, in a wave of strikes, would not stand out as the participation of the ‘lower sections of the petite bourgeoisie’ unless the clerks’ social distinction was reflected in their demands and brought them into conflict with other categories of workers. Although this may have been the case in particular historical conjunctures, it is questionable whether it is consistent enough to warrant a different class categorisation. It is then not clear why such a conflict should be understood as an inter-class and not as an intra-class conflict.

The reason for questioning these ‘new’ class categories is not to insist on an imaginary class unity, nor to deny the existence of a middle class. Rather, it is to emphasise the importance of the internal hierarchy of the proletariat (which indeed involves very sharp discontinuities: to that of mental/manual labour we may add those of gender and ethnicity or race), its frequent lack of unity and even its decomposition in particular historical periods, namely in the present one, as well as to distinguish the hierarchical relation from the relation of exploitation.

We cannot then define a class purely on the basis of its ‘structural determination’, neither is it sufficient to define it purely on the basis of its socio-cultural distinctions. Particularly considering ‘the middle strata’ whose social position has been historically fluid, and in view of today’s extremely sharp hierarchical division between the lower and the higher ranks of ‘mental labour’, the definition of class sub-groups has to take into account the practice and discourse of these social groups in historical instances of social struggle. As we will see below, in the case of the petite bourgeoisie, ‘structural determinations’ and sides taken in social struggles are not linked in any necessary way, but neither should ‘conjunctural’ class positions be taken to contradict ‘structural determinations’. Instead, a historical analysis of the formation of classes and class alliances in social antagonisms can reveal that ‘conjunctural’ class positions are not mere exceptions to a determining structure but they are part of a process of change.

The most methodical investigation into the petit-bourgeois class and its reproduction within Greek capitalism has been that of Andreas Lytras. Lytras’s most important contribution to the debate is that the petit-bourgeois class of small producers has not been a pre-capitalist remnant that has persisted through the ages (rendering the word ‘traditional’ a misnomer), but it was the result of a deliberate policy of the Greek state, which, essentially, both created this class through the land redistribution that successive governments instituted until 1925, and in later decades ensured the reproduction of this class through a system of subsidies and legal protections. The reasons for these decisions of the Greek state combine concerns about the international political conjuncture, the development of industry, and the escalation of class struggle, both inside the country and internationally.

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101 Public sector workers have indeed been very active during important waves of struggles through the history of the Greek labour movement. See Katsoridas, Vaikai Statonoi.

The question of land ownership was one of the major problems of the newly-founded Greek state from 1828 onwards. The acquisition of the lands of Thessaly, Epirus, and southern Macedonia from the Ottoman Empire entailed a change of their legal status from a system of production where the land (çiflik) owners appropriated one third or half of the product, to a system of capitalist proprietorship where land owners obtained the entire product and workers became landless wage-labourers deprived of all rights to the land.\textsuperscript{103} This proletarianisation sparked continuous violent protests by landless peasants demanding land redistribution, which were, at first, brutally repressed,\textsuperscript{104} as the Greek government did not wish to challenge the laws of private property, hoping, \textit{inter alia}, to attract investment from Greek expatriate capitals.\textsuperscript{105} Yet in 1917 a conjuncture of events favoured a change of policy. One likely reason was the success of the Bolsheviks in Russia, which had caused concerns that a similar rebellion could occur in Greece.\textsuperscript{106} Another political reason could be the attempt of the Venizelos government in Thessaloniki to win the support of the population of Northern Greece in a context of deep conflict with King Constantine I over Greece’s participation in WWI. Such support would allow Venizelos to form an army that would invade Asia Minor. There were also immediate economic reasons. Greece had been embargoed by the Allies, blocking all imports, to force the country’s participation in the war on their side. This caused a rapid increase in the prices of agricultural products and raw materials which the land owners exploited to their benefit, but which harmed industrial production. According to Vergopoulos, land redistribution did not so much benefit the small farmers who were given the land—because its effect was extreme price deflation—as much as it benefited industrial production.\textsuperscript{107} After the tragic end to the war and the influx of masses of immigrants from Asia Minor, a section of them would also be socially integrated by being given plots of land.\textsuperscript{108} Land redistribution did not mean a good standard of living for its beneficiaries, however, nor did it mean that they no longer had to be wage-labourers. According to Seferiades, the new small-holding peasants very soon became indebted to merchants and suffered extreme poverty. This meant that they still had to work for owners of larger stretches of land, which had not been redistributed due to the owners’ affiliations with government officials. This situation meant that peasants’ struggles did not come to an end with land

\begin{footnotes}
\item[104] The most well-known of these protests was the Küler revolt in 1910, in which six peasants were shot dead by the police forces. The peasants had rioted at two train stations demanding to enter the trains that would take them to the protest in Larisa free of charge. Giörgos N. Alexátos, \textit{Istorikí lexicí tou ellinikíou ergatikíou kinimatos} [Historical dictionary of the Greek labour movement], 2nd ed. (Athens: Geitoniás Tou Kósmou, 2008), 212.
\item[105] Richard Clogg, \textit{A Concise History of Greece} (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
\item[106] Lefteri Stavros Stavrianos, \textit{The Balkans since 1453} (London: Hurst, 2000).
\item[107] Vergópoulos, \textit{Agrotiká zitíma}.
\item[108] It should be clear, however, that Minor Asia immigrants did not become ‘petit bourgeois’ en masse by being given plots of land. The greatest proportion had to enter waged labour and in fact their supply of cheap labour was a major factor for the development of Greek industrial capital in the 1930s. Katsorídas, \textit{Vasiko’ Stathmo’}
\end{footnotes}
redistribution, and they continued to be very intense, this time against merchants, around the issue of prices.109

This historical fragment shows that small ownership was not a pre-capitalist remnant tending towards extinction but the product of a special conjuncture of war, as well as part of the process of the region’s transition to fully capitalist social relations. The creation of a class of small land owners was deemed politically and economically preferable to large land ownership for Greece’s participation in the war as well as for the development of industry. After WWII, small land ownership in the countryside formed the economic basis for small property and small family-scale business ownership in urban centres, as agricultural production was becoming less sustainable and the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy grew.110 This expanding urban petit bourgeois class, having formed its own political organisations, managed to reproduce itself by protesting against policies of European market integration that favoured large Greek and international capitals, gaining state subsidies and protections. Lytras writes about the formation of small business and farmers’ organisations after WWI, and the post-war history of their political mobilisations and achievements, culminating in 1966, when regular subsidies and favourable credit terms were instituted by the Stefanopoulos government.111 According to Lytras, the reason for this favourable treatment at that historical moment was their temporary alliance with the labour movement which staged very significant struggles at the same time. Enosis Kentrou, a centrist, liberal party that supported the mobilisations, had won the elections in 1964 but was ousted by a royal coup. Stefanopoulos, one of the prime ministers installed by King Constantine, satisfied petit-bourgeois demands to appease the protests, while, tellingly, labour organisations and the left continued to be heavily repressed. The recent history of civil war, as well as the ongoing Cold War, meant that it would be too dangerous to allow the labour movement and the left to be similarly empowered, and the military dictatorship of 1967 was a direct response to this danger.112

After the dictatorship, small business and farmers’ organisations joined the 1974–1980 wave of struggles alongside the labour movement, and won many of their demands with the PASOK government of 1981. The governments after 1981 kept in place subsidies for agriculture and protections for ‘closed’ trades (a bureaucratic system of licensing that discouraged new entrants).113 However, as European economic integration continued in the ’90s, and following the internationalisation of production, many small businesses began to face hardship, due to their inability to compete with imported goods and new subcontractors in East Asia.114 The greater availability of credit, the cheap labour provided by the immigration waves of the ’90s and 2000s,

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112 See Aktis Rigos, Serafeim Seferiadis, Euathus Chatzivasileiou (eds.), *I ‘zytonti’ dekaeti tou 60* [The ‘Brief’ ’60s] (Athens: Kastaniotis, 2008).
113 Lytras, 176–179.
and the expansion of an atypical labour market balanced out these losses temporarily.\textsuperscript{115} However, as we will see in Chapter III, the recent period of crisis and restructuring has led to a great number of closures, since the economic restructuring measures have been opposed to all forms of local protectionism. This development shrank the number of small businesses—an extremely significant social change for Greek society that shaped the character of struggles against the restructuring.

\textit{Capital and the Bourgeois Class in Greece}

Although we began this discussion with the petit-bourgeois class, it would be mistaken to present Greek capitalism as driven by a mass of small capitals, or, worse, small family businesses that subsist on revenue. It is commonplace, and part of the dominant discourse in Greece, both on the right and on the left, to underestimate the power of the Greek capitalist class, characterising it as ‘parasitic’ and ‘unpatriotic’.\textsuperscript{116} It is also frequently claimed that a ‘national bourgeoisie’ has never existed in Greece, but instead there is a ‘comprador bourgeoisie’ subject to foreign imperialist interests. Effectively, the dominant class of capitalist society is seen, in the case of Greece, as falling short of the supposed criteria that would make it a real bourgeois class. According to this narrative, its failure lies in, first, not investing in real ‘production’ but only in ‘compradorial’ activities and in finance. Second, it lacks the necessary ‘bourgeois ethic’ and a unified bourgeois political formation. Many writers, including Lytras, tend to support similar views, influenced by the theory of dependency, which understands the very existence of foreign investment in Greece as a form of ‘colonialism’,\textsuperscript{117} analyses shipping capital and service sector firms as ‘unproductive’,\textsuperscript{118} and even sometimes makes the mistake of assessing the level of industrialisation by comparing the ratio of small to large businesses.\textsuperscript{119}

If this perspective was based solely on an economic argument it could be easily refuted. In fact, the early pre-revolution Greek capitals operating from the Ottoman Empire were not just merchant capitals but were also involved in small industrial production, shipping, and exports, mainly of textiles, to western Europe.\textsuperscript{120} Between 1850 and 1910 industrial areas appeared and grew in urban centres, attracting large concentrations of urban working populations in the cities of Ath-


\textsuperscript{116} See, for example, James Petras, ‘Sto eisodimatiúcho kefáliá oofelétaí i dynamiiki anáptuxi tí Elládas kai i viomíchaniú tís ypanáptuxi’ [Rentier capital is the cause of Greece’s dynamic development and its industrial undertakings], \textit{Oikonomik–s Tachydr–mos}, 8 March 1984.

\textsuperscript{117} For a fuller criticism of this position see Giannis Mavris, Thanasis Tskeóiras, ‘To xenó kefalio kai i anáptuxi tou ellínikoú kapitalismoú’ [Foreign Capital and the Development of Greek Capitalism]. \textit{Théis}, no. 2 (1983).

\textsuperscript{118} This view is not the result of Marxist orthodoxy but an ideological notion perpetuated by the traditional strategy of autarky favoured by the Commnist Party of Greece. As we have seen, according to the Marxian definition, productivity is the valorisation of capital, which is independent of whether the commodities produced are material goods or ‘immaterial’ services. Marx, ‘Results’, 448.

\textsuperscript{119} Lytras, in \textit{Prologomena}, notes that in Greece in the 1920s only 10\% of industries employed more than 10 workers. To demonstrate how misleading this statistic is, for the period 2007–2011, this percentage has been 10\% in the UK and 18\% in Germany, which was the highest in the EU. Eurostat, \textit{Business Demography by Size Class} (from 2004 Onwards), http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/, retrieved 13 Jan 2014.

ens, Piraeus, Thessaloniki, Volos, and Ermoupoli.\textsuperscript{121} By the early 1930s there was a rapid growth in industrial production (65\%, 1928–38), which had benefitted from the 1929 crisis. The state contributed to this development, nationalising key industries (railways, infrastructure, banking) from as early as 1914.\textsuperscript{122} After WWII, the state expanded its investments to facilitate business activity, and imposed a restructuring that entailed a wage freeze, very high unemployment (which, in combination with deep poverty in the countryside, contributed to the largest emigration wave the country had seen, after that of 1900–20) and currency devaluation. A new boom period began in the 1960s and lasted until the crisis of 1973. In this period, called the ‘golden’ period of Greek capitalism, Greece’s GDP growth rates topped OECD rankings. The construction industry expanded its activities to the Middle East and North Africa, while the tourism industry also began to expand rapidly internationally (in addition to the shipping industry, whose activities have been expansive throughout its long history).\textsuperscript{123} In the 1990s another phase of expansion of Greek capital took place (banking, construction, industrial production), this time outwardly into the Balkan area, where it continued to be relatively dominant.\textsuperscript{124} This history certainly does not indicate a ‘comprador’ character for Greek capital.

The popularity of this perspective, however, does not lie in an economic argument but in an ethical and political one. The notion of the ‘bourgeois ethic’ that the Greek bourgeoisie supposedly lacks and the ‘comprador’/‘national’ bourgeoisie distinction have their origins in the discourse of anti-colonial struggles, which is taken up by theories of dependency. This discourse supposes that a proper national bourgeois class would not merely exploit the country’s proletariat, but it also ought to take upon itself the responsibility for national economic development and ‘independence’. Even though the Greek war of independence was led by a class akin to just such a bourgeoisie, this bourgeoisie is undermined, because it welcomed British and French financial and military assistance in the war, later rendering the Greek state financially indebted to these countries.

This narrative, originally, did not stop here, for it concluded with the traditional revolutionary vision of the communist movements of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century: it was not the ‘decadent’ bourgeoisie, but the working class that could manage the national economy effectively and drive out the ‘foreign imperialist powers’. Today, with this revolutionary narrative having lost its appeal, the criticism of the ‘comprador bourgeoisie’ refrains from reaching such subversive conclusions—all that is left is the question of economic management alone. It is no wonder that now this argument is even utilised by the neoliberal press in order to promote the strengthening of capital, the consolidation of its political power, and the acceleration of the restructuring.\textsuperscript{125}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{121} Lila Leontidou, \textit{Póleis tis sýgísi} [Cities of Silence] (Athens: Cultural Technological Institute ETVA, 1989). The industries mentioned are gas, mining, concrete, chemicals.
\item \textsuperscript{122} Mauroûdas & Ioánndis, \textit{Vólia}, 17–22.
\item \textsuperscript{123} Mauroûdas & Ioánndis, \textit{Vólia}.
\item \textsuperscript{124} Anístis Tarpákos, ‘Í valkanîkí dieîsdýsî tou ellîmikoû kapitalismou’ [The Balkan penetration of Greek capitalism]. \textit{Théseis}, no. 50 (1995).
\item \textsuperscript{125} For a typical example, see Páskhos Mandravélis, ‘Ta elleîmmata tís astíkís táxis stîn Elláda’ [The deficiencies of the bourgeois class in Greece], \textit{Kathimerini}, 5 August 2012.
\end{itemize}
While the simplest narratives of dependency are today discredited in academic debates, anti-imperialist analyses of Greek capital still use some of its theoretical tools. For example, for Mavroudeas, the level of penetration of ‘foreign capital’ in the Greek economy indicates the transfer of surplus-value to ‘more developed’ countries, even though he concedes that these companies also do reinvest within Greece.126 In a similar vein, while acknowledging the expansion of Greek capital in the Balkans, he highlights the problem of its ‘limited living space’ in the Greek economy. The historical and ongoing internationalisation of Greek capital is thus presented as a weakness.127 This perspective, similar to theories of dependency, aims not for a critique of the capital relation but for a ‘socialist’ project of nationalised, state-managed economic development, specifically industrial development. This view will be discussed more extensively in the next chapter.

As for the political power of the Greek bourgeoisie, the historical outcomes of class struggle in Greece and the political forms of the first two thirds of the 20th century reveal a hegemony imposed by force. This is evidenced by the long period of repressive anti-communism in successive governments and dictatorships from 1929 onwards, when Venizelos criminalised the ‘subversive ideas’ of communists, anarchists, and the labour movement with the ‘idiómo’ law, until its repeal in 1974. Again, these developments have to be understood through the history of class struggle in Greece, as well as the context of international political and economic conjunctures. One of the most decisive events of class struggle and a major setback for Greek capital was the civil war between communist guerrillas (initially largely armed by the British as allies in the war against Germany) and the collaborationist government of occupied Greece. The defeat of the communists (again with British intervention) was decisive of subsequent extremely high levels of repression of the labour movement and the left up until 1981. The trauma of the civil war still colours the way in which the class relation is articulated politically today, and its history remains contested as part of this period’s struggles (see Chapter V). Generally, we might say that up until the 1980s, the dominant bourgeois political ideology in Greece has tended to range between anti-communist liberalism and the conservative far right (involving ultranationalist ideology and violent repressive state practice), particularly at times of deep crisis when the stability of state power was challenged by social movements.128

The Greek Working Class and Labour Movement

The size and significance of Greece’s working class is similarly a subject of continued debate. According to Lytras, because of the large size of the petit bourgeois class in Greece, the working class

126 Staúros Mavroudēs, ‘To ellínikó krátos kai to xéno kafaláio stin oikonomikí krisí’ [The Greek state and foreign capital in the economic crisis] (Krátos kai Díakio ston 21o aióna, Law Department, Panteion University, Athens, 2011).

127 This is a recurring argument of theoreticians of the dependency perspective. For example, Nicos Mouzelis, ‘Capitalism and Dictatorship in Post-War Greece’, New Left Review I, no. 96 (1976).

has had special characteristics. One is that a great proportion of it tends not to be entirely landless and to own property for its own use. A second characteristic is that it has tended to be fragmented due to employment being distributed over a large number of small workplaces, which has negatively affected its possibilities for collective organising and bargaining. As already discussed, Lytras underestimates the size of the Greek industry, and concomitantly its employment. Writing in the late 1990s, he also sometimes tends to extrapolate from his contemporary weakness of labour struggles to the entire history of struggles in Greece. Yet beyond such underestimations, it is true that in Greece the proportion of waged workers in the workforce has been smaller than in Western Europe, and the proportion of ‘own-account’ workers has been higher, even though waged labour expanded significantly through the 20th century. The percentage of waged workers increased from 36.8 in 1951 to 51.4 in 1981 to 65 in 2008. Meanwhile, the percentage of own-account workers has fluctuated between 28 and 38 through the 20th century, reaching the lowest point of 21% in 2008.129 It should be noted, however, that self-employment has not had the same meaning in the middle of the 20th century as it does today. In the 1950s, according to the 1951 census, own-account workers were employed in trades that could be carried out by lone individuals, for example as traders of a variety of goods, independent skilled tradespersons (electricians, tailors etc), doctors and accountants. To a certain extent this is still the case, but an increasing proportion of ‘self-employed’ workers are in fact employees without insurance and employment rights. In other words, this is a precarious form of employment used by employers to avoid national insurance contributions and other employee benefits such as paid leave. This becomes evident when we look at what occupations declare themselves as self employed in 2008: about one third of the total are office workers, unskilled labourers, and industrial workers.130 These statistics indicate the changing character of the class structure in Greece. Through the latter half of the 20th century, waged labour became, quantitatively, the dominant production relation, despite the simultaneous reproduction of the petit-bourgeois class.

Even though the structurally-defined working class was a minority through the first half of the twentieth century, this did not prevent the emergence of a politicised labour movement that staged extremely significant struggles. The first significant strike demanding wage rises and the reduction of the working day to 10 hours is dated back to 1879, by shipbuilding workers in the port of Syros. The first labour unions were formed from 1886 onwards, and the first Labour Mayday took place in 1894. Literally explosive struggles took place since the 1890s: Lavrio miners blew up a dynamite warehouse and took over a factory in 1896.131 We see then that already from the 1880s there existed in Greece a working class that was significantly radicalised in terms of its forms of struggle. The first labour confederations were formed in 1908 (the Association of the Working Classes of Greece—STET—in Volos), 1909 (the multi-ethnic Federation in Thessaloniki, a prede-

131 Katsoridas, *Vasikoi Stathmoi*, 31–33.
cessor of the Communist Party of Greece), and 1910 (Workers’ Centre of Athens).\textsuperscript{132} These confederations were active in workers’ self-education, produced socialist literature, and made connections with the socialist and communist internationals. Intense struggles continued through the pre- and mid-war periods and began to win demands: In 1909, Sunday was instituted as a day of rest; in 1912, a labour inspection office was instituted to ensure the enforcement of labour legislation; in 1914, child labour and the labour of pregnant women was banned, employers became responsible for the compensation of work accidents, and workers gained the legal right to form unions; from 1914 to 1920, daily working hours were reduced from 11 to 9. Later, in 1932, the 8-hour day was instituted; in 1934, the first law on social security was voted into parliament; by 1935, the system of collective labour contracts began to come into use.\textsuperscript{133} This was achieved after decades of struggles for these demands, in a context of great resistance by the state and employers’ organisations, and extreme repression of the labour movement, whose protests frequently ended in many casualties and deaths by the gendarmes. Particularly in the period of rapid capitalist development (1928–1932), the living conditions of the working class had again worsened, involving the extreme exploitation of Asia Minor immigrants, the disregard of recently instituted labour rights, as well as a high proportion of children in the workforce. The Thessaloniki rebellion of May 1936, led by the tobacco workers (a great proportion of whom were women), involving a paralysing 10-day general strike and pitched battles and barricades through the city, was responded to by the Metaxas coup, which further raised the level of repression and sent labour activists to be tortured in exile.\textsuperscript{134}

The civil war that began towards the end of WWII should also be seen as a major event of class struggle in which the working class played a significant role. During the German occupation, Greek workers (organised under EEAM—the ‘labour’ EAM) staged the first general strike among the Axis-occupied territories on 24–25 March 1942, as well as the only successful general strike in March 1943.\textsuperscript{135} It is true that EAM and the ELAS army recruited their members mostly from the countryside,\textsuperscript{136} but this must be seen also in the context of the small-holding peasants’ armed struggles that had taken place since the turn of the century, and their escalation in the 1930s.\textsuperscript{137} The

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 34–36.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 40–45, 73.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 83–88.
\textsuperscript{136} EAM (National Liberation Front) was the largest resistance organisation against the occupation, after the Greek national army was defeated and the Tsouderos government exiled itself to Egypt. Politically led by KKE, which up to then had been illegal, EAM’s stated aim was not only liberation from German occupation but also ‘popular democracy’. Its politics during the war were not explicitly politically partisan, in order to attract a wider section of the peasant and petit-bourgeois population. ELAS (National Popular Liberation Army) was the guerrilla military arm of EAM. During the war, EAM was able to create an alternative state structure in the mountainous areas it controlled. It was also significant that women participated for the first time in an army (ELAS) and in the elections. Michalis Lymperatos, ‘Οι οργανωμένες τις Αντίσταση’, in Ch. Chatziágiou and P. Papastratis (eds.), Istoría tis Ellásas tou 20ou Aionu, vol. 3, bk. 2 (Athens: Vivliórama, 2007).
\textsuperscript{137} To understand the level of confrontation that small-holding peasants were engaged in, the uprising of the Peloponesian raisin producers in the summer of 1935 is indicative: Thousands of militant peasants marched on horseback to the raisin production factory, where they gained the support of the army positioned there, and occupied the factory. Armed, and with more peasants having joined them, they all marched to Kalamata,
political power of the Communist Party during the 1940s and the very size of the ranks of EAM and ELAS is not explicable by the size of the Greek industrial proletariat, but is rather a sign of the pre-war economic oppression of both the proletariat and small-holding peasants whose products were sold to the industries at such low prices that it was hard for them to even subsist on that income. This was one of the historical conditions that produced the many occasions in which small ownership entered a political coalition under the hegemony of the labour movement.

Another significant period of struggles was that of 1956–1965. This was a period of rapid development of the industrial and construction sectors, creating a wider basis for the creation of workers’ communities with common experiences. This was also a period of heavy repression and state terror. The Labour Confederation (GSEE) itself was controlled by the state and had an anti-communist agenda, even though for many of its leaders it was not anti-communist enough and they decided to split off and create the ‘New GSEE’ in 1957. The latter’s slogan in the first issue of its representative publication, ‘Ergatikí Símaía’ [Labour Flag], stated: ‘The New GSEE for Greeks and whites; The Red GSEE for communists and lepers’. Despite this, workers formed alternative organisations and an escalating wave of strikes developed affecting the industries of construction, mining, tobacco, electricity, rail, press, mail, education, banking, and a variety of others. In 1961–2 several categories of public sector workers carried out coordinated strikes lasting several days. The state’s response was to ban the strikes and prosecute their participants. Still, the alternative labour organisations grew stronger and more coordinated, forming the well-known SEO-115, an association of 115 unions expelled from GSEE, which achieved several demands (wage rises of 31.6% on average; paid leave; benefits for dangerous occupations; the 1st of May holiday).

The movement’s climax was in 1964–5, when Greece reached a record-high level of strikes worldwide, and Enosi Kentrou was brought to power, promising to reinstate political liberties. Once more, the establishment responded with a royal coup (1965), soon to be followed by the Colonels’ junta in 1967, which was not received negatively by NATO powers in the context of the Cold War.

We see, then, that even though the Greek labour movement—as the working class with a political project “for itself”—appeared later than elsewhere in Western Europe, it became active very rapidly. It was also very rapidly politicised, inspired by socialist, communist, and (in the early stages) anarchist revolutionary ideals, and by the successes of their contemporary movements elsewhere in Europe and Asia. It very soon posed a very real danger of subversion to the Greek state and was responded to with extreme repressive measures, including a series of dictatorships, from Metaxas to the Colonels.


138 This was not the first occasion of such control. Indeed, successive governments and right-wing parties had attempted, and frequently managed, to control the Labour Confederation (GSEE) from the inside, ever since its very foundation in 1918. Katsoridas, Vaiikoi Statthmoi.

139 Katsoridas, Vaiikoi Statthmoi, 115.

140 Ibid., 120–124.

CYCLES OF STRUGGLE SINCE THE METAPOLITEUSI

Metapoliteusi: The Victory and Defeat of the Labour Movement

Much of the mainstream post-crisis discourse on the period of the ‘Metapoliteusi’, that is, the democratic period that succeeded the Colonels’ dictatorship from 1974 onwards, is a discourse of contempt. Those who grew up from the 1980s onwards witnessed the political and economic scandals of PASOK in 1989, the left parties collaborating with the right in order to ‘purge’ the state from corruption, the social passivity of the majority of their parents’ generation who are seen as complicit to the establishment of a bi-party system alternating between PASOK and New Democracy, both of whom pursued policies of austerity whilst giving out generous subsidies to select sectors and capitalists. It is hard for these generations to see PASOK, the party that symbolically represents the Metapoliteusi, as anything but a party of the establishment, rife with career politicians involved in multiple scandals with indemnity. This has been the case even more in the current crisis, considering that PASOK was the first party to impose extreme austerity measures and heavy police repression. It is only seemingly a paradox that the right-wing propaganda in support of the restructuring has similar contempt for the Metapoliteusi, although for the precise opposite reasons: it presents the entire period from 1981 to today as a period of the ‘ideological hegemony of the left’ (that is, of labour unions, recalcitrant—mostly state-sector—workers, and left intellectuals) which has put a stranglehold on the Greek economy. The latter discourse has been common to the post-2012 New Democracy-PASOK government, the ‘national-socialist’ Golden Dawn, and financial services firms such as J. P. Morgan.142

Looking carefully at the history from 1974 until the current crisis presents a very different picture, which can certainly not be homogenised under the concept of ‘Metapoliteusi’. If anything, the word merely means ‘regime change’. The claim that the entire 38 years since 1974 were part of a single period of ‘Metapoliteusi’, which, as the right-wing discourse went, ended only in 2012, merely betrays the depth of the restructuring and the epochal change it has attempted to impose. Instead of this generalisation, the term should be reserved for (a) the fall of the dictatorship in 1974, and (b) the victory of PASOK in 1981, which went a long way towards expanding political freedoms for the left.

Most distorting, however, is the missing history of struggles from 1974 to the mid-’80s, which has been replaced by the mainstream presentation of this period as one of PASOK’s ascent to power through its charismatic populist leader, Andreas Papandreou. When the history of these struggles is remembered, it is often presented as if it had a revolutionary potential, which was co-opted and domesticated by PASOK.143 Here, I wish to present a different story, one that soberly

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examines the potential and the limits of the Metapoliteusi struggles, their dominant aims and ideology, and how the latter were a part of the dynamic that brought PASOK to power.

The junta fell in 1974 as the result of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, the student uprising of November 1973, which was combined with the first strikes after a long period of relative quiet,\textsuperscript{144} and the international crisis that had begun to affect Greece with high levels of inflation and low profit rates. It was smoothly succeeded by a junta-approved right-wing government under Karamanlis. Karamanlis’ government began a transition to democratic rule by legalising the Communist Party, releasing political prisoners, and prosecuting the core members of the junta regime. However, at the same time, the state apparatus of the old regime (most notoriously, the torturers of political prisoners) either remained in their positions, or received very lenient sentences, while neo-fascist organisations began to terrorise the social movements of the left.\textsuperscript{145} The government remained authoritarian, intimidating police practices continued to oppress demonstrators, and GSEE remained under government control.

In this still-repressive, hopeful, and crisis-ridden context, a self-organised factory-based movement emerged in the industrial sector, a sector that had grown very significantly in the previous decade. This movement began a power struggle for the self-representation of factory workers as opposed to sectoral union and party-led representation, establishing OVES, the Federation for from the perspective of the ‘autonomous’ contingent in the struggles. It includes flyers, newspaper cuttings and polemical essays.

\textsuperscript{144} Katsoridas, \textit{Vatikai Statimoi}, 125–126.

\textsuperscript{145} For more on these organisations and their activities that continue until today, see Chapter V.
Industrial and Factory Trade Unions, in 1979. It launched forceful struggles for higher wages (which had been dwarfed by high inflation) and better working conditions. As the movement grew, it established forms of democratic self-organisation of workers in the factories, and the demand of self-management began to emerge, evolving, in some cases, into factory occupations. The discourse of self-management became dominant within OVES, in a context where a large number of loss-making enterprises were threatened with closure. Alongside factories, in this period there were mobilisations in several other sectors (transport, electricity, telephony, construction, shipping, education etc.) where there was a large concentration of workers. A second wave of mobilisations (1979–81) was driven by the mobilisations of the more secure workers in the public sector.

Overall, this period saw the highest number of days lost in strikes thus far in Greek history.

In the same period, indebted small-holding farmers launched struggles to demand price protection and financial support by the state, as the low prices in which their products were sold to merchants and the industries were only sufficient to sustain a life of deep poverty in the countryside. Many villages had no infrastructure like electricity or water supply, and small farms had no irrigation. This condition had led previously to a large emigration wave from the countryside into urban areas and abroad in the 1950s, ’60s and into the early ’70s. In addition to state protection, there were also demands by landless peasants for the redistribution of the remaining large landed estates, belonging to monasteries, private landlords and the state. Similar to the workers’ organisations, farmers’ organisations, the Agricultural Societies, which had been very active in the 1960–67 wave of struggles, had been entirely dissolved by the dictatorship. The few struggles that took place during the dictatorship against compulsory land purchases by the state for development projects were heavily repressed. However, from 1974, with the impetus of wider social radicalisation, Agricultural Societies began to be re-established, and launched struggles involving strikes (the non-distribution of agricultural products), road closures, large demonstrations that confronted the police, and land occupations.

This questioning of the use of landed property also encouraged struggles by slum dwellers for the freedom to reside on land intended for development.

The student movement continued to be active, fighting for the conviction of those responsible for the deaths in the Polytechnic uprising, demanding the expulsion of former supporters of

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147 Katsorídas, Vazikoi Statímmoi, 131.
148 Sakellarópoulos, I Elláda sti Metapoliteusi, 68–74.
149 Christos Ioánnou, Místhóti apascholísi kai syndikálismós stin Elláda [Salaried employment and trade unionism in Greece], Melétes (Idryma Mesogéiakón Meletón, 1989), 102.
152 See the documentary ‘Megara’ (1973) by Sakis Maniatis and Giorgos Tsembropoulos on the movement in Megara against compulsory purchases for an oil refinery.
the junta from key university positions, and expressing solidarity with workers’ and peasants’ struggles.\textsuperscript{155}

In this period a new feminist movement also began to grow, alongside, but also separately from, women workers who organised themselves in the female-dominated sectors. Such women workers’ organisations had been first established in the 1954–67 period.\textsuperscript{156} But the Metapoliteusi feminist movement went beyond both the bourgeois feminist movement of the first half of the century and women’s labour struggles in the ’50s and ’60s, in that it brought into the public sphere issues of the private sphere. Inspired by the feminist movements abroad, this movement targeted its protests against patriarchal family institutions (the dowry system, the unequal rights to property of married and divorced women), the laws against abortion, and rape legislation.\textsuperscript{157} The female body came to be the centre of many discussions of sexuality (including compulsory heterosexuality) and identity, particularly in the ‘autonomous’ women’s groups, which separated themselves from the party-based women’s organisations that focused on economic matters and legislative change.\textsuperscript{158}

These autonomous groups were part of a broader rebirth of anarchist and anti-authoritarian ideologies towards the end of the dictatorship period, inspired to a great extent by the May 1968 movements in France.\textsuperscript{159} An anarchist/anti-authoritarian milieu grew associated with a militant counterculture, and found its centre in the area of Exarchia in Athens—a long-established intellectual centre of the metropolis, where a large number of radical publishers, bookshops, and social centres are located until today. These militant groups (whose positions varied and overlapped, ranging from ultra-leftists, anarchists, and situationists to supporters of violent vanguardism and armed struggle) had been active in dynamic demonstrations and clashes with the police, solidarity action in support of arrestees, university occupations, militant workers’ struggles, and anti-fascism.

Alongside these movements, the organisations of small business owners also became active in this period, with demands that matched the wider movement’s anti-imperialist, anti-EEC stance.\textsuperscript{160} As already mentioned, small family-based businesses objected to the opening of the Greek market, fearing competition from stronger European capitals, and preferring a protectionist regime of controlled markets and subsidies. Even though this movement was clearly petit-bourgeois in its demands, it formed an integral part of this period’s movements, precisely because of the latter’s understanding of the Greek economy, and by extension the ‘Greek people’, as the

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{157} Chárís Athanasiádís, ‘Oi dýo stigmés tou ellínikou feministikou kímnatos’ [The two moments of the feminist movement], in Eisaggó thematón schetikó me ta fíla stin ekpайдétikí diadikasia, ed. Eléni Maragkoudákí (University of Ioannina, 2007), 13–23.
\textsuperscript{159} Alexátoς, Istorikó lexikó, 34–35.
\textsuperscript{160} Lytras, ‘Mikro-Astikí Leitourgía’, 259–264.
dependent victim(s) of imperialism. The movement’s dominant discourse was patriotic socialist and anti-imperialist, in that it promoted the advancement of the national economy for the good of the ‘Greek people’, both ideals which the bourgeois class, in collaboration with foreign capitalist super-powers, particularly the USA, had supposedly betrayed.\textsuperscript{161}

Most of these movements were met with very heavy repression. The Karamanlis government expanded the police force, and introduced new riot police units and armoured vehicles for crowd control. The suspicious death of Alekos Panagoulis (1 May 1976), a leading anti-dictatorship activist who objected to the inclusion of junta sympathisers in the Karamanlis government, seemed to send the message that not that much had changed. In response, many of the demonstrations of the period culminated in rioting. This rioting was not acceptable to the left party organisations of KKE and PASOK, which favoured more disciplined forms of struggle, and typically condemned rioting as the result of ‘infiltration by provocateurs’.\textsuperscript{162} Generally, since the Polytechnic uprising, left parties struggled to keep up with the dynamism of grassroots struggles, and often strategically acted as a pacifying force in order to regain control.\textsuperscript{163}

Despite the intensity of the conflict around the practices of struggle between autonomous and party-controlled organisations, the containment of the struggles by political parties was eventually successful, as, in this period, the level of active participation in party organisations was extremely high.\textsuperscript{164} It would be mistaken to understand party participation and its influence on the social movements as a ‘capturing’ of struggles that misled them into a reformist path, as was argued at the time by the supporters of autonomous organising and of a non-parliamentary revolutionary route.\textsuperscript{165} The fact that the movements were so easily ‘captured’ was an expression of the very content of the movement’s demands (so long as they exceeded immediate concerns), including those of autonomous organisations: political liberties, social equality, social welfare, the redistribution of wealth, the socialisation of production through a combination of state ownership and self-management,\textsuperscript{166} and the creation of an independent national state and economy outside the EEC and free from American ‘imperialist control’ (given that the theory of dependency was the dominant understanding of Greece’s position in international power relations).\textsuperscript{167} Besides, mass active participation in political parties was, with the exception of KKE, a new phenomenon of the post-dictatorship period. The representative authoritarian hierarchy of the older party form, whose

\textsuperscript{161} Autónomí Prótovoulía, \textit{Noémris} 1973.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid., quoting several newspapers and political statements of PASOK and KKE.
\textsuperscript{164} On political party participation in this period, see Christóforos Vernardákis and Giánnis Mairís, ‘Oi taxikoí agoýnes sti Metapoliteusi. Mérös 2o: I thési tôn politikóin kómmatón sto krátos kai i épéktasi tís politikís antiprosoýopésis’, [Class struggles in Metapoliteusi. Part 2: The position of parties in the state and the expansion of political representation] \textit{Thésies}, no. 16 (1986).
\textsuperscript{165} Autónomí Prótovoulía, \textit{Noémris} 1973.
\textsuperscript{166} It is probably not coincidental that the discourse of self-management, which was promoted by PASOK, was also utilised in the parallel electoral campaign and 1981 victory of François Mitterrand in France.
\textsuperscript{167} See Sakellarópoulos, \textit{I Elláda sti Metapoliteusi}. 
members were mere voters, was no longer sustainable within a period of mass struggles. These demands, as well as significant sections of these movements’ organisations, were then integrated, albeit using different discourses, within the agendas of PASOK, KKE, and KKEes, the three main party forces within the movements. PASOK was not merely a ‘populist’ party led by a ‘demagogue’ aiming to gain power and control social movements, but it was also the political expression of movements whose demands already presupposed a form of state and a government that would put them into practice. Yet, PASOK, unlike the communist parties, while supporting radical reform in favour of the lower classes (‘the people’), as well as increasing the role of the state in proletarian reproduction through nationalisations, did not employ an anti-capitalist discourse.

Although some authors refer to a ‘defeat’ of the workers’ movement of this period due to a decrease in the number of strikes from 1978 onwards, it is important not to underestimate the social transformations effected by this wave of struggles, in which workers played a major, if not hegemonic, role. We may even speak of a victory, however partial, of this movement, expressed in the radical, in relation to Greece’s authoritarian history up until that point, social and economic transformations from the fall of the dictatorship to the first PASOK government. Politically, this was a momentous shift towards the legitimisation of the left, and, temporarily, of workers’ demands. PASOK’s measures in the first three years satisfied many of these demands. For workers, this included wage increases (a 40% increase on the minimum wage, translating into an average real annual wage increase of 2.2%, including a 4.1% increase in the industrial sector), and the introduction of the automatic adjustment of wages with inflation (ATA). The right to unionise was safeguarded, lock-outs were banned, and the existing government-installed right-wing leadership of GSEE was fired. PASOK’s labour organisation, PASKE, immediately became dominant within GSEE. For small producers, there were significant increases in subsidies. PASOK originally resisted EEC neoliberal economic policies, shifted the balance in public spending in favour of social welfare, and carried out a long series of nationalisations. Many of these nationalisations responded to labour movement demands in loss making enterprises, most of which belonged to powerful bourgeois families, including several mines; ship building firms; concrete production

168 Vernardákis and Mauris, ‘Oi taxikoí agónes 2’.
169 KKE esoterikou (Communist Party of Greece, Interior) was formed by a Eurocommunist faction of KKE that split off in 1968.
170 This is the most dominant view in the literature on the period, even though it has already been subjected to some criticism. See for example, Ággelos Elefánités, Ston asterismós ton laikismóú [In the constellation of populism] (Athens: Polítis, 1991). For criticisms, see Vernardákis and Mauris, ‘Oi taxikoí agónes 2’; Sakellarópoulos, I Elláda sti Metapoliteusi, 204–227.
171 Sakellarópoulos, I Elláda sti Metapoliteusi, 70–73.
172 Giannís Voulgarís, I Elláda sti Metapoliteusi 1974-1990 [Greece of Metapoliteusi] (Athens: Themélio, 2008), 161–162. Note, however, that statistics on wages and expendable income in the period 1981–85 vary. According to Bank of Greece data, the average expendable income of waged workers went through a series of rapid increases and decreases within these years, which cancelled each other out, so that the average annual wage increase was only 1.1%. Sakellarópoulos, I Elláda sti Metapoliteusi.
173 N. 1264/82 A.K.
174 Ibid.
firms; the largest textiles industry; paper mills; a steel firm; and a multinational oil firm.\textsuperscript{176} The state sector was enlarged so much that the size of its capital exceeded that of the private.\textsuperscript{177} PASOK’s government also took symbolic action to signal the end of persecution for the left. It disbanded the gendarmerie, it removed remaining military influence from state television, it officially recognised EAM and ELAS as part of the national resistance movement and provided pensions for veterans, and it encouraged the repatriation of political refugees. PASOK also decentralised state power, and it enacted laws on academic freedom, the university asylum, and the democratic participation of students in the management of universities.\textsuperscript{178} On women’s rights, and after some pressure from women’s movements, PASOK abolished the dowry and the legal privileges of men in marriage; it decriminalised adultery; it legalised abortions and it introduced new legislation to safeguard equal pay for women.\textsuperscript{179}

It is often claimed that PASOK’s attempt at socialist/social democratic transformation was ‘out of phase’,\textsuperscript{180} given that most of the West was at the same time entering a phase of neoliberal restructuring, having already gone through a social democratic or ‘Keynesian’ phase of accumulation (wages-productivity deal) that had reached a point of crisis. As we have seen, this temporary exception was not unique to Greece.\textsuperscript{181} In other southern European countries (Spain and Portugal) that had undergone dictatorships in their period of rapid industrialisation that climaxed in the 1960s, the fall of dictatorial regimes was typically followed by socialist governments. This shaky socialism was not even unique to Southern Europe, in that France also elected a ‘socialist’ president in 1981, François Mitterrand. The attempt to persist with social democratic policies in the early ‘80s when, in the US, the UK, and Germany the paradigm had already shifted towards neoliberalism is then perhaps not such a great anomaly. The dominance of authoritarian politics and dictatorships in a period designated as ‘Fordist’, which, as we have seen, is said to coincide with a ‘social democratic’ consensus,\textsuperscript{182} appears more anomalous and requires explanation.

Why would the labour movements of the ‘Fordist’ period in North-West Europe and North America be able to achieve their integration into a social-democratic form of state, while, in these Southern European countries, they were heavily oppressed by anti-communist dictatorships

\textsuperscript{176} Many large loss-making corporations were already nationalised under the prior New Democracy government, most notably Olympic Airways (owned by Onassis) and several enterprises owned by Andreadis (four banks, five insurance firms, a pesticides firm, two ship-building firms, several ships, the Hilton Hotel). Nikos Trántas, ‘Politiki kai oikonomía ti dekaetia tou ’80’, in Oikonomía kai politiki stin zýghroni Elláda, ed. Theódoros Sakellarópolous (Athens: Diónikos, 2004).

\textsuperscript{177} Georgios Provópoulos, Oi dimóisies epicheirísies kai organismat [Public enterprises and organisations], Eidikés Melètes 11 (Athens: IOVE, 1982).

\textsuperscript{178} The university asylum, which protected campuses from the invasion of police forces, was part of customary law since the 19th century, and not a newly-invented freedom of the Metapoliteusi as is sometimes claimed. Students have been known to appeal to it during protests since 1897. Its significance increased after the 1973 Polytechnic uprising, and the first PASOK government instituted it as a law. Christos D. Lázos, Ellíniko fílitikó kínima 1821–1973 [Greek student movement 1821–1973] (Athens: Gnósí, 1987). Antónis Manitákis, ‘To nòma tou panepistímiaxou asýlou símera’ [The meaning of the university asylum today], Eleutherotypía, 16 November 1996.

\textsuperscript{179} Athanasiádis, ‘Dió stigmés’, 22.

\textsuperscript{180} Voulgáris, I Elláda ti Metapoliteusi, 149.

\textsuperscript{181} Lipietz, Miracles, 113–130, see discussion in the introduction to this chapter.

\textsuperscript{182} Hirsch, ‘Postfordismus?’, 335.
in the same period? This cannot be explained as a mere ‘phase difference’ or a delay, because that would presume that a historical norm exists that ought to be followed in all regions. Anti-communist dictatorships in the region had been part of a pre- and post-WWII anti-communist strategy to control communist movements that had posed a threat to the integrity of the ‘western bloc’. Countering the threat of workers’ uprisings and of political alliances with the ‘East’ took a different form in different parts of Europe after WWII. In most of Northern Europe, peace succeeded the war, and labour was economically and politically integrated into a mode of accumulation driven by increasing productivity and increasing working class consumption. The strength of unions in many cases was integrated into the bureaucratic apparatuses of the state. The rate of expansion of mass consumption was significant, and the risk of wage rises exceeding productivity gains became a recognised problem. On the contrary, in Spain and Greece, where communist insurrection had provoked civil wars, dictatorships and heavy repression were the main ways of controlling workers. According to Sakellaropoulos, the colonels’ dictatorship was the product of a conjuncture where a successful regime of accumulation based on authoritarian social control (a constitutional monarchy with an interventionist monarch and a politically powerful army, as the most aggressive face of the bourgeois coalition) was being destabilised by social and labour movements and a popular centrist party, the Centre Union (Ενωσις Κεντρου).183

Anti-communist authoritarianism did not mean, however, that these countries followed a radically different accumulation model. In the case of Greece, capitals rapidly adopted new industrial technologies in the period of 1963–73, yet real wage increases in the same period (11.26%)184 were well below the impressive rise in the productivity of labour (7-12% annually) with the left and labour struggles being heavily repressed.185 Wage levels were regulated by the state (with the mediation of government-recruited union leaderships) through the institution of collective contracts, allowing industrial capitals to predict the controlled expansion of consumption, although realisation was also helped by a sustained increase in exports.186

The fall of these dictatorships and the struggles that followed could be seen as part of the post-1968 wave of struggles in Europe, which coincided with the crisis of this model of accumulation in the late 1960s–70s. The oil crisis and the devaluations of the dollar (to which the drachma was pegged), as well as sharp price increases in agricultural produce and raw materials, affected the Greek economy, with inflation increasing to 15% in 1974,187 and stagnation in profits and productivity (stagflation).188 Greek capitals, which had been dependent on imported oil and production technologies, suffered from increased production costs. To counter the crisis, strategies of accumu-

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186 Ibid., 25.
188 Ibid., 306.
lation internationally tended to shift towards the control of wages, and, with that, the policing of struggles. However, in the case of Greece, the fall of the dictatorship made it more difficult to contain these struggles and prolong a conservative, let alone authoritarian, political regime.

Despite this favourable political conjuncture, PASOK’s social-democratic policies were hard to sustain at a time when Greek capital was weakened from the international oil crisis, and came against a limit very soon. Most of these policies were funded by government debt, and it soon became clear that increasing aggregate demand and the ‘socialisation of production’ could not translate into a ‘lever for development’ in this instance. Instead, a significant bulk of the industrial sector that had driven the boom of the 1960s was making losses, but the nationalisation of those industries was not helping to turn them around. Soon, the slowdown would lead to a fall in the proportion of employment in the industries, although the absolute size of industrial employment still remained stable. Meanwhile, the national balance of payments was in deficit, because of a significant loss of income from the shipping industry, tourism, and emigrants, due to the international crisis. Business organisations then pressured the state to control wages, and an economic restructuring aiming at increasing productivity via policies that controlled wages and labour activism was in order. Still, PASOK attempted to introduce this restructuring through the very discourse of the socialisation of production and workers’ self-management. In 1983, it introduced the legal framework for socialisation, including the notorious Article 4 which limited the right to strike by making its legality conditional upon majority vote. This was presented as a ‘new quality’ of unionism, which would no longer remain stuck in ‘economism’ but would recognise its new ‘responsibilities’. Disagreement over the new law within GSEE drove the KKE unionists to leave the confederation. In the same year, PASOK attempted to institute ‘workers’ committees’ and workers’ ‘supervisory councils’ that would manage issues of labour and production jointly with employers and managers. In this way, ‘socialisation’ would truly become compatible with ‘development’: workers would be involved in management and in disciplining their own productivity. Within OVES, this move was welcomed as a step towards the ideal of the democratic management of production, despite voices that warned against the undermining of unions by management committees.

Indeed, the undermining of unions was soon a fact, as the restructuring (‘stabilisation programme’) involved, alongside the devaluation of the drachma, essentially the undoing of many of the measures introduced in the first years. This involved the gradual withdrawal of ATA; a reduc-

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193 For a critical discussion of the debate that took place at the time around the question of workers’ committees, and the ways in which they attempted to introduce a restructuring, see Anéstis Tarpágkos, ‘Epitropés ergazoménōn stis epicheirísis’ [Workers’ committees in enterprises], Théasis, no. 10 (1985).
tion in the minimum prices of agricultural products; the reduction of employment in public sector firms; the non-safeguarding of the new laws on trade unions’ freedoms; state intervention and economic dependency of the GSEE; and a series of spending cuts. In the years 1986–87, real wages fell by -8.9% and -4.4% respectively, while the profit rate improved. Inflation and the external deficit also fell, even though the pressure to improve ‘competitiveness’ and to get rid of labour market ‘rigidities’ continued.194 State subsidies of private investment also tripled from 12 billion drachmas in 1986 to 36.5 billion drachmas in 1988.195 PASOK’s dissenting activists were attacked by their governing party; the PASKE leadership of GSEE who disagreed with the restructuring was removed via the same legal act that had been previously used to democratise GSEE. The government was again installing its preferred leadership.196 These developments encouraged employers to go on the counter-attack as the factories movement had lost its strength in the crisis, and, increasingly, employers were able to gain control of resistant unions within workplaces by threatening and isolating their activists. The second PASOK government of 1985 was then the beginning of the end of Greece’s short-lived ‘social-democratic’ period.

PASOK’s swift transition to policies that went against the movements that had brought it to power was not only a compromise or a betrayal, but also the outcome of the very aims of ‘socialisation’ and ‘growth’ combined, expressed by the movements of the Metapoliteusi. The contradiction between these aims came to the surface as soon they began to be put into practice, because this attempt occurred at a time when the accumulation model of labour integration, social welfare, nationalised industries, and the wages-productivity deal had come into a crisis. This was a model founded on enhancing aggregate demand, but, most importantly, on the state’s direct contribution to the reproduction of labour power. The state’s task of the reproduction of capitalist society, that is, of maintaining an economy based on the production of value, soon contradicted the capacity to integrate labour demands. As soon as there was a crisis of profitability, the deepening of the exploitation of labour was posed as the route to recovery. In this context, PASOK’s so-called ‘capturing’ and ‘pacification’ of the movement was in fact the realisation of the limits of the movement’s demands: the nationalisation and ‘self-management’ of production entailed the involvement of labour in the management of the capitalist ‘national economy’. This involvement validated the policing of struggles that became an obstacle to capitalist ‘development’.

The defeat of labour struggles in this period are epitomised by their gradual inability to speak on behalf of ‘society’, ‘the nation’ and the ‘national economy’, because of the contradiction between their demands and the ‘neoliberal’, accumulation strategy that responded to the ‘70s crisis in western Europe. The interests of the ‘national economy’ — the return to profitability — contradicted the interests of labour in the clearest possible way, since profitability was no longer founded on domestic consumption and was impeded by wage growth. The growing reserve army of

196 Voulgarís, Êllîda tî Metapolîteusi, 363.
labour in the ‘core’ capitalist countries, as outsourcing brought on relative deindustrialisation, increased pressure on wages as well as welfare. The new model, in the face of crisis, recognised the problems that inflation caused to international markets, and the limits of protectionism. De-integrating labour and pushing down wages (both direct and indirect) would be a way not only to increase profits (and surplus value) but also to ward inflation and allow for more freedom in international trade. Finance would then play the important role of flexibly distributing investments around the world, and allowing for more accurate projections of profitability, secured by greater price stability.\textsuperscript{197} Greece was affected by this trend of restructuring since joining the EEC in 1981, even though political developments held back its adoption until five years later.

The period of the first two PASOK governments ended with the 1989 scandal which brought it out of power.\textsuperscript{198} The left parties formed a coalition with the right-wing New Democracy, in the name of ‘purging corruption’. This was another blow to the left as, after its alliance with the right it became irretrievably fragmented between KKE, the Left Coalition (the predecessor of today’s SYRIZA) and several other small parties. This reflected the fragmentation of the labour movement, which continued to weaken with ongoing deindustrialisation and the increasing alignment of state policies with those of the rest of the EEC.

Greece’s non-alignment and realignment with the dominant trends in economic and social management and modalities of accumulation is then related to the level and outcomes of class struggle in the country, as well as its geographical proximity to the countries of the ‘eastern bloc’ and prior episodes of intense struggle, namely the civil war. Prior to the Metapoliteusi, the labour movement was not integrated into the state, regardless of the political cost, because there was still the perceived threat that a strengthening of the labour movement and the Communist Party might take Greece into an alliance with the Eastern bloc. That was not only a threat for Greek capital but also a threat at the level of an international Cold War. As a result, there was a mild Western acceptance of the Greek state’s repression of the labour movement through the violent dissolution of democracy and the persecution of left and centrist politicians and activists.\textsuperscript{199} This authoritarian control of labour has been the dominant characteristic of the class relation in Greece through the 20\textsuperscript{th} century up until 1981.\textsuperscript{200} We can then say that the different temporality of the shift to social democracy in Greece was not a ‘delay’, but authoritarianism was an ingredient inherent to its local mode of accumulation. The Metapoliteusi signalled a crisis of that model, which permitted the development of struggles and a temporary ‘social-democratic’ deal, which soon also met its limits, unable to resolve the crisis.

\textsuperscript{197} See Sotiropoulos et al, \textit{Demystifying Finance}.
\textsuperscript{198} The scandal involved the embezzlement of Bank of Crete funds by its owner Georgios Koskotas, and his allegations that the Prime Minister, Andreas Papandreou, had received bribes in return for depositing the funds of state enterprises in the bank. Koskotas had also been supported by the government in gaining ownership of three daily newspapers, a radio station and the football club Olympiacos. According to Sakellaropoulos’ retrospective assessment, the government had attempted to support a new generation of entrepreneurs whom it saw as willing to make investments, as opposed to established industrialists whom it blamed of not taking any initiatives. Sakellaropoulos, \textit{Elláda sti Metapoliteusi}, 490.

\textsuperscript{199} Konstantina Maragkou, ‘The Foreign Factor and the Greek Colonels’ Coming to Power on 21 April 1967’, \textit{Southeast European and Black Sea Studies} 6, no. 4 (December 2006): 427–43.

\textsuperscript{200} This argument is also supported by Sakellaropoulos, \textit{Aíttia}.\textsuperscript{199}
1990–2008: The Continuing Restructuring and Struggles Against It

The series of governments from 1991 onwards (alternating between PASOK and ND) attempted to impose neoliberal-style reforms, many of which were met with strong resistance by social movements. The process of this phase of restructuring in Greece was affected by this resistance, the ways in which governments responded to it, as well as by the fall of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe. First, the fall of the ‘eastern bloc’ opened up opportunities for Greek capital to expand to those regions in banking, construction, and industrial production. A number of important infrastructural projects were also completed with state funding (the Athens Metro, the Venizelos airport, the bridge linking Rio and Antirrio, the Olympic Stadium for the 2004 games). The restructuring was promoted by the fiscal targets decided by the European Union as conditions for joining the monetary union. After the introduction of the Euro, Greek capital was further empowered and its growth continued. Growth was based not only on the introduction of new computing technologies that increased productivity (relative surplus value), but also on the extraction of absolute surplus value through the expansion of a precarious labour force. Continuing deindustrialisation compounded this, as many productive units were transferred to Eastern Europe, striking the last blow to what remained of the industrial labour movement. Labour was further weakened by privatisations, flexibilisation, the expansion of the informal labour market, and, correspondingly, the size of the unorganised labour force. At the same time, there was a significant influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe, and, from 2005 onwards, from South Asia and Africa as well. These immigrants were hyper-exploited by large employers (e.g. Olympics works) as well as small businesses.

Specifically, in this period, the extension and flexibilisation of working hours was institutionalised, while piecework, hourly-paid work, working from home and working undeclared and uninsured became more widespread. The unprecedented influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe, and particularly from Albania, also enabled low-paid and precarious work in the bottom ranks of the labour force (construction, care work, agricultural work, cleaning, and catering), while the wages of labour market entrants (graduates) remained very low. With wages failing to correspond to inflation, more women were forced to enter the labour market, as households were unable to sustain themselves on a single wage. With the collapse of the ‘Eastern Bloc’, the Greek left was further disempowered by a series of splits, while unions failed to integrate the more precarious workers of their sectors, who in many cases ended up organising independently (often in grassroots or ‘base’

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201 Undeclared labour increased rapidly after the 1970s crisis. The reader should not causally associate undeclared labour only with immigration, even if the latter has increased those rates even further. A great proportion of undeclared workers has also been women. V. N. Geogarkopoulou, ‘Atypa Morfomata kai Paraokonomia’ [Atypical Formations and the Shadow Economy], The Greek Review of Social Research, no. 63 (1986): 3–29. Also see Ntina Vaiou and Kostis Chatzimichali’s, Me ti raftomichani stin kouzina kai tous Poloi stous agrois [Sawing machine in the kitchen and Poles in the fields] (Athens: Exantas, 1997).

202 Mauroudas & Ioannidou, ‘Stadia’.

203 Sakellaropoulos, I Ellida sti metabolithi, 456.
unions, which mostly grew from 2000 onwards). One reason for this was that the most powerful unions within GSEE were those of the public sector and large industries. Besides, a great proportion of precarious workers were employed in the country’s small businesses, where relations with employers are personal, while a large proportion of immigrant workers were in the country illegally, and as such they had very limited rights.

It should be noted here that PASOK’s first governments safeguarded comparatively favourable work conditions in the public sector. These privileges consisted of wages higher than average, a shorter working day, permanent status (public sector workers could not be laid off except in cases of misconduct), and better pension and social security arrangements. These privileges and the associated labour market segmentation encouraged resentment among workers in the private sector as the restructuring gradually removed their labour rights and worsened their social security provisions. This was compounded by the universally despised byzantine state bureaucracy that public sector workers were accused of maintaining. This discontent has consistently been used ideologically by the state in order to gain public support for privatisations and other reforms in the public sector (mostly in health and education). Although the privileges of permanent public sector workers were not removed, a parallel, precarious labour stratum was created in the public sector, by employing hourly-paid workers with temporary low-wage contracts, as well as outsourcing positions via subcontracting agencies. All these changes betray a restructuring strategy of increasing the extraction of absolute surplus value (lengthening the work-time required to reproduce labour power) in the private and the subcontracted public sectors. In other words, this was an attack on the direct wage, which was not counterbalanced by increasing spending on indirect wages (welfare).

On the contrary, pensions and social security were a prime target for cuts. Already since the late 1980s the government declared that the system was in deficit because of increased spending on pensions and the health service under the first PASOK government. The neoliberal argument according to which extreme state generosity and an ageing population caused the deficit is contestable, at least in the case of Greek social security funds. According to studies by INE-GSEE, IKA’s (Institute of Social Security) deficit was not so much caused by increased spending, but was due to its low income. IKA funds had been held in the Bank of Greece in the post-war period, providing an interest rate below the market average. Employers also failed to pay social security contributions for increasing numbers of undeclared workers. Yet IKA renegotiated employer debts with terms favourable to employers. This lost income was assessed to constitute 15–20% of IKA’s total income. To cover the resulting deficit, IKA took private loans with interest rates in the range of 32–35%. Through successive legislations, the complexity of which is beyond the scope of this chapter, governments increased the pension age, increased the number of years of work required to

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205 Katsoridas, Vasikoi Stathmoi, 146–147.
206 Ibid.
207 The Greek national health system was never universal but depends on individual workers’ social security contributions, for a part of whose disbursement employers are responsible.
obtain a full pension, changed the rules of pension calculation so as to cut pensions, increased workers’ pension contributions, and cut incapacity pensions, making them conditional on a more advanced level of incapacity. The parts of the wage that were designated as ‘Christmas, Easter, and holiday benefits’ were no longer to be included in the total wage for the calculation of pensions.210 The primary healthcare offered by IKA to its beneficiaries also remained underfunded, involving long queues and very little regulation of the quality of service provision. Meanwhile, the contribution of beneficiaries to the cost of medicines increased, and the right to free health service became conditional on a higher level of social security contributions. This situation gradually led those with relatively higher incomes to use private sector services. In 2008, IKA wrote off an enormous amount of debt owed by employers as part of the integration of smaller ‘special funds’ into its fund.211 Clearly, this was a restructuring policy that redistributed social costs downwards.

The policy was complemented by an upwards redistribution of profits. State spending was increasingly diverted away from welfare and towards infrastructural projects, carried out by state-supported private capital, as well as towards privatisations (of airports, ports, telecommunications, banks, undeveloped public land, including beaches and forest areas, etc.) and the opening of state-monopolised markets to the private sector (health, college-level education, the radio and television industries) with beneficial terms and subsidies for the new owners and entrepreneurs. Overall, the state’s intervention in the distribution of incomes increasingly favoured the interests of capital over those of workers, while unions were gradually disempowered. The changes disproportionately affected the younger generation—the entrants to the labour market—and perpetuated the marginalised status of immigrant workers. From the mid-1990s onwards, households began to supplement their incomes with consumer credit (via mortgages, loans and credit cards), which had become available cheaply.

The full range of struggles against this restructuring cannot be presented here, but some broad observations can be made. Struggles defending wages gradually receded, becoming less and less successful, and were replaced by movements defending various forms of welfare and state provision: movements resisting privatisations and pension reforms; movements in education, involving university and high-school students as well as education staff; the first struggles of immigrants. Organised union representation declined, and a new type of grassroots unionism emerged, a form of labour activism by outsourced and other types of insecure workers, including immigrant workers. The riots of December 2008—which will receive special attention, as one of the final episodes of this period—were also at a distance from production, although its more political tendencies protested GSEE’s inactivity and its marginalisation of precarious workers.

In 1990, the largest wave of strikes of the decade resisted the abolition of ATA, the pension reform to increase age limits, and the re-privatisation of previously nationalised loss making

210 It should be obvious that designating a part of the wage as a ‘special benefit’ is the perfect strategy for taking it away when so desired. These ‘benefits’ were strategically and ideologically excluded from the total wage also when Greece was scrutinised during the sovereign debt crisis for supposedly offering workers too good a deal.

211 N. 3655/2008 AK, Ar. 137.
enterprises (Peirai̕ki Patrai̕ki, Olympic Catering, Euvoia Mines, VELKA, and others), introduced by the ND government. Despite the large number of strikes (234) and 20 million lost hours of work, the measures were implemented. Policies of low-level austerity continued through the 1990s, without any significant workers’ resistance. In 2001, a renewed pension and social security reform, now introduced by PASOK, faced particularly strong resistance, with very high levels of strike participation (75% in the private sector) and broad social support, including the support of small business associations. Although the mobilisation was able to halt the reform, a similar pension reform was approved the next year, and no further significant strike waves took place until the sovereign debt crisis.

From 2000 onwards, in response to the lack of union representation, small self-organised unions began to be set up, mostly in the urban service sectors where flexibilised and insecure employment was normalised (shop assistants, catering workers), or sectors created through public sector outsourcing (couriers, hospital cleaners). These unions cannot be compared with the grassroots industrial unions in the 1970s in terms of their strength. They are rarely recognised by the larger unions or employers, so they have had little negotiating power. Since they cannot offer security, they often cannot attract the majority of workers in their sector or workplace to organise strikes, and have thus engaged in labour activism (blockades and demonstrations) outside their workplaces. Grassroots-level unionism continued to be active through to the crisis period, and will be discussed in Chapter IV. Beyond grassroots labour organising, there were, of course, also ad-hoc labour disputes in the informal sector, notably by immigrant agricultural workers, who were usually not supported by unions or any political organisations, and faced extremely violent repression by employers, police, and local communities.

Amid the weakness of labour struggles, this period saw the rise of a new oppositional social category, that of the ‘youth’. Some of the most significant social struggles in these two decades were carried out by university and high-school students. The wave of occupations in thousands of schools across the country in 1990–91, supported by teachers’ strikes, fought against reforms that would cut the education budget and reinstate stricter control in classrooms, such as the reintroduction of uniforms. The occupations lasted for several months and encountered heavy police repression as well as right-wing vigilante attacks. In one such attack, a teacher was murdered by a member of the New Democracy party youth (ONNED) who had tried to close down a school occupation in Patras. The incident inflamed the protests and forced the government to withdraw the law. But the occupations also had a character that went beyond what was circumscribed by their demands. For high-school students, the occupation was also an act of resistance against the daily

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213 Ibid., 87.
214 N. 3029/2002 AK.
216 ‘To chronikó tis dolofonías tou Nikou Temponéra’ [The chronicle of Nikos Temponeras’ murder], ΤΙ/Χ5, 27 July 2011.
routine of school-work.²¹⁷ There was a tendency, in the following years—1993, 1996–2000 and 2005–2008—for mass school occupations to become annual events, which moved from demanding better education and a lighter burden on pupils, to expressions of revolt in the face of a quickly vanishing future (particularly in 2008).

University students also carried out a series of significant mobilisations, with occupations as their main bargaining tool, in 1991, 1998, 2001 and 2006–07. These responded to a series of gradual reforms that aimed to align Greek higher education with the Bologna Declaration, to allow the establishment of private universities and the privatisation of university property, as well as to introduce a new system of assessment. The reforms also aimed to modify the law concerning the university asylum. A reform was proposed in 2006, according to which the ‘rights to work and education’ would be protected from ‘anyone’ who might try to obstruct them, and not only the police. This effectively suggested that protests, occupations, and strikes were violations of asylum.²¹⁸ These reforms, as part of the overall economic and social restructuring introduced over this period, aimed at rationalising the role of education in the reproduction of labour-power, that is, forging a more direct link between education and work, as well as transferring the costs of this education from the state to individuals. This was in line with the corresponding trend of minimising the state’s contribution in the reproduction of labour-power, while enhancing its facilitation of private investment. The restructuring, of course, also had a political aspect. The university reforms have been aimed at controlling student activism and the influence of the left in university campuses. The asylum reforms were directly aimed at this.

The strikes and occupations in education of 2006–2007 amounted to one of the strongest responses to the restructuring over these two decades, managing to force a withdrawal of the reform for private universities, while many of the other reforms (intensifying studies by shortening their length; introducing forms of funding that are conditional on low-paid or unpaid academic work; stopping the provision of free textbooks; university asylum reform; making university funding conditional upon assessment of academic performance; internal regulations containing a series of disciplinary rules affecting students) were eventually only partially enforced due to the resistance of tutors and students. University occupations and mobilisations began in May 2006 and continued, after the summer break, from October 2006 to March 2007. A strike by university tutors from May to June 2006 that joined forces with students in large unruly demonstrations escalated the situation. The number of occupations reached 420 nationwide (out of 448 university departments),²¹⁹ and the government was forced to withdraw the reforms temporarily. In September, school teachers went on an impressive 6-week-long strike demanding better pay and less flexibilisation. In October, high-school occupations also spread across the country (467 schools at their peak). In 2007, the reforms were resubmitted and a renewed wave of occupations began, accompanied by weekly demonstrations from January through March. These demonstrations were very large and frequently ended in

²¹⁹ Ibid., 36.
clashes with the police, in which dozens of demonstrators were badly injured. In February 2007, PASOK withdrew from the discussion on the constitutional reform that would open the way for private universities. Yet, on 8 March, PASOK rejoined the government in approving the rest of the reforms, which soon brought the end of the movement.

Certain characteristics of this movement might be said to have anticipated the riots that took place a year and a half later. The role of ‘active minorities’ greatly expanded, questioning the dominant role of political parties in student politics. Due to the broader than usual participation in the assemblies by students who did not belong to political parties, they became less controllable by organised left party activists, and their traditional methods of functioning—focusing on producing carefully-worded ideological texts; defining strict march routes; aiming for ideological hegemony among students—were to some degree undermined. This situation allowed militant minorities to be formed, to gain influence, and to define the combativeness of the student movement overall. While the great mass of students did not actively participate in occupations or their coordinating discussions, they took part in assemblies and demonstrations in large numbers, and supported and/or participated in confrontations with the police, to the extent that the mainstream press began to consider whether this reflected ‘the rage of an entire generation’. It may not be so far-fetched to suggest that the frequency and intensity of demonstrations around this movement to an extent legitimised the act of confronting the police, mostly on the grounds of responding to police violence. This was in light of instances of undercover or uniformed police heavily assaulting and tear-gassing handcuffed or otherwise trapped protesters, arresting them without charges, and refusing their access to lawyers.

At the time, 25.5% in youth unemployment and the minimum wage of €700 were already considered to be causing significant hardship. It was commonplace for the younger generation to depend on family incomes throughout their 20s. Yet conditions were to become far worse very soon, and perhaps the militancy of these student mobilisations betrayed a premonition of that possibility, in response to accelerated restructuring, heightened police repression and new legisla-

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Ibid., 9.

Aiōnioi katalipseis & Ametanōitoi apergoi, Faištikis katalipseis, aperγια daskalίν: Mia synαntiων pou (den) είχε [Student occupations and the teachers’ strike: A meeting that (never) happened] (Athens, 2008), 34.

Examples are: radio station interventions; locking oppositional professors into their offices; blocking all research activity; publicising the university’s financial data found in hard disks; temporarily blocking rail stations and highways; intervening in call centre workplaces where fellow students were working; demonstrating in ‘popular’ neighbourhoods, demonstrating at GSEE offices to demand a general strike, and more. Ibid.


One significant and much publicised incident of police violence was the ‘flower box case’ (ypótheši zarn-tiniéra). In the evening after the demonstration of 17 November 2006, undercover police heavily beat up a student from Cyprus in front of uniformed police. He was arrested without charges and was only hospitalised the next day. His family was not informed. The official police report stated that he had accidentally fallen into a flower box. Despite the widely publicised video evidence of the assault, by 2013, only two of the officers involved in it had been convicted. Amnesty International, Police Violence in Greece: Not Just Isolated Incidents (London: Amnesty International, 2012), 45–46; Vasōl's Papanastasoul's, ‘Athōi 6 apó tous 8 Astoninikouš gia tî zarntiniéra’ [Six out of eight officers acquitted on the flower box case], ELEFTHEROΤYP'IA, 19 January 2013.

‘Prōtía metaxý tôn 27 stín anergía tôn néon’ [First place among the 27 in youth unemployment], ELEFTHEROΤYP'IA, 4 May 2007.

This was a trend that began in the 1980s. Sakellaropoulos, I Elláda sti Metapolitevía, 436–437.
The Riots of December 2008 and Their Aftermath

On 6 December 2008, a police officer shot and killed a 16-year-old teenager, Alexis Grigoropoulos, in the ‘anarchist’ neighbourhood of Exarchia, for allegedly cursing and throwing a plastic bottle at the officer. The event was followed by furious demonstrations and riots of an unprecedented scale that lasted several days. The suddenness, spread, and duration of the riots were uncontrollable and surprising even for the anti-authoritarian milieu, whose presence in the area and its long-running feud with the police was directly linked with the incident. Everything began before the anti-authoritarian milieu could make a decision for any kind of strategic reaction to the event, and the riots spread very quickly across the country, lasting for at least four days, with thousands of participants. From Monday the 8th, the riots spread among high-school students throughout Greece, who left their schools to go and attack police stations and anti-riot units. The element of spontaneity was defining, in the sense that few of the actions were prearranged or organised: participants met in the street and rallied alongside strangers.

The December riots, despite taking place in the end of 2008, when the shockwaves of the global financial crisis had already reached the USA and the EU, cannot be easily classified as an event that belongs to the period of crisis, although it did take place in a context of anxiety about its outcome. In late 2008, ‘Greek consumers’ were said to express deep worries regarding future developments in unemployment and their personal incomes. The crisis had begun to impact negatively on the construction and tourism sectors, and interior demand had begun to fall by the first quarter of 2009. Yet the discussions of the time, referring to an uprising of the ‘700-euro generation’ (even if sometimes reduced to ‘600’ or ‘500’), appear very distant from the attack on the wage and the mass unemployment unleashed by the restructuring responding to the crisis, as will become obvious in the following chapters. Still, this was certainly not a time of prosperity. The pressure of over 20 years of neoliberal-style restructuring had begun to be clearly felt among a younger generation whose future prospects already looked worse than those of their parents. Polic-

227 ‘Efarmózetai o periortismós diadilóseon’ [Demonstration restrictions to be enforced], Kathimerini, 3 January 2007.
228 This is evident in several publications, blogs and oral accounts that have some affinity with the anti-authoritarian milieu. For some examples, see Woland, ‘Dekémvrís 2008: Mia prosphátheia na anieíchousome tì dynámì kai ta ória tou agōnâmas’ [An attempt to detect the power and limits of our struggle], Blaumachen, no. 3 (June 2009); Cognord, ‘Enas chρόνος kai káti me tous pigkounous’ [A little over a year with the penguins], Cognord, 4 March 2010, https://neucognord.wordpress.com/2010/03/04/.
229 Cognord, ‘Enas chρόνος’.
230 ‘Oi Ellînes einai oi pio apaisidioxioi’ [Greeks are the most pessimistic], Kathimerini, 7 December 2008.
232 Arguably, this appellation was a discursive instrument for containing the uprising by reducing it to a ‘generational’ problem as opposed to an economic and political one. Eirînì Chîrîakí-Poulou and Álxandros Sakellariou, ‘Îl koinôniki katastasi tîs “genias tîn 700 eurî” kai i anadysis tîs stonimerio tîs [The social construction of the “700-euro generation’ and its emergence in the daily press], The Greek Review of Social Research, no. 131 (2010): 3–32.
The murder of Grigoropoulos showed that the state not only no longer negotiated, but that it was cultivating a repressive apparatus which would not hesitate to terrorise and kill at any excuse. The riots in response to this did not articulate any specific demands, such as the prosecution of the officer, or a better social deal. They responded with immediate, spontaneous acts of destruction. From the very first moment, these riots were not merely a revenge on police violence, but also included the vandalising of government buildings, bank burning, and destroying and looting shops. Looting—expropriating any commodity from food and basic items to luxury goods—should not be seen as an ‘opportunist’ activity that took advantage of the meaning of the riots, because it was part of that meaning. The riots pointed at a stifling social situation in a broader sense, which encompassed the commodity form and private property as well as loci of state power. Their duration over four days, often continuing through the night, temporarily denaturalised the ‘normality’ of going to work, of shopping, of circumscribed and hierarchical politics, as well as the state’s monopoly on violence.233

The rioting crowds were composed of teenagers, including many ‘second-generation immigrants’; young students, workers or unemployed; some older persons; immigrants; and groups of the anarchist/anti-authoritarian milieu. The latter were, for the first time, outnumbered in violent street practice.234 Groups of the broader left participated in demonstrations, but tended to distance themselves from the riots. The looters tended to be immigrants and high-school and university students. Immigrants also took part in anti-police clashes in the inner city neighbourhoods where they lived, attacking the Omonoia Police Station, known for systematic racist abuse. But while the riots have been justifiably described as proletarian, based on both their composition and practice,235 the rioters rarely acted as students, as immigrants or as workers: they did not affirm any particular subject. Communiques issued by groups in the left and anti-authoritarian milieus referred to the subject of the uprising as young ‘proletarians’.236 These groups were nonetheless unable to either represent or control the rioters when the latter acted against their political principles. Those who condemned the looting or the destruction of ‘small shops’ were unable to stop such practices.

The political language that accompanied the riots was itself inspired by the riots. Like the practices of riot, it was a negative language, repudiating the entirety of a murderous social system.237

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236 For example, Proletárioi apó tin katelimménì ASOEE, ‘Katastréfoume to parón giati erchomaste apó to mellon’ [We are destroying the present because we come from the future], katalipsiasoee.blogspot.co.uk/2008/12/, 14 December 2008.
237 The pamphlet issued by the Albanian Immigrants’ Social Centre, Autés oi mères einai kai dikés mas [These days are ours too], is characteristic in making links between the murder of Grigoropoulos, the riots by high-school students, and the ‘mass participation of second-generation immigrants’, cataloguing the racism, abuse
The main political voice of the riots came from the anti-authoritarian milieu and the left, some of whom participated in the riots, while others organised large daily rallies of sizes similar to those of the peak of the 2006–07 student movement. These groups also initiated the occupations of universities and public buildings around the country, in order to create spaces to reflect on what was happening and facilitate the ‘continuation of the uprising’ beyond the streets. The occupation of public buildings other than universities as a tactic of struggle, which was unprecedented in December 2008, would become more common in the crisis mobilisations.

The December riots were felt by many of the participants as a qualitative break from the student movement of 2006–07 and the period of social struggles that had preceded it. On one hand, this was because a social activity seemed to have spontaneously emerged whose practice went far beyond the usual forms of protest, without positing a specified subject and without formulating demands. On the other hand, and for the same reason, the events escaped the control or imagination of political organisations, whose vanguardism was seriously challenged. With the lack of a workers’ subject, the workerist desire for political initiatives towards creating a social uprising that would invade workplaces would not be fulfilled. The occupation of GSEE offices in Athens, which was a reaction to GSEE cancelling a pre-planned 24-hour strike that had happened to coincide with the riots, did not evolve in that direction, as wished by politicised occupiers. The demand-less character of riots and of the occupation itself, which did not aim at a dialogue with GSEE, meant that the occupation became an end in itself. This caused a conflict with grassroots unionists who, used to acting with clear political aims, could not see the point of the occupation unless it related to a specific workers’ struggle. Despite thousands passing through the five-day occupation and hundreds participating in its assemblies, few actions emerged from it that would affect workplaces, such as interventions or blockades, or even work stoppages.

In every case, it is clear that even though December can be called with some validity an uprising of young proletarians, it was not a workers’ uprising, and it could not become one through political agitation. In fact, this was a social explosion that took place away from the spaces of work. Instead, it targeted the space where the obstacles to proletarian reproduction are immediately experienced, the space of consumption and exchange.

According to TC’s analysis of the December riots, the riot, in targeting the forms of capitalist reproduction (particularly the state and the coercive aspects of proletarian reproduction), had as its content ‘the struggle of the proletariat against its own existence as a class’. Yet it faced a limit (‘the glass floor’) in that it remained at the level of reproduction and could not expand into the sphere of production. TC explain at length that by ‘production’ they do not mean to privilege as

and deaths suffered by immigrants in Greece in ‘eighteen years of [accumulating] rage’. (republished in ‘Đekemvris 2008: Chronologi mias exégesis’ [December 2008: Timeline of an uprising], Blasamachen, no. 3 (June 2009); 29–81, 54.

238 A. G Schwarz, Tasos Sagris, and Void Network, We Are an Image from the Future (Edinburgh; Oakland: AK Press, 2010).

239 Woland, ‘Đekemvris’.

240 The only demand posed was the freeing of riot arrestees.


revolutionary a specific group of workers or the traditional working class. Yet, although they qualify their statements by reference to the mutual presupposition of production and circulation, they insist that blockades and occupations, in acting upon sites of value circulation, are by definition limiting because only through struggles arising in sites of value production can wage-labour (and labour) be abolished. 

While TC analyse the segmentation and fragmentation of the proletariat in other texts, it is notable that, in this analysis, they do not go very far in that direction. They point out that these ‘limits’ existed because rioters only represented the most precarious segment of the proletariat, the labour-market entrants whose ‘lack of future’ meant not only dire future employment prospects but also a threat to their physical lives represented by Grigoropoulos’ murder. They see a limit in that the uprising did not expand to other segments that could initiate a struggle in workplaces, but they do not ask how such expansion might have happened. Sometimes they appear to attribute this lack of expansion to a fetishism of the moment of coercion in proletarian reproduction, which reduces exploitation to mere domination. But it may also be this very fragmentation that makes such expansion, upon which a generalised workers’ uprising might be premised, impossible. It could be that, for this reason, contrary to TC’s assumptions, future revolutions might not emerge from the sphere of production, but as invasions into that sphere from the outside.

The limit of the December uprising may then be better conceptualised spatially as its inability to extend its social questioning beyond the street, the shops and the public buildings and into the private spaces of production and reproduction, of exploitation and gendered domination, such as workplaces and households, except to a very limited extent. In this sense, this was not a rebellion that affected all aspects of everyday life, and certainly not the most hidden ones.

Yet, if December did not alter existing relations, it certainly created new relations, it legitimised new social practices and opened up new social spaces. Through organising local assemblies, new spaces for social bonds and self-organisation were created, a legacy that would be revived after the squares movement in 2011. The political and social networks that the events of December brought together were also central to mobilisations that took place later in 2009.

Above all, particularly because of their unusual generalisation and partial social legitimisation, the events of December generated a sense of oppositional strength among the most precarious...
ious ‘segment’, which was expressed in the protests and mobilisations that succeeded it. Significantly, the participation of immigrants in the riots was a precedent for the clash between Muslim protesters and police on 21 and 22 May 2009, when, during another police raid into one of the many makeshift mosques used by Muslim immigrants, an officer tore a Quran notebook into pieces. Immigrants rioted against the police and vandalised cars, shops, and banks. The 2009 movement of solidarity to Konstantina Kouneva, the Bulgarian secretary of the Pan-Attica Union of Cleaners, who had been a victim of an acid attack for her labour activism, also had additional energy inspired by December, and extended to occupations, demonstrations, and non-payment campaigns in Metro stations around Athens. The gendered and racialised aspects of the cleaners’ work conditions and of the attack were also brought to the surface, although this did not spark a deeper critique of the meanings of gender associated with their situation.

As those energies waned, organised politics and forms of vanguardism returned. A particularly long-lasting form of vanguardism that grew right after December was that of ‘armed struggle’ organisations such as the Cells of Fire Conspiracy and Revolutionary Struggle. These groups, many members of which were arrested over the following years, have received significant support within the anarchist/anti-authoritarian milieu.

CONCLUSIONS
This chapter has attempted to do several things at once. Against the notion that capitalism is always capitalism and hence our theoretical tools remain valid, it argued for the theoretical usefulness of the historical periodisation of capitalism and of identifying differences between periods, in order to demarcate social struggles in the present and develop new theoretical tools for their analysis. It also argued for a particular method of periodisation, which views capitalism not only in terms of economic history but also as a class relation and as a process of social struggle. The political, the level of the state and its discourse, as well as social struggles and their ideologies are as central to such a periodisation as the economic level.

But such a periodisation cannot be founded on a global, homogeneous history, in relation to which the local history of Greece is merely an instantiation or an exception. At the same time, the history of capitalism is neither indeterminately heterogeneous, nor is the relationship between different temporalities explainable by a simple relation of dependence. In becoming a global system, capitalism produces contemporaneity but not homogeneity, in that the variety of forms of exploitation in different parts of the world belong to the same time or period, because they mutually imply and influence one another, but are heterogeneous for this precise reason. The notion of multiple coexisting modes of production or of the existence of pre-capitalist or ‘underdeveloped’ ‘remnants’

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251 Konstantina Kouneva was a cleaner at the Attica Metro. She was the victim of an acid attack, after having received threats, in the context of a labour dispute with subcontractor employers.
is then rejected, because no local form of exploitation can be understood as having evolved in isolation from and unaffected by the decidedly capitalist international level.

The chapter then applied these insights by providing a short account of the specificities of Greek capitalism, its class structure as it emerged and transformed through historical conjunctures and social struggles, and its forms of integration into the dominant economic and political trends in Western Europe, with emphasis on the period after WWII and Greece’s civil war. While this account is certainly incomplete, since this type of historical research only formed a secondary aspect of this project, it is possible to identify the following cycles of accumulation and cycles of struggle in recent Greek history, which adapted in local, particular ways, to the accumulation strategies and the dynamic of class struggle dominant in the capitalist ‘core’.

a) 1945–73: A politically unstable period characterised by intense class struggle, which involved extremely heavy repression, corresponding with the Cold War era, in response to the threat communists had posed during the civil war. Corresponding to the ‘Fordist period’, industrial production also developed rapidly, but, in contrast to western Europe, this was not accompanied by the political integration of labour organisations or a ‘social-democratic’ compromise. Instead, the continuation of accumulation was ensured through authoritarian political forms and social control: a constitutional monarchy with interventionist royalties, and a dictatorship, both oriented towards eliminating the communist threat. This period ended with the fall of the Colonels’ junta, which meaningfully coincided with the global crisis, as profits and productivity stagnated and high inflation rapidly wiped out any modest wage gains.

b) 1973–1985: The period began with grassroots-initiated struggles advancing democratic and socialist demands, whose most radical imaginary was that of the self-management of production. The multiplicity of social demands, which had been held down under the dictatorship, as well as the concentration of labour in factories, unleashed a form of grassroots social power, but the conjuncture was short-lived. This cycle of struggles clashed with the beginnings of a neoliberal restructuring that was becoming the dominant trend in western capitalism. As a result, the victory of the movement in bringing to power a party that represented its most moderate aspects became a defeat and its own limit, as the idea of self-management was soon integrated into a restructuring that aligned itself with the neoliberal turn elsewhere in western Europe. Self-management was all too rapidly rearticulated as the self-management of austerity and the self-control of workers’ movements. The introduction of state welfare and large scale nationalisations only lasted for a few years, only to be very soon followed by cuts, wage freezes and denationalisations. It could be described as a period of transition to the new model of accumulation, marked by a cycle of struggles unleashed by the fall of an oppressive regime.

c) 1986–2008: In this period, which after 1989 was also very stable politically, the neoliberal restructuring (the new cycle of accumulation) gained pace, while social movements’ demands became gradually delegitimised. The restructuring did not always go forward as smoothly as had been planned by governments, due to social resistance, but this was less and less a workers’ resistance over this period. The labour market, and the proletariat, became segmented between per-
manent and secure workers (usually older and in the public sector) and subcontracted, flexible, temporary or otherwise insecure workers (usually younger, non-Greek, and female, in the private sector). Resistance to the restructuring then tended to involve the younger generation and immigrants, who were nevertheless not organised as workers. Relatively strong structures of resistance also existed in universities that were only defeated with great difficulty. The period ended with movements and riots led by the younger generation, which, while not making any specified demands, legitimised new practices of struggle outside the sphere of production. The period ended with the sovereign debt crisis in the Autumn of 2009.

This restructuring, and the associated delegitimisation of labour demands, effected the first stage of a shift in the dynamic of the class relation, which is indicated in the passage from struggles organised or hegemonised by the labour movement, concerning the direct wage, the rights of workers, and their autonomy in organising their labour, to a struggle in spheres outside production, concerning the indirect wage and circulation. Even though the workers’ movement in favour of ‘self-management’ in the ’70s had already faced crisis and factory closures, workers’ power and organisation was still possible, despite numerous political obstacles, on the back of workers’ relatively stable concentration in factories and construction sites, and their importance to capitalist growth during those decades. That movement had been able to achieve wage increases and the expansion of labour rights and benefits, even if only temporarily. The identifiable shift took place through the process of deindustrialisation, as well as government policy that created an ever-expanding section of the labour force that was flexible and precarious, and, because of this, structurally fragmented. This was not a merely political shift, but a shift that was related to international tendencies in the mode of accumulation. The crisis and capitalist competition pushed toward a mode of accumulation that would no longer depend on a national working class that produced and consumed commodities. The advances in finance, shipping, and transportation, and, in the case of Greece, the opening up of nearby Eastern European economies offering cheap labour and new consumers, pushed those capitals that survived the competition towards increasing internationalisation and outsourcing.

I call this a shift in the dynamic of the class relation and not simply a technical transformation, or a recomposition of the working class, because it signalled a reshaping of the relationship between the reproduction of capital and the reproduction of labour-power, as well as their mediation by the state. The reproduction of a local, national labour-force would now appear as less of a necessity for internationalised capital. On the other hand, as TC has put it, under these new conditions, the national working class would begin to have to face ‘the whole of capital’, meaning that it would be subject to competition in an international labour market. Its terms of integration into the circuit of capitalist reproduction could no longer be disputed in local terms, and, most importantly, the terms imposed in this unbalanced bargain to the local managers of labour-power (the state) would actively effect the flexibilisation, precarisation, and fragmentation of the class. It is in this sense that we should understand TC’s emphasis on the inability of the proletariat to find

253 Théorie Communiste, ‘Communization in the present tense’, 43.
strength or a positive identity in its class condition, that is, in its relation to capital and its form of integration into the circuit of value production.

As will be discussed in the next chapter, the sovereign debt crisis deepened this shift, producing a sharp qualitative break between the struggles up to 2009 and those that followed it. Consequently, the riots of December 2008 cannot be said to belong to the crisis period, contrary to many writers classifying them as ‘crisis riots’ at the time. The chapters that follow will show that, as the crisis affected an extremely broad section of society, ‘youth’ would no longer be the privileged subject of resistance. The crisis emerged as an issue that not only raised the question of the wage and the ability to be securely integrated into the wage relation, but also that of democracy as a question of national sovereignty, causing a deep political crisis, further legitimising violent street action and the rejection of official labour organisations and established political parties.
III. The Crisis and Restructuring

INTRODUCTION
The global financial crisis that broke out in 2008 radically halted the growth of the Greek economy, and the developments that took place in its wake were rapid. Over 2009, Greek banks were already making losses and reducing the availability of credit to small and medium-sized businesses, despite having received a €28bn government support package. After the elections of November 2009, the country attracted an official rebuke by the European Commission, when the new centre-left PASOK government revealed the country’s deficit to be reaching 12.5% of GDP, with the public debt rising to 111% of GDP. Over the following months, pressures rose on the newly elected government, which had promised to turn Greece into a social democratic ‘Denmark of the South’,¹ to impose austerity and restructuring measures in order to reduce its deficit and debt and come closer in line with the EU stability pact. Meanwhile, interest rates on government bonds rose rapidly, making it increasingly difficult for the country to service its debt, and raising market fears of a default. The wrangling between eurozone members over the possibility of IMF intervention and a bailout for Greece, particularly Germany’s disagreement, heightened the market panic. Eventually, in April 2010, an agreement was reached between the Greek government and the European Central Bank (ECB) - European Commission (EC) - International Monetary Fund (IMF) ‘troika’ on a bailout, on the condition that an agreed programme of economic restructuring would be implemented. This was ratified in May 2010 by the Greek parliament, amid a massive general strike demonstration, and a riot that led to the death of three workers who were trapped behind the shutters of a bank as it was firebombed by demonstrators.

The economic and fiscal adjustment programme proposed ‘internal devaluation’ through labour market deregulation,² layoffs, pay cuts, pension cuts, regressive tax rises and privatisation, removing ‘privileges’ from public sector workers and prosecuting tax evaders. Under the close guidance and scrutiny of the troika, the government would vote on more austerity and restructuring measures every few months over the following years up to 2015, under the constant threat of a default or the government being unable to meet its internal obligations, as bail-out funds were conditional on each vote. Increasingly deeper cuts on pay, pensions, benefits, and the health service were implemented most readily. The scale of these cuts and the impact they and the labour deregulation have had on the Greek economy, society, and class structure cannot be overstated. These were the broad events that set the context of the social struggles examined here. But events and facts are, of course, not self-explanatory. This chapter attempts to reflect on the possible light that

¹ ‘Ολοκλήρωση ομιλίας του G. Papandreou στη DETH’ [George Papandreou’s full speech at the International Trade Fair of Thessaloniki]. Imerisia, 13 September 2009.
can be shed on the character of struggles that emerged in the crisis period until 2014 by an analysis of the crisis and the restructuring that attempted to manage it.

This chapter will examine the specific characteristics of the present configuration of capitalism that has entered a crisis, and how it manifested locally in Greece. It will consider Marxist analyses of the crisis, and their theoretical and ideological implications. Taking the Marxian perspective of the critique of political economy, which recognises capitalism as an inherently contradictory social system, means that economic solutions to the crisis that would perpetuate the reproduction of capitalist relations will not be offered. Instead, the aim is to produce an analysis of the crisis and a critique of its social management, not in order to replace it with an alternative one, but as part of a broader critique of the dominant forms of power in capitalism. Understanding the specific characteristics of the crisis and the theoretical responses to it will help explain the form that crisis management has taken in this case, as well as the forms of struggle against it.

THE CRISIS IN GREECE AMID THE WORLD CRISIS

Having emphasized, in the previous chapter, the forms of integration of Greek capitalism into the dominant economic and political trends in Western Europe, its crisis is also to be understood as both local and integrated in its particularity into the world crisis that began in 2008. Doing this is a particularly complex task, since analyses of the world crisis, as well as of the crisis in Greece, are under severe contestation at the time of writing. Here, an attempt will be made to identify those accounts that seem the most consistent with, as well as advancing, the critical Marxist perspective outlined in this thesis so far.

Most accounts of the world crisis, mainstream, Neo-Keynesian or Marxist, have pointed to processes of financialisation in order to explain the crisis. The most dominant Marxist account, of which there exist several variations, supported by well-respected writers such as Robert Brenner, Andrew Kliman, David McNally, and Paul Mattick Jr., is based on the classic Marxian ‘tendency of the rate of profit to fall’, often accompanied by a wealth of data (long-term rates of world GDP in the case of Brenner; devised measures that are meant to correspond to Marxian categories in the case of Kliman). Despite several differences among the above mentioned authors, the main thrust of this account is that, since the peak of the 1960s, the rate of profit in the world economy has entered a period of stagnation or decline. This is attributed to the high organic composition of capital in production, which led to strong productivity increases and rising real wages in the ‘Golden Age’ of capitalism (up to the end of the 1960s). These writers’ interpretations of the Marxian ‘law’ entails that these kinds of increases in productivity, which are based on the increase of the proportional value of fixed capital in relation to variable capital in production, as well as the inability of the increase in relative surplus-value to exceed increased production costs, have the long-term

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effect of decreasing the rate of profit.\textsuperscript{7} According to Kliman, the crisis of the 1970s, which was a crisis of overaccumulation caused by rising organic composition, has not been overcome, because not enough capital was devalued. According to Brenner, intensifying global competition on the adoption of innovative technologies and the use of cheap labour allowed the cheaper production of goods in the world market, but this caused growing overcapacity and a downward squeeze on profits in the world manufacturing industries.\textsuperscript{8} This ‘long downturn’ was, however, countervailed, over the period since the 1970s, by the deregulation of finance and the supply of credit to states, companies, and households. This situation created bubbles in the stock market and property markets, which underwent consecutive bursts in the 1990s and 2000s, culminating in the credit crisis of 2008.\textsuperscript{9}

The expansion and financialisation of debt in the world economy is commonly attributed to the abandonment of the Bretton Woods gold-standard arrangement, and its replacement by the dollar as principal reserve currency. According to Richard Duncan,\textsuperscript{10} who is also quoted in Brenner’s work, this allowed the US to expand its sovereign debt without the type of market corrections that the gold standard would have imposed. The US trade and current account deficits increased, as the US played the role of the world’s consumer, pushing the economy forward, and benefiting the export-oriented economies of Germany, Japan, and later China. Japan and China in particular tended to amass dollars from these exchanges, which they reinvested in US assets, in order to maintain artificially low US interest rates, a low dollar price, and high levels of US debt-fuelled consumption for their exports. Debt and financialisation are then understood as alternative methods of boosting demand to counteract a long-term tendency of low profit rates, suppressed wages, and increasing unemployment.

Brenner, among other writers,\textsuperscript{11} understands the fall of the rate of profit as a secular tendency of the capitalist mode of production, rather than merely a cyclical tendency of periodic crises. This long-term decline is associated with rising inequality and stagnant real wages,\textsuperscript{12} as well as populations that are thrown out of the production process due to increased mechanisation and corresponding high labour productivity. Endnotes and Aaron Benanav, in their article ‘Misery and Debt’,\textsuperscript{13} support the argument, following the Marxian ‘General Law of Capitalist Accumulation’,\textsuperscript{14} that crisis has not produced merely a reserve army of labour, but accumulation and the historical development of the means of production has produced a secular tendency towards an increase of

\textsuperscript{7} This does not mean that absolute profits fall, but that their rhythm of increase becomes slower.


\textsuperscript{11} This view is also supported by Robert Kurz, who goes as far as predicting capitalism’s collapse. Robert Kurz, ‘On the Current Global Economic Crisis: Questions and Answers’, in \textit{Marxism and the Critique of Value}, ed. Neil Larsen et al. (Chicago: MCM’ Publishing, 2014), 331–356.

\textsuperscript{12} Brenner, ‘Los orígenes’.


\textsuperscript{14} Marx, \textit{Capital, Vol. 1}, Chapter 25.
constant relative to variable capital, leading to the growth of a surplus population that is not integratable into the wage relation.

Many Marxist Greek economists who have attempted to understand the crisis have tended to follow similar lines of reasoning, arguing that a Marxist approach ought to explain the crisis as not just conjunctural or the result of policy mistakes but as a structural feature of capitalism. This structural feature is sought in production, not in distribution or circulation, and specifically in the movement of the rate of profit. Maniatis and Passas, for example, have examined econometric data, constructing Marxist variables to assess the profit rate, and have demonstrated trends that are very similar to the pattern identified by Kliman and Brenner. After the high profit rates of the ‘Golden Age’ of 1958–1972, the profit rate declines sharply with the crisis until 1984. Then the profit rate slightly recovers and shows no significant rise or decline until 2007. Like Kliman, Maniatis and Passas argue that profit rates have not returned to pre-1972 levels because not enough capital was devalued during the 1970s crisis. After 1984, the profit rate peaked in 1992, but Maniatis and Passas contend that the growth after 1995 was effected by excessive financial expansion. They show data that, while financial profit rates were close to or lower than the profit rates in the non financial sector in 1980–90, afterwards they rose to levels comparatively much higher. They then attribute the crisis also to what they consider to be an increasing ratio of unproductive to productive labour, and an increasing proportion of financial profits among total profits.

Mavroudeas and Paitaridis broadly agree with this view, but wish to add to it some further considerations. They point toward what they interpret as ‘imperialist exploitation’ within the EU. They attempt to show that European integration has caused a fall in competitiveness for the Greek economy because its government could no longer have control over the monetary and fiscal instruments of economic policy, and that the competition among economies with differential levels of development causes ‘value transfers’ from less developed to more developed capitals. Lapavitsas’ work similarly points to trade imbalances within the Eurozone, which, he argues, have benefited exporting economies with strong prior currencies such as Germany.

This argument, while not entirely inaccurate, presents only a partial picture. First, it advocates a protectionist approach, arguing that Greek capital was only harmed by joining the EU. One then wonders why Greek capitals and the country’s establishment have so enthusiastically supported and continue to support their participation in the Eurozone. According to Economakis, Androulakis, and Markaki, the Greek economy grew more rapidly after entering the Eurozone, even if this was accompanied by high external deficits reflecting relatively low competitiveness and a high

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All of the ‘peripheral’ economies of the Eurozone grew more rapidly than the ‘central’ ones after accession. This means that the effect was contradictory and should not be viewed one-sidedly. Second, Mavroudeas and Paitaridis conceive of the unbalanced relationship between the value of imports and the value of exports of an economy as *exploitation*, which is a rather perverse way to conceptualise capitalist competition. This view is contrasted to Milios’s account of the influx of savings and low-interest credit into Greece after it joined the Eurozone. Third, this view’s anti-imperialism acknowledges but underestimates the hegemonic role of Greek capital in the Balkan region after 1990.

While the fact of these trade imbalances cannot be denied, the political and theoretical thrust of these arguments can be questioned. These contributions suggest that it is in the interests of the Greek economy and Greek capital to exit the Eurozone. They understand the form of Greece’s integration into the world crisis in terms of a slightly more sophisticated version of dependency. While, then, insisting on the ‘Marxian’ character of their contributions, they end up developing a criticism of capitalism that does not question exploitation, but rather questions the relationship between different national capitals, with the implication that the interests of labour are aligned with the success of the capitals of ‘their’ nation. The veteran enemies of this view in the Greek discussion, Milios and Sotiropoulos, argue that it fails to understand the international market as not simply an area for international transactions, but as the framework for global capitalist competition. International competition reproduces international differences in labour productivity and national profit rates, but it does not eliminate the capitals of less competitive economies. Instead, it produces pressures towards the internal restructuring of those economies so as to increase the competitiveness of their capitals through the continuing reorganisation of labour. The common European market was created in order to perform this precise role. Hence, the less competitive country is continually blamed of having fallen behind in carrying out neoliberal reforms.

With regard to the role of finance and the expansion of sovereign debt, there is less disagreement. All of the authors mentioned above argue against the mainstream attribution of the high levels of Greece’s sovereign debt to high wages or excessive government spending. The rate of wage rises was below productivity gains from 1985 onwards, reflecting the imposition of the restructuring discussed in the previous chapter. Maniatis, in an extensive study, shows that Greece’s state spending over the past 30 years was close to the European average, but its income was lower

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20 See also the discussion on theories of dependency in Chapter II.
21 Milios, ‘The Greek Crisis’.
22 Milios and Sotiropoulos, Rethinking Imperialism, 145–183.
23 For an example, see Pános Kazákos, *Aπό τον ατέλειο σχεδευτισμό στην κρίση* [From incomplete modernisation to the crisis] (Athens: Patákís, 2010).
than average. The public deficit is attributed to low taxation on high incomes as opposed to a large state sector or high public sector wages. The share of waged workers in total taxes has been consistently higher than their share of state spending, which means that the state’s redistributive policies benefited high incomes and capital.25 Another picture is presented by Economakis et al.,26 who emphasise the low interest rates of the pre-crisis period, which accompanied the Greek economy’s rapid growth in the 2000s as well as its long-running current account deficit. For Economakis et al., it was the latter that powered the expansion of gross external debt (both public and private) in the Greek economy.

Although neither the current account deficit nor the large external debt are convincing as causes of the crisis, they represent weaknesses of the Greek economy. As Sotiropoulos and Milios point out,27 the size of debt as proportion of GDP had remained more or less stable since 2000 and up until the crisis, without triggering a rise in interest rates. On the contrary, high levels of debt were considered as evidence of the peripheral countries’ process of successful adjustment to the Eurozone. It was only the financial crisis of 2008 that reframed the debt as representing the high risk of sovereign default. Even if Greek capital and households were not as heavily financialised as those in the US and Western Europe, as some authors argue,28 the Greek state was heavily dependent on finance, that is, on the issuing of treasury bonds (selling sovereign debt) to the capital markets, similar to other states in the Eurozone periphery. This debt financed the growth of the Greek economy since it joined the Eurozone. It was only deemed by those markets to have reached unsustainable levels at a time of generalised market panic, which made it impossible for the Greek state to continue borrowing in capital markets. The state then had limited choices. Either it would default on its debts, or it would enter the bailout agreement with the European Central Bank (ECB) - European Commission (EC) - International Monetary Fund (IMF) ‘troika’, which in return demanded a radical restructuring and ‘internal devaluation’ of wages and assets.

It is clear that the financial sector and debt played a pivotal role in the crisis, but most Marxist writers tend to treat it as secondary and draw attention to the rate of profit instead. Indeed, profit-rate accounts of global crisis are compelling, satisfying the Marxist demand for a systemic explanation of crisis that is founded on capitalism’s contradictions, and providing a wealth of data to demonstrate the arguments. These analyses also correspond to the widespread pre-crisis experience of low wages, high indebtedness and being surplus to the requirements of capital. But while this data may convincingly evidence a world economy that since the 1970s has not been able to reach 1960s levels of growth, the interpretation of the data, as well as of Marx’s theory, can still be contested.

25 Ibid.
26 Economakis et al., ‘Profitability and Crisis’.
To begin with, a lower profit rate does not suggest a stagnant economy, but one that is expanding at a slower pace. It may therefore be an exaggeration to refer to the period since the 1970s as a stagnant period or as a ‘long downturn’. Stagnant wages and a widening income gap are also no indicators of a lack of growth of accumulation, precisely because the capitalist motivation is profits, not the improvement of the conditions of life. Besides, stagnant wages, disconnected from rates of productivity, was the very paradigm of growth in the period after the 1973 crisis, rather than a sign of economic weakness. It signified the combination of the extraction of relative surplus value (through technological development) and absolute surplus value (through falling wages and extending the working day). This model was functional, over these decades, with the supplementation of wages by credit, and it did produce some growth. If these measures are correct, then, and the rate of profit failed to reach post-war heights in the post-1973 period, still it might be misleading to present this as ‘stagnation’, especially considering the scale of destruction that preceded the post-war peaks of the profit rate.

One problematic implication of interpretations of this period as one of secular decline is that they leave open a deterministic reading that rejects the possibility of capitalism entering a new phase of growth after the present crisis. In combination with a theory of secular surplus population growth due to this decline, this can favour dystopic end-of-world scenarios or, conversely, the notion of the impending collapse of capitalism.

There is, however, evidence of the production of a surplus population worldwide, if it is carefully conceptualised. Two points should be emphasised about it: first, this population is not excluded from the wage relation in any absolute sense, and second, it is not evenly distributed across the world. The form of non-integration of these populations into the wage relation is, in most cases, not absolute exclusion or unemployment, but rather there has been an increasing section of the global population in insecure and low-wage employment (without contracts, part-time, temporary, and informal), concentrated in economic sectors that are peripheral to capitalist development, such as low-paid informal work in high-labour intensive informal trade and services. The uneven distribution of this population is related to the fact that the increasing internationalisation of capital after the 1970s is not only associated with (relatively) unhindered capital flows, financial flexibility, and trade interdependence in the international division of production, which challenge the integrity of national economies. It also reinforces national boundaries through the creation of a

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29 The 2015 ILO report on employment suggests that there has been a decline in world employment growth since the beginning of the crisis in 2008, particularly in the most developed countries. However, the most significant finding is that part-time and own-account jobs growth have outpaced growth in full time and permanent contract jobs, while everywhere but in high-income countries around half of all waged workers work without contracts or informally. International Labor Office, World Employment and Social Outlook 2015 (Geneva: Brookings Institution, 2015), 17–28.

30 Informal employment is a correlate of poverty levels and is most prevalent in low-GDP-per-capita countries ranging from 42.2% of non-agricultural employment in Brazil to 83.6 in India. It is most prevalent in trade and services. Informal employment appears to have been on the increase in Africa, Latin America and South Asia since the 1970s and ‘80s when it began to be counted. ILO Department of Statistics, Statistical Update on Employment in the Informal Economy (Geneva: ILO, 2012); Jacques Charmes, ‘The Informal Economy Worldwide: Trends and Characteristics’, Margin: The Journal of Applied Economic Research 6, no. 2 (1 May 2012): 103–32.
stratified global labour market. Global production is divided spatially into countries and regions (within and across countries) with different wage levels, and corresponding conditions of living and values of labour power. These divisions, which to a great extent are already marked by a history of colonial racialisation, are maintained through punishing and (re)racialising immigration controls preventing the global mobility of populations who are surplus to the requirements of the production of value.

In the case of Greece, similarly, from 1970 to 2000, total employment did not fall, and more women joined the labour market. The rates of unemployment also steadily fell until 2009. Yet this period’s mode of accumulation did produce a mostly young population segment that was integrated into the wage relation informally and insecurely, always at risk of unemployment. This condition aggravated competition in the labour market and was another factor conducive to stagnant wages. In the crisis, as we will see in the section on the restructuring, an unemployed surplus population expanded enormously, alongside the expansion of the informal labour market, while the formal labour market itself became more similar to the informal in contract terms (insecurity, low wages). In Chapter V we will see that in the crisis the internal segregation of this surplus population deepened at the same time, as migrants became more systematically racialised and heavily policed.

The ‘General Law of Capitalist Accumulation’ then does offer a convincing explanation for the growing presence of the surplus population in the ghettos of the US, the favelas of Brazil, in African and Asian slums, in the council estates of the UK and the suburbs of Paris. Marxian laws are useful for interpreting existing tendencies, but caution is needed in using them to predict future developments. A rigid interpretation of the Marxian ‘tendency of the rate of profit to fall’ as a historically determining ‘law’ even belies Marx’s text, which qualifies the theory with a number of counter-tendencies (increase in the rate of surplus-value, wage cuts, fall in the prices of constant capital), leaving a lot of room for a cyclical, or even a more contingent (i.e. dependent on a larger number of identifiable but unpredictable factors) interpretation, which would mean that the ‘law’ is indeed all too often offset by the counter-tendencies. Moreover, the relationship between the Marxian tendency of the profit rate to fall and historical profit tendencies measured in currency is far from simple, since Marx’s general rate of profit is a ratio between amounts of value, that is, of socially necessary labour time. The empirical monetary profit rate thus does not behave in the same way as the Marxian general profit rate when mechanisation makes labour savings in the production

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35 Maniatis & Passas, ‘Falling Rate of Profit’.
36 This is the case according to Riccardo Bellofiore, who also agrees with this criticism and with the monetary approach to value (see below). Riccardo Bellofiore, ‘Which Crisis, of Which Capitalism? Marxian Political Economy and Financial Keynesianism’ (The Great Meltdown of 2008: Systemic, Conjunctural or Policy-Created?, Izmir University of Economics, 2014).
process, because necessary and surplus labour-time do not factor into its calculation as they do in the Marxian formula. Mechanisation also means that the monetary profit rate, as a ratio between prices, can increase even if labour-time is minimised in the production process.³⁷ Marx’s critical analysis then identifies not a trend that is of use to bourgeois economics, but an antithesis between capitalism’s dependency on the exploitation of labour and its tendency to expel labour from the production process: a capitalism freed from its dependence on labour-power would cancel capitalism’s own foundations. This is not the place for a deeper discussion of the implications of mechanisation, but such observations throw some doubt on the economic application as opposed to the abstract theoretical use of the Marxian theory of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. To make the theory even more precarious, Michael Heinrich’s closer analysis of Marx’s work, based on the evolution of his manuscripts,³⁸ Has questioned whether the theory of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall was convincing as a ‘law-as-such’ even to Marx himself.³⁹ Heinrich claims that Marx never managed to put forward a coherent crisis theory. Clearly, any claims to be proposing the most faithfully ‘Marxian’ theory of crisis are superfluous to the argument.

Another theoretical problem might be the question of finance’s separation from the real ‘productive’ economy in many such analyses, as a mere element of instability and of speculative bubbles. The deregulation of finance and its diffuse convolution into derivatives which themselves became traded as commodities is often seen as neatly ‘covering up’ a lack of growth, while being treated as superfluous in relation to the productive sectors of the economy. This view has been accused of oversimplifying the relationship between the profit rate and the development of finance. Sotiropoulos, Milios, and Lapatsioras have argued that finance is a sector with a longer and more complex history than such narratives allow, and that financial capital cannot so neatly and flexibly fill gaps created by underconsumption.⁴⁰ They propose an alternative analysis of finance, founded on the ‘monetary theory of value’, as opposed to what they diagnose as Ricardian-influenced approaches to Marx’s labour theory of value. Marx inherited the Ricardian understanding of value through his engagement with classical political economy, which remains influential among orthodox understandings of the labour theory of value and Marxist economics. In its most extreme form, it does not distinguish between concrete and abstract labour, in that it assumes that value is produced by labour independently of the equalisation of different commodities and labours via a universal equivalent, money. Value, measured in labour-time, is assumed to exist as a substance in the products of labour whether these are commodities or not.

³⁸ This study is a collective project taking place mostly in Germany, organised around the work towards the first German edition of Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe, the complete writings of Marx and Engels. Their study has become a significant tool in problematising the Engelsian reorganisation and publication of volumes II and II of Capital, through which Engels’s interpretation of Marx’s work became its dominant ‘orthodox’ understanding.
³⁹ Michael Heinrich, ‘Crisis Theory’. According to Michael Heinrich, ‘does Marx actually manage conclusively to prove the “law as such”? … [I]t can be shown that Marx does not succeed in providing such a proof. The “law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall” does not first fall apart in the face of the “counteracting factors”; it already falls apart because the “law as such” cannot be substantiated.’
⁴⁰ Sotiropoulos, Milios & Lapatsioras, Demystifying Finance, 139.
Against this view, the ‘monetary’ interpretation of Marx’s theory of value, in which the work of Georg Backhaus was central, argues against the substantialisation of labour into the product,\(^{41}\) and against the understanding of value as a quantifiable essence that can exist separately from its form, money. Backhaus has argued that Marx’s critique of political economy was not aimed at revealing labour-time as the hidden magnitude of value (the principle upon which most Marxist economics is based), but instead it was a critique of value that analysed its genesis, the transformation of social activity into something that can be accumulated.\(^{42}\) The value-form is here understood as a historically specific social relation that is established through the generalisation of production for the market, commodity exchange and its mediation by money in capitalism. It is only the generalised exchange of the products of labour as commodities, mediated by money, that brings value into existence, equalising different quantities and qualities of concrete labour. This understanding of the value-form is not entirely new—the work of Isaak Rubin in the 1920s contains such insights—\(^{43}\) but has re-emerged in contemporary debates because of increasing interest in the German discussion on the value-form, which has been based on the renewed study of Marx’s complete manuscripts.\(^{44}\) For Sotiropoulos et al., then, the quantification of value on the basis of labour-time independently of money is based on a Ricardian notion of the magnitude of value, as opposed to the Marxian critique of value.\(^{45}\)

FINANCE AND THE CAPITAL FETISH

On the basis of their understanding of the monetary theory of value, Sotiropoulos et al. strongly criticise the aforementioned accounts of finance and financialisation. Although it is impossible to summarise the full complexity of their work in this chapter, their criticism is not only relevant to our discussion of crisis, but it can assist an understanding of the specificities of the crisis in Greece, as well as of the forms of resistance to the restructuring. This understanding of value also puts into question the orthodox categorisation of service sectors, particularly those in the sphere of circulation, as by definition ‘unproductive’.\(^{46}\) Indeed, if value is understood as embodied in the material commodity and not as a social relation, the service commodities of advertising, research and development, transportation, and logistics would only be understood as revenue expenditure, and the labour processes associated with them as income transfers from industrial production.

Sotiropoulos et al., on the contrary, insist that the process of circulation cannot be separated but is bound to the circuit of social capital by the movement of money as capital and hence it is a moment of the valorisation process. Following Marx’s definition that ‘such labour is productive as

\(^{41}\) Heinrich, *Marx’s Capital*, 49.

\(^{42}\) Backhaus, ‘Dialectics’, 104.


\(^{44}\) The analyses of Hans-Georg Backhaus and Helmut Reichelt have been particularly influential in this respect, proposing a monetary approach to the theory of value, even though few of their works have been translated into English. Very relevant to this discussion are: Hans-Georg Backhaus, ‘Dialectics’; Reichelt, ‘Social Reality as Appearance’.

\(^{45}\) It should still be noted that these writers credit primarily Althusser, and not the German value-form debate, for their very similar argument on a ‘monetary theory of value’.

\(^{46}\) See, for example, the discussion of Poulantzas in Chapter II.
is consumed directly in the production process for the purpose of valorising capital’, means that the material or ‘immaterial’ nature of the commodities is no criterion for distinction. Only un-socialised private labour (for example production for consumption within a household), and labour that does not produce commodities (for example, services offered for free by the state) is unproductive of surplus-value by definition. Moreover, Sotiropoulos et al. argue against the interpretation of Marx’s discussion of the ‘metamorphoses’ of capital in Vol. II as corresponding to separate ‘fractions’ of capital (financial/rentier, productive capitalist, and commercial capitalist) which are supposedly independent from one another. The latter interpretation, following the influential 1904 work of Thorstein Veblen, has led to a voluntarist political understanding of the crisis, according to which the hegemony of the financial class fraction of capital has managed to control state policies and impose the neoliberal restructuring of the economy, causing a chronic shortage of investment and misallocations of capital, as well as imposing a widening of income differentials and increasing the indebtedness of working populations. Opposed to this view, the authors argue that the ‘fractions’ are personifications of capital. They are particularly wary of views that attempt to separate sharply the ‘real’ ‘productive’ economy from finance as fictitious capital, as Marx has called it, as well as views that interpret the expansion of the financial sector as the culprit for reduced investment on industrial production.

Most interestingly for the present analysis of crisis, the restructuring, and the forms of resistance to it, Sotiropoulos et al. discuss finance and credit based on the theory of the fetishism of capital. The capital fetish consists in the disappearance of the exploitation of labour as a necessary mediation in the production of value. Money capital invested into the production process seems to beget an expanded value in money capital, which is not traced back to the labour expended in the production process, since capitalists formally fulfil all obligations: normally, wages are paid, the cost of fixed capital is paid, interest on any debts is paid. This fetishism reaches a higher level in the case of finance capital. Financial capital (circulating claims to value, securities, stocks, and derivatives), as a form of interest-bearing capital, the most general and developed form of capital according to Marx, is (only) ‘fictitious’ in the sense that the expansion of capital that takes place through its process, and the value produced, is based on assessments of the probability of future profits (process of capitalisation). In this process, the place of capital is occupied both by the money capitalist (finance) and the ‘functioning capitalist’ who manages the productive enterprise: Veblen’s distinction of the former as parasitical upon the latter does not hold. Capital as finance is a forward-looking claim on the future production of surplus-value. According to Sotiropoulos et al., this makes capital in this ‘most developed’ form itself a financial ‘derivative’: its valuation derives from the performance of firms. In this sense, the most complex form of this function, the commodification of risk in the form of derivative products, is also at the heart of the capital circuit. Finance,

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47 Marx, ‘Chapter 6: Results’, 442.
51 Similar arguments are made by Heinrich, Three Volumes of Capital, 155–168.
following the explosion of innovations over the last 30 years, has represented and enabled the increasing worldwide speed and flexibility of the movement of capital. The fetishism of capital is then produced by the process that expands capital as finance as if it were unmediated by the production process. Financial capital is the ultimate capital fetish, because the mediation of its expansion by the production process becomes completely invisible: capital appears as what it really is: self-valourising value.52

As discussed in Chapter I, fetishism does not imply unreality. The critical power of the theory of fetishism is to reveal the historicity of abstractions (most importantly abstract labour), to denaturalise them and point towards their paradoxical character, the mediations of capital’s apparently supernatural self-expansion, as opposed to presenting the more concrete mediations (concrete labour, industrial capital) as the true reality of capitalism that needs to be liberated from the abstract ‘illusory’ forms. The attempt by many economists to discover the ‘real’ economy underneath the ‘appearance’ of finance neglects the fact that finance has a practical social validity as capital, and has a significant function in accelerating the international circulation of capital, which cannot be done away with unless the capital relation itself is dissolved. Treating ‘fictitious’ finance capital as false capital, excluding its movements from an analysis of the dynamic of accumulation of the previous period and the current crisis except as a parasitical factor on the ‘real’ economy, is, effectively, a re-fetishisation, instead of a de-fetishisation, of finance. It affirms finance capital’s ‘fictitiousness’ instead of paying attention to its mediation by the production process and the latter’s dependence upon it: the value of financial capital, once more, appears to come out of thin air; it multiplies of its own accord, it is purely a bubble. This specific attitude towards finance is associated with political forms and ideologies that emerged in the crisis period, which will be discussed further below.

But if financial capital is to be treated as capital, then what is debt, and, specifically, what is a debt that cannot be repaid? Indeed, the inability to repay debts can be identified as the beginning of the crisis in the USA, with the devaluation of subprime mortgage-backed securities, as well as in Greece, when its sovereign debt was deemed unpayable and its treasury bonds' interest rates shot up. Instead of this being a freak event, however, the non-correspondence between financial claims to future value and the realised value of investments is the rule, not the exception. Valuations of firms and assets fluctuate daily in stock markets, with enormous amounts of capital being destroyed and created rapidly. In this crisis, the value of even larger amounts of capital has been put in question: only in the cases of the USA and Greece, vast amounts of capital in the form of mortgage-backed securities (USA) and treasury bonds (Greece) have either been devalued, or have been at a high risk of becoming devalued. In the case of Greece, the risk of a sovereign default on external debt has corresponded to the devaluation of capital invested in Greek treasury bonds, as the ‘virtuous circle’ of high external debt / high GDP growth turned into a vicious circle. Let us recall the

52 For a detailed exposition of the capital fetish, also see Jacques Rancière, “The Concept of “critique” and the “critique of Political Economy” (from the 1844 Manuscript to Capital)”, Economy and Society 5, no. 3 (August 1976): 352–76.
way in which the crisis reached Greece. In 2007, many European banks had assets that had become devalued as a result of their leverage in mortgage-backed and asset-backed securities. This put a stranglehold on interbank lending and thus liquidity, while money market rates rose sharply. To help the situation, the European Central Bank purchased devalued long-term assets and securities held by banks, offering liquidity, and allowing banks to deleverage and increase the ratio of short-term securities on their balance sheets. National central banks also provided liquidity to domestic banks. Meanwhile, the banks themselves, in their attempt to deleverage, sharply restricted their supply of credit to the economy. Thus, sovereign debt rose during the crisis, in the attempt to prevent the collapse of banks, while servicing that debt became far more difficult and expensive, because of low demand for government securities, which have longer maturity. Peripheral countries were hit more badly as a result, due to their higher levels of debt. This triggered further insecurity, with increased speculation on possible defaults in the Credit Default Swaps market. The virtuous circle had clearly become vicious, through the process by which states and the ECB helped prevent the abrupt devaluation of assets and the threatened collapse of the financial system.

While financial capital, then, cannot be seen as an extraneous, predatory level of the capitalist economy, the central structural role that financial markets play in the currently dominant model of capitalist accumulation and in the organisation of the Eurozone has coincided with political interventions that have prevented losses in private financial institutions, that is, the rapid wipeout of devalued assets, securities, and, in the case of Greece, of government debt. Instead, a different strategy was followed, that of restructuring peripheral Eurozone economies.

THE LOGIC OF THE RESTRUCTURING

The impetus to prevent the collapse of the financial system did not on its own determine the particular form of restructuring that has been imposed on the Eurozone periphery, and on Greece in particular. As a result of its inability to service its debt and continually rising interest rates on Greek treasury bonds, the Greek state entered an official agreement with IMF, ECB, and European Commission (EC) representatives in May 2010, to accept a series of loans, funded by the IMF, the ECB, and member-states of the European Union pooled centrally by the EC. These loans allowed it to service its debt—while, in the long run, increasing Greece’s total debt-to-GDP ratio—in exchange for restructuring measures agreed in the Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies. These policies claimed to address the following problems: (a) the weak external competitiveness of the Greek economy, attributed to wages rising faster than productivity in the 2000–2009 period and to rising levels of consumption; (b) fiscal imbalances, attributed to state overspending, tax evasion, the 6% growth of the state sector which ‘crowded out’ the private sector, and to ‘unreformed’ health and pension systems; (c) the increase of government and external debt, particularly

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53 As recounted more analytically in Lapavitsas, Crisis in the Eurozone, 51–58.
55 Ibid., 4.
the increase incurred due to the financial crisis, from 95% of GDP in 2007 to 115% in 2009; (d) ‘rigid’ product and labour markets; (e) a weakened banking sector.

The specific budgetary measures agreed to address these problems have been the following: deep wage cuts in the public sector; pension cuts; cuts in unemployment benefits; cuts in the funding of local authorities; reduction in public employment; cuts to transfers to public entities; and flat tax rises on the lowest incomes, on VAT, fuel, cigarettes and alcohol, gaming, and property tax. The programme also contained a series of reforms. First, it proposed a pension reform which aimed at unifying all the different sectors’ pension funds into a single fund while rising the pension age to 65. Second, it recommended a ‘product market’ reform that would deregulate all professions that were protected via licences and trade associations (such as lawyers, pharmacists, taxi drivers), as well as liberalise the sectors of services, energy, and transport, and cut bureaucratic burdens. A systematic privatisation programme was also added to the schedule of measures in 2011. Finally, and importantly, it emphasised the necessity of labour market reform that would ‘curb undue wage pressures’. The first Memorandum agreed against cuts to the minimum wage, although these were implemented at a later stage of reforms, in 2012. However, it already listed measures such as: limiting the applicability of sectoral collective bargaining agreements ‘to allow the local level to opt-out from the wage increases agreed at the sectoral level’; sub-minimal minimum wages for younger and long-term unemployed workers; the removal of laws limiting layoffs; cuts to layoff compensations; and easing part-time and temporary work regulations. It predicted that these labour market reforms would ‘spur job creation and increase wage flexibility’.

While these measures were presented by the economists and politicians who made these decisions, as well as by conservative media commentators, as a mere ‘necessary adjustment’ responding to ‘excessive wage rises’ and ‘privileges’, their impact on everyday life for the lower and middle strata in the country was catastrophic. The full scale of this destruction cannot be represented adequately within the scope of this chapter, but some indicators can be listed. First, it should be pointed out again that for all the complaints about excessive wage rises, wages in Greece lagged below rises in productivity from 1985 onwards, and average wages in the country were still at 81% of the European average in 2009. From 2009 onwards, they fell to 65% of the European average. From 2010 to 2013, the purchasing power of the average wage fell by 21%. The measures that limited the validity of collective contracts, and the reduction of the minimum wage to €586, and to €510 for those under 25 (which was in fact €495 and €431 respectively after national insurance

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57 EC, Economic Adjustment Programme, 22.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid., 20.
60 The influential conservative German newspaper Bild has been particularly active in promoting a distorting depiction of ‘Greeks’ living it large and robbing ‘German taxpayers’. For example, D. Hören. ‘Multi-Billion Euro Aid to Greece - German Anger at Paying for Luxury Greek Pensions’. Bild, 30 April 2010.
61 Maniatis and Passas, Wage-productivity gap’, 58.
62 INE-GSEE, I elliniki oikonomia, 144.
63 Ibid., 143.
were conducive to this result, as wages even for professionals were readjusted around the new minimum. A large number of workers, estimated by the Ministry of Labour to have reached around one million by the end of 2014, were also affected by wage arrears lasting from one to over five months, both in the private and in the public sector.\textsuperscript{64} The scrapping of limitations to collective dismissals, mass public-sector layoffs,\textsuperscript{66} and the reduction of dismissal compensations, all contributed to the steep rise in unemployment, up to a peak of 27.2% in 2013, which rose to 57.1% for those under 25, and to 31.6% for women.\textsuperscript{67} The cuts to unemployment benefits, limiting them to €460 for a maximum of one year and making them conditional on not having received benefits in the prior four years,\textsuperscript{68} impacted particularly negatively on the long-term unemployed, when, by 2014, 7 in 10 unemployed had been out of work for over a year.\textsuperscript{69} As health coverage by the Greek national insurance system is dependent upon employment, the vast number of unemployed also lost access to free health services. This also impacted very heavily on uninsured and migrant pregnant women who now had to pay large amounts for childbirth.\textsuperscript{70} Meanwhile, basic commodity prices continued to rise, with the inflation rate falling from the 4.4% of 2010, but still persisting at 2.5% over 2012.\textsuperscript{71} Inflation rates only reversed towards the end of 2013, and still, by the end of 2014, the rate was -1.3%.\textsuperscript{72} This means that there has been no uniform ‘internal devaluation’,\textsuperscript{73} but rather there has been a massive devaluation of labour power.

In addition to encumbering workers and those whose survival depends upon employment, the combination of crisis and austerity proletarianised a large section of the petite bourgeoisie—the artisans and small business owners who have constituted about 30% of the working population.\textsuperscript{74} Indicatively, in the first quarter of 2012, 53.3% of small businesses considered themselves likely or very likely to close down, while 54% have had difficulties in paying their employees. Profits decreased by 35% between 2011 and 2012, as businesses faced low consumption and lack of credit for raw materials, as banks refused credit applications.\textsuperscript{75} This climate had remained more or less similarly negative by 2014. More concretely, while small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

\textsuperscript{64} ‘Oi anatropéps se misthóis, symbásis, apožmióseis, epidómata’ [The overhaul on wages, contracts, compensations, benefits], \textit{Ta Néo}, 19 March 2012.

\textsuperscript{65} Ilias Georgakis, ‘Ena ekatommyriro ergazómenoi aplirótoî ÿos kai 5 mnèœs’ [A million workers unpaid for up to 5 months], \textit{Ta Néo}, 25 April 2015. The article quotes data provided by the Ministry of Labour.

\textsuperscript{66} Dimitris Nikolakopoulos, ‘Me vàsi periýgràmmata théseœn oi apólyseis 150.000 dimósiœn ypallíœn’ [150,000 public servants’ layoffs based on post outlines], \textit{To Vima}.


\textsuperscript{68} N. 3986/2011. From 1 January 2013, unemployed persons who had received unemployment benefit for 450 days over the previous 4 years were to longer have the right to the benefit. If they had received the benefit for less than 450 days, their benefit was to be reduced according to the number of days the benefit was received. From 2014, the day limit was to be reduced to 400 days.

\textsuperscript{69} INE-GSEE, \textit{I ellinikí akonomía kai i apachbolisi}, 204.

\textsuperscript{70} Patient contribution in public hospitals for childbirth increased to €800 for unemployed, uninsured women and to €1,700 for migrants without papers. These amounts doubled in the case of a caesarean. Giannarou, \textit{Kathimerini}, 9/7/2014.

\textsuperscript{71} ELSTAT, \textit{Deiktis Timiôn Katatalátoy: Iánios 2012} [Consumer Price Index: July 2012].

\textsuperscript{72} ELSTAT, \textit{Deiktis Timiôn Katatalátoy: Avgoustos 2014} [Consumer Price Index: August 2012].

\textsuperscript{73} For a critical assessment of the policy of internal devaluation see Ilias Tóvakimoglou, \textit{Esoterikí sputinúsi kai ysiôrresi kefalán: Mia kritikí prosèggisi} [Internal devaluation and capital accumulation: A critical approach], (Athens: INE-GSEE, 2012).

\textsuperscript{74} Lampousaki, ‘Greece: Self-employed Workers’.

\textsuperscript{75} IME GSEVEE, \textit{Ektrimi: Oikonomikoi Klimata} [Estimation of Economic Climate], January 2012.
employed 85% of the labour force in 2009, by 2014 one fourth of SMEs had closed down, and employment in the sector had shrunk by 27%.76

Frightening material indicators of the social impact of the adopted restructuring measures are the 25% estimated increase in homelessness from 2009 to 2013,77 and the 55.8% rise of suicide mortality rates between 2007 and 2011.78 This should be understood not only as an effect of unemployment, poverty, and debt, but also in light of the closure of a large number of mental health centres.79 To make things worse, the closure of three major psychiatric hospitals was announced in 2014.80 General public hospitals also suffered from shortages in staff, supplies, and medicines, delayed payment of staff, and closures, due to a 30% healthcare budget reduction coinciding with a 24% rise of hospital admissions.81 The closure of drug rehabilitation centres also resulted in the continual increase of HIV infections among injecting drug users, many of whom are homeless.82 Another indicator of the deepening of poverty was the reintroduction of food rations for children at schools and kindergartens as a result of a series of cases where children had passed out from malnutrition.83

Again, the shrinking of social and health services placed an increased burden on women to perform traditional care-work roles in the family, which was enlarged, as more family members tended to share each home to reduce costs.84 The pressure to perform a gendered role has also been associated with an increase in male violence against their partners, particularly by unemployed men who felt emasculated by their loss of status.85

The restructuring was slower in terms of enhancing market freedom and competition by removing the protections and preferential treatment afforded to Greek capitals. Privatisations have mostly benefitted large Greek companies (still ruled by a few big names of the Greek bourgeoisie).86 It has also been relatively slow in terms of streamlining the public sector bureaucracy, which

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76 IME GSEVEE, Τάσεις οικονομικού κλίματος [Economic Climate Trends], July 2014.
79 Sofia Neta, ‘Κλείνουν οι κέντρα ψυχικής υγείας’ [Mental health structures closing down], Eleftheropypia, 19 September 2011.
80 Elena Fyntanidou, ‘Τα πνευματικά κλείνουν, τα νοσοκομεία στέναζουν’ [Psychiatric clinics close, hospitals suffer], To Vima, 2 November 2014.
82 For a detailed study of cumulative types of hardship on multiply disadvantaged populations in Greece, see Eirini Andriopoulou, Fóris Papadópoulos & Páno Tsáklógliou, Φτώχεια και κοινωνικός απόκλεισμος στην Ελλάδα: Επικάλυψη και διαφοροποίηση [Poverty and social exclusion in Greece: Overlap and differentiation], (Athens: INE-GSEE, 2013).
84 Maria Karamesini, ‘I krisi oso proklisi gia tis feministes’ [Crisis as a challenge to feminists], Fjlo Sykæ, 16 October 2012.
86 For example, the core bidder in the privatisation of the state lottery business, OPAP, was the oil magnate and owner of AEK football club, Dimitris Melissanidis. Melissanidis is known to have made threatening telephone calls to the head of OPAP, against the signing of an already agreed subcontract with the gaming technology supplier Intralot. Intralot is a subsidiary of Intracom, a multinational technology and defence
would have required extra state investment to achieve. Up until 2014, the ‘streamlining’ only involved layoffs and reductions in new staff, affecting most gravely education and the health sector (again, affecting the value of labour power).

Clearly, these measures have had a redistributive character, essentially redistributing wealth upwards to the detriment of lower social strata. Both cutting direct and indirect wages, and imposing flat taxes, typically has that effect. In a more Marxian language, the restructuring’s attack on the direct and indirect wage produced a deeper disconnection between the reproduction of capital and proletarian reproduction. What the state ‘offered’, in terms of proletarian reproduction, was reduced to increasingly oppressive policing, accompanied by more stringent legislation against protests and higher penalties for those arrested. The restructuring thus effected the second and deeper stage of the shift in the dynamic of the class relation, as labour and its organisations were demoted by state and capital to the status of social pariahs: labour power was now treated as superfluous and its reproduction as radically disconnected from, or even as antithetical to, valorisation. This was mediated by changes in laws through which the state manages the class relation. The capitals that could do so then took advantage of a labour market rigged in their favour. The destruction of a great number of small capitals deemed uncompetitive added to the creation of a large unemployed population prepared to work for very low wages, or even unpaid (due to wage arrears, which in many cases were never paid). The mainstream cultural expression of this fact on television, from comedy sketches, with unemployed characters begging to work for free, to programmes on how to make a living from small patches of land, were symptomatic of the elusiveness of the wage. The media message encouraged a make-do attitude and the acceptance of worsening conditions by the unemployed, in tune with the state’s workfare programmes.

The wage cuts and labour market restructuring evidently did not ‘spur job creation’, although they did increase ‘wage flexibility’ towards a rather extreme, downward bend. The programme of ‘internal devaluation’ was equally unsuccessful, as decreasing wages and labour-unit costs, and falling aggregate demand, were not matched by falling prices. Still, it would be simplistic to understand such measures as a response to Greek capitalists demanding such changes. The communications group, owned by the billionaire Sokratis Kokkalis, who also owns a football club, Olympiakos. Kokkalis was prosecuted in 2011 concerning the contracts OPAP entered with Intralot between 2005 and 2007, bypassing an open bidding process, which were disadvantageous for OPAP. Kerin Hope, ‘Greece faces collapse of second key privatisation’. Financial Times, 27 June 2013; Gianna Papadakou. ‘Διοίκεσις για συμβάσεις OPAP-Intralot της περιόδου 2005–2007’ [Prosecutions for OPAP-Intralot contracts in the period 2005–2007]. To Vima, 30 May 2011.

Three new forms of workfare were introduced in this period. (a) ‘Training vouchers’ (επιτάγες κατάρτισης): one-month training seminars on new technologies accompanied by a €500 benefit. ‘Beneficiaries’ had to sign out of unemployment benefit to obtain this benefit. (b) Programmes of public-benefit work (Προγράμματα Κοινόφοιτου Εργασίας): five-month employment in the public sector and NGOs for a maximum of €625 pcm, which was reduced to €490 after 2013. The programme was used to cheaply compensate for staff shortages in schools, hospitals and other public services caused by restructuring policies. NGOs were purposely set up to benefit from the programme as subcontractors of various public services. Importantly, this employment was not entitled to the rights that apply under regular labour contracts. (c) Workfare programmes of five-month ‘work experience’ for those under 29, in private-sector beneficiary companies for €400–460 pcm depending on qualifications. See N. 3845/2010 ΑΚ.

INE-GSEE, I elliniki oikonomia, 131–139.
European Commission document on the ‘adjustment programme’ for Greece mentions that Greek industrialists were not in favour of wage cuts and instead were more interested in the easing of bureaucracy.\textsuperscript{90} The policy adopted by the state followed a particular economic logic, rather than merely responding to the demands of groups of capitalists. Here we see that the role of the state is a complex one, of ensuring social reproduction in the sense of reproducing capitalist society, that is, the capital relation, and ensuring accumulation. Yet the state appears to have failed in this role, because the restructuring, over a period of four years, did not restore the ‘reliability’ and ‘competitiveness’ of the Greek economy, did not ensure its capacity to repay its debt and reborrow on capital markets, as the debt increased as a proportion of GDP by 34.8\% between 2010 and 2014, but instead led to an abrupt shrinking of the economy, as GDP shrank by almost 25\% in the same period. Economakis et al. maintain that the austerity policy employed to manage the crisis caused underconsumption, which in turn deepened the crisis, and did not allow capital to be devalued and to restore profitability.\textsuperscript{91} While the restructuring attempted to reduce the value of labour by direct and indirect wage cuts, as well as layoffs, the high rates of unemployment that ensued have had a negative impact on the capitals that depended on domestic consumption as well as on the state’s tax revenue. The political instability produced by the ferocity of the restructuring translated politically into the instability of governments and the weakening of the parties that supported it. This increased the possibility of a future left government (which materialised in January 2015) that promised to halt or reverse restructuring measures. Still, despite these ambivalent, or even self-defeating, consequences, it is possible to show that the restructuring, while devastating on multiple levels, was not a mere mistake, but followed the dominant strategy of accumulation and economic restructuring of the preceding period, which is also a political strategy.

That the particular form of the restructuring, including its consequences, was not a mistake but a conscious strategy is evident in the most overt way by the zeal with which it has been defended by Eurozone officials and ministers, particularly those of Germany, but also by all the governments of Greece up until 2015. While this thesis does not cover the period from 2015 onwards, when anti-austerity SYRIZA came to power, the statements in reaction to SYRIZA’s rejection of the programme of austerity reveal that the reforms themselves have been considered as more important than solving the problem of Greece’s sovereign debt, and that debt has played the role of justifying the implementation of the restructuring. A statement quoted in the \textit{Financial Times} in February 2015 makes this clear: ‘Germany wants Greece to stay in the eurozone, but not at any price.’\textsuperscript{92} If we go deeper into the [debt] discount debate, there will be no more reforms in Europe,’’ said a senior German official. ‘‘There will be joyful celebrations in the Elysée and probably in Rome, too, if we go down this path.’’\textsuperscript{92} Clearly, celebrations in the Elysée and Rome would be deeply troubling, because they would indicate that austerity is over.

\textsuperscript{90} EC, \textit{Economic Adjustment Programme}, 21.
\textsuperscript{91} Economakis et al., ‘Profitability and Crisis’.
To understand the logic of such statements and of the type of restructuring they continue to support, it would be helpful to take a step back and consider the structure and intent of the European Monetary Union in both political and economic terms. The content of the restructuring imposed on Greece is not an innovation but a deepening and acceleration of all the measures Greek governments were already imposing since the 1990s, as we have seen in Chapter II. PASOK’s decision not to leave the European Community, as it had promised before the 1981 elections, meant that it had to follow the roadmap toward monetary integration, which began most decisively from 1996 onwards by the (PASOK) government of Kostas Simitis. This roadmap had the typical characteristics of neoliberal restructuring, as already mentioned in the previous chapter: privatisations, pension reforms, local authority cuts, public-private partnerships and outsourcing in the public sector, liberalisation of labour contracts, wage cuts to overtime work and the institutionalisation of flexible and part-time work. Why were such measures promoted by the EU, and why were they the condition for joining the EMU? Was this merely an ideological shift following the collapse of the ‘Eastern Bloc’?

Werner Bonefeld’s 2002 contribution to this discussion, as well as his more recent work on ordo-liberalism, are revealing. Tracing the history of neoliberal thought from the 1930s onwards, he has insisted that the logic of European integration has been both economic and political. Hence, the shift towards neoliberalism in the 1970s cannot be understood either as solely an economic response to the crisis or as the mere rise to dominance of an ideological project. Bonefeld describes the 1930s ordo-liberal criticisms not only of the Weimar Republic’s inability to facilitate a liberal economy, but also of its ‘weak’ state, that is, a state that did not have the monopoly of violence and could not draw the locus of politics back into the state. The influence of Carl Schmitt’s authoritarian criticism of the Weimar Republic can be seen in statements by the ordo-liberals Alexander Rüstow and Wilhelm Röpke, who advocated a ‘dictatorship within the bounds of democracy’, and Alfred Müller-Armack’s explicit support for a strong state that resolves socioeconomic difficulties and frees the initiative of individuals (‘Vitalpolitik’) by suppressing ‘the class struggle’.

Bonefeld sees a continuity between the ordo-liberal conception of the free economy as political practice whose operation depends on the ‘market police’, and the project of European integration, especially given the influential role of Alfred Müller-Armack in shaping this project. In both cases, the problem these liberal interventions wished to address was not a state that was too...
strong or too interventionist, but rather a state that was too weak, so that it gave in to the demands of ‘special interests’—that is, to social demands that increased the cost of labour power—while allowing the politicisation of society beyond parliamentary and legal processes. Bonefeld also refers to Hayek’s 1930s vision of a supranational Europe that would encourage competitiveness as opposed to national economic protectionism, and would allow the free movement of capital, labour, and commodities. Most relevant and central to Hayek’s vision is that monetary policy would be centralised and national states would not be able to pursue monetary policies independently in order to satisfy popular demands. A ‘Keynesian’ response to social conflict would no longer be possible, thereby guaranteeing the freedom and stability of the markets, on the basis of a rule-based, centralised monetary policy, which shields central banks from political interference. Thus, national fiscal policies that veer away from a prudent fiscal discipline of surpluses in their current accounts would be punished by market forces. While Hayek’s work was written in the 1930s, its logic directly applies to common analyses of the 1970s crisis: the inflationary pressures of labour demands, the exorbitant price of welfare, recalcitrant unproductive workers.

In the present crisis, these principles of European economic integration have become extremely clear in the case of Greece, as well as the cases of Spain, Portugal, Ireland, and Italy. In contrast to vague understandings of neoliberalism as advocating a small, weak, and non-interventionist state, Bonefeld points out that the neoliberal state is one that does not yield to social demands, and entails the ‘harsh and disciplinarian control of the labour market’. From his analysis it is also clear that monetary integration strategically functions as the separation and externalisation of an important branch of the state’s powers, that which concerns monetary policy and could potentially allow currency devaluation to accommodate credit expansion and inflationary tendencies, so as to make it impervious to mass democracy and the ‘excessive expectations’ this democracy generates. In Greece we indeed have seen this ‘mass democracy’ being treated as a major threat, not only in the form of social mobilisation, but also in electoral participation itself. In 2012, the leaders of the EU made public statements warning Greek voters against electing parties that did not support the restructuring measures, arguing that those parties (specifically SYRIZA) were against the EU—despite statements by those parties to the contrary—and therefore such an outcome would cause Greece’s exit from the Eurozone and an economic collapse. We see then that European integration put pressure on the sovereignty of European states. Yet it is clear, for Bonefeld, that this pressure does not become an external limit, but an internalisation of this limit on the part of national states:

The importance of EMU, then, is not that it makes democratically unaccountable what previously had been democratically accountable. Nor does EMU simply place binding ‘constraints of state power’ (Gill, 1992, 178; see also Gill, 1998).

101 Bonefeld, ‘European Integration’, 128.
Rather, the importance of EMU is that national states, on their own initiative, will no longer be able to accommodate class conflict through credit expansion or currency devaluation.¹⁰³

What happens, however, if national states incur large proportions of debt? Bonefeld’s assessment of such a case corresponds to what the dilemma has been in the case of Greece. The choice is between the ECB re-financing the member state in some way, which would generate ‘moral hazard’ (that is, the possibility that other member states will be let off the hook) or forcing the member to leave the Union, which would jeopardise the entire Euro project. A project founded in order to reinforce fiscal discipline could not have permitted the bailing out of Greece’s national debt without demanding the reforms that have been imposed, because if the debt was bailed out without such demands, the whole mechanism of imposing fiscal discipline and neoliberal reforms in the Eurozone would be defunct. The same does not apply in the case of bailouts for private financial institutions, since the free functioning of the latter is what the mechanism was set up to protect in the first place.

The internalisation of this discipline by successive Greek governments brings us back to the work of Sotiropoulos et al., who have discussed finance also as a technique of governmentality. The autonomisation of a rule-based monetary policy in the Eurozone is associated with the functioning of financialised debt and the assessment of risk. National debt can be assessed as higher risk during crisis, because its gradual devaluation through currency devaluation is no longer possible, and hence the possibility of a disorderly default on that debt rises. We have seen that such a high assessment of risk entails high interest rates, creating a vicious circle where debt becomes unserviceable. During this crisis, the assessment of risk in financial markets has played an extremely important role in the process of restructuring.

We have already discussed how Sotiropoulos et al. bring attention to finance as the fetishism of capital. This, for them, also means that ‘capital assets are the reified forms of appearance of the social relation of capital and so their valuation is associated with a particular organic representation of capitalist relations.’¹⁰⁴ The valuation of capital assets occurs through financial markets, which play a social role in the organisation of social power. Through the assessment of risk, financial markets, even when they appear dysfunctional, are a technology of power which, through valuation, shapes and reinforces the forms of the exploitation of labour. Drawing (critically, although this is not the space to address this criticism) on Foucault, the authors argue that contemporary finance is a technology of governmentality. This is because financial markets, in permanently overseeing markets, and, in turn, the social events that affect them, are both heterogeneous themselves and target a heterogeneous population, while reacting to collective social events and process-

¹⁰⁴ Sotiropoulos, Milios and Lapatsioras, Demystifying Finance, 151.
es with assessments of risk, which they objectify in statistical terms. In doing so, they do not impose an abstract norm by direct force, but instead they reinforce or punish the activities of capitals, states, workers, or other social groups, that respectively contribute or pose obstacles to the valorisation of capital. Indeed, from 2009 to 2014, we have seen how the risk-valuation and interest rate of Greece’s sovereign debt has fluctuated in response to Eurogroup discussions, parliament decisions, large demonstrations and election predictions and outcomes. At the level of individual capitals, the possibility of insufficient profits translates almost immediately to less access to credit. Lastly, but most pertinently for this inquiry, at the level of workers’ experience, the pressure translates into the message that if too much is demanded, or, more likely, if wage cuts and labour market reforms are resisted, the capital that mobilises their labour power will be devalued, and they could find themselves without jobs. The mediated immediacy of this type of market supervision is a specific characteristic of contemporary highly financialised capitalism.

The restructuring described above was then imposed on the Greek economy and society, and on the lower classes most directly, both via the structure of the EMU, whose very premise was to impose fiscal discipline through the removal of monetary control from participating states, and via the governmental technology of finance, which reinforces that discipline on all whose existence (state and capitals) or subsistence (proletarians) depends on the reproduction of capital. ‘On the basis of this “material” blackmailing the most significant social consensus in the logic of capital is usually organized.’

FETISHISM AND THE POLITICAL CRISIS
The presentation of the restructuring on the political scene as an ‘external’ material blackmailing, imposed either by the institutions that monitored it (the IMF, the ECB and the EC) or by the anonymous agency of ‘banks’ and ‘financiers’ was precisely an instance of the fetishism of capital, as defined above. This fetishism has entailed a particular understanding of crisis, one affected by the distance and apparent disconnection of finance capital from labour and the process of valorisation. The increased exploitation, the pauperisation, the particular reconfiguration of the class relation’s dynamic effected by the restructuring then appeared as the domination of an international élite of powerful politicians and financiers upon the nation-state and its ‘people’. Via international institutions, it appeared to be this élite that eroded national sovereignty and intervened into and invalidated democratic processes. The demands for democracy, the retrenchment into anti-imperialist nationalism and xenophobia, and the subject of the national citizen, which, as will be seen in the following chapters, became dominant in the discourses of the movements that resisted the restructuring, were the mirror image of the way in which the dynamic of restructuring was manifested in the political scene.

We can better understand the relationship between these political tendencies and the fetishism of capital if we briefly revisit Sotiropoulos’ et al. account of the way in which the ‘metamor-

\[105\] Ibid., 154.
phoses’ of capital are concretised, not only by laypersons and journalists, but by Marxist theorists as well, into particular capitalist fractions. If taken further, this concretisation becomes personification, when financial capital is not seen as just a sector but as a clique of powerful capitalists. The abstract, collective, decentralised operation of financial markets is then personified into individuals. An extreme case of this type of personification has been anti-Semitism, whose mid-war ideology, according to Moishe Postone’s analysis, can be understood as a form of anti-capitalism that targets only the abstract forms of capital and opposes to them concrete industrial capital. The opposition to abstraction, Postone points out, extends also to the concept of the mobile ‘abstract’ citizen without ethnic roots or national ‘blood’ personified by the Jew. The parallel with the period examined is evident in the strong resistance to granting citizenship to the children of immigrants born and raised in Greece, and thus expanding the concept of citizenship to a more abstract one, beyond ‘genes’ or ‘blood’. It is also no wonder that anti-Semitic conspiracy theories are once more rising in popularity—and this has been particularly the case in Greece—in the midst of a deep ‘financial’ crisis. This fetishistic anti-capitalism was, of course, expressed politically in a different way in the present historical and economic context, in a deindustrialised, bankrupt Greece.

The media presentation of the ‘Troika’ as a group of individuals led by Angela Merkel, on the basis of Germany’s political and economic power in the EU, validated a view of the restructuring not so much as a drive to restructure the class relation and promote the economic model favoured by the founding ordo-liberal ideology of the EU, but rather as German imperialist domination over Greece. What is not recognised in this narrative, which has also heavily influenced left politics and left economic analyses of the Eurozone as a structure that predominantly favours Germany, is that Germany would never have been able to have the ideological dominance it does within the EU, and the autonomy of monetary policy that the ECB represents would not function, had it not been for the far more diffuse discipline imposed by financial governmentality, which exceeds EU structures. This form of governmentality does not require the existence of the Eurozone to function, even though the Eurozone structures tighten its grip. Argentina, which is often mentioned as a positive example by anti-Eurozone commentators, is, in fact, a case in point. Despite leaving the dollar peg, devaluing its currency, and defaulting on its debts, its economy is still threatened by more defaults over ten years later, and its economic policy is still under the close scrutiny of the markets.

Marxist economic analyses of the Greek crisis that lay blame on core-periphery relations within the Eurozone also tend to place special importance on industrial capital and its nationally-

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106 Duménil and Levy, *Capital Resurgent*.
integrated development for overcoming the crisis. This positive emphasis on national production and growth misapprehends Marx’s work as economic science instead of as a critique of the political economy. Its focus on the ‘real’ value of productive labour versus the ‘fictitious’ value of finance does not move beyond the fetishism of capital, because it proposes a ‘socialist’ national economy founded on national industries geared towards domestic consumption. The problem here is not only that the production of value itself is untouched by this critique. This approach also risks promoting a fetishistic anti-capitalism, by not recognising that finance is not merely a superfluous epiphenomenon in the world economy, an abstract level that can be dispensed with by choice, so that concrete nationalised capitalist development can continue undisturbed. It is a necessary, integral part of capitalist structures and circuits of valorisation. A nationalised capitalism, at least in the present configuration of international capitalist production and accumulation, can hardly exist without finance and cannot grow without competition. The formation of the EMU, and Greece’s entry in it, was not an act of defeat but an act that aimed at achieving the market freedom that would benefit Greek capitalism.

Both left-wing and right-wing voices, as well as a large section of the crowds in demonstrations over this period, branded as ‘national traitors’ the Greek politicians who signed the Memorandum agreements containing restructuring measures in return for bail-out funds. The ‘nation’ and ‘its people’ or citizens were the unified classless mass confronting them. While this discourse of identifying proletarians and small business owners with the nation as a whole favours the strategic left-wing articulation of an anti-austerity policy as a national-popular policy (the Gramscian secret of a successful counter-hegemonic discourse), this very discourse also legitimised far-right, not to say national-socialist articulations. These were represented by the rise of Golden Dawn, whose ideology combined anti-imperialism with a violent activist support for everything concrete and ‘pure’: the Greek shipping industry against left unions (whose ‘Jewish origins’ became once more a discussion topic in the blogosphere); Greek ‘blood’, territory and ‘health’ against the corrupting invasion of ‘clandestine immigrants’; the supposed existence of oil fields in the Aegean, which ‘Jewish millionaire bankers’ are said to be preventing the Greek state from investigating. Although, as we will see in Chapter V, this discussion of fetishistic anti-capitalism is not the only explanation for the rise of Golden Dawn and xenophobia, it was certainly an important factor that strengthened the appeal of their discourse.

The democratic, classless language of the anti-austerity movements can also be interpreted in this context. The German imperialism promoted through the EU did not only appear to threaten Greek sovereignty but also Greek democracy, because neither voting for the social-democratic programme of George Papandreou, nor the enormous demonstrations outside parliament (on which more in the next chapter), had any impact upon the imposition of austerity. The nationalist articulation of democracy with the Ancient Athenian polis into which so much national pride is

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112 This is more or less the programme of parties to the left of SYRIZA like ANTARSYA and KKE, as well as SYRIZA’s anti-EU contingent.
113 ‘Petrélaia’ [Oil], Elinokratía, 2 June 2012, http://ellinokratia.blogspot.co.uk.
invested, which, again, connoted the cultural and genetic historical continuity and superiority of the \textit{ethnos}, once more fuelled a discourse of holding up the fort against invaders. Even though, as we have seen, the ordo-liberal ideology at the heart of the EU did create a structure that poses limits to ‘mass democracy’, the core threat posed to market freedom by mass democracy was not the political rights of the national citizen but rather the class struggle. Still, it was democracy that appeared to be attacked by the restructuring, despite its most direct, and very destructive, material impact on wages. Its heavy effect upon a great section of the ‘petit-bourgeois’ stratum, combined with the long-lost hegemony of class-based politics, formed the pro-democratic resistance to the restructuring as a defence of the nation. In Chapters IV and V we will also see how the strongest attempts to affirm this subject of the national citizen were associated not only with the ethnic but also the patriarchal content of this citizenship.

The political crisis that followed the imposition of the restructuring, signalling the collapse of the two main parties of the Metapoliteusi, PASOK and New Democracy, and manifesting even in the street humiliation of MPs over 2011 and up to the May elections of 2012,\footnote{Over 2011, incidents of yoghurt and tomato-throwing, and similar kinds of attacks, against MPs was frequently reported.} resulted only temporarily in forms of resistance that were autonomous from political parties and traditional forms of political organisation. The very discourse of this resistance, while initially rejecting ‘all politicians’, was not impervious to its gradual reintegration into traditional political structures. The way in which governments themselves took advantage of the xenophobic tendencies expressed by anti-austerity movements is indicative of this, and is discussed more extensively in Chapter V.

Still, this ‘return to politics’ (elections and electoral discourse, the conflict between left and right, between human rights and xenophobia) from 2012 onwards was in no way stable. No party or government managed to gain enough support or to complete its term in the period until the end of 2014, and even oppositional parties of the left and right did not enjoy full support because there have been no convincing economic answers, within the capitalist system, to the impasse posed by the crisis. Even the impressive rise of SYRIZA (see Chapter V) was not a return to the kind of mass politics characteristic of PASOK in the early 1980s. Its rise was relative, in the context of broader political delegitimation. The crisis of politics then emerged as a deepening of political polarisation, precisely because of parties’ attempt to rescue the political by amplifying their discourse. Through this period, no party has had the kind of support that would suggest any wholesale return to the stable politics of the \textit{Metapoliteusi}. The possibility of deep financial instability after SYRIZA’s rise to power can only be followed by further political instability, that can entail deep social upheaval, and an even deeper crisis of politics.

If, however, the crisis of politics here is understood in the sense of the autonomisation of civil society from the state, or the delegitimisation of the state by movements that do not address demands to the state, the crisis of politics would be assessed as having been rather mild. All of the mobilisations of the crisis period addressed themselves to the state, despite some internal tendencies towards forms of self-organisation, in contrast to the December uprising’s peculiar opposition...
to state authority itself. In this sense, the emergence of this type of an uprising, which autonomises social struggle from the state (and could be said, in a Marxian manner, to point towards an overcoming of the division between the state and civil society), was an element that only existed temporarily in December 2008, and its legacy tendencies in the crisis period were subsumed under the dominant tendency to re-legitimise the state at the same time as the state delegitimised the movements’ demands.

CONCLUSION: THE CRISIS AS CLASS STRUGGLE?

Marx’s work and the Marxist tradition have often looked to periods of crisis as opportunities for the escalation of class struggle. Times of crisis reveal the tensions disguised under periods of economic growth. These tensions, which are the contradictions inherent to the capitalist mode of production, are anticipated to swell up to the surface as class struggle. An external, causal understanding of the link between crisis and class struggle, whereby either proletarian struggles cause crises, or crises cause workers’ struggles, should be avoided, however. This is because the former conception would exaggerate the agency of concrete struggles, and the latter would promote a deterministic vision of the political outcomes of crisis. The relationship between crisis and class struggle in the first instance ought to be conceived theoretically, not empirically; that is, by using a concept of class struggle that refers to the contradictory and conflictual dynamic of the capital relation. Approaching the question in this way, the notion that getting into mortgage debt was a practice of class struggle that constituted a ‘collective threat’ to capital loses its implications of agency.\footnote{Midnight Notes Collective, \textit{Promissory Notes}.} Getting into debt to supplement low wages was part of the specific dynamic of the class relation that produced the tendency towards crisis, and so, as part of an internal process, it cannot be conceived as an external relation of causality. Beyond a question of a causal relation, class struggle is here conceived as the conflictual dynamic of a capital relation in crisis.\footnote{This abstract definition does not take priority over historical processes of class struggle however. See the discussion on class in Chapter II.}

In this chapter’s discussion we have then seen the dynamic of the capital relation, as mediated by the state, in the attempt by states to contain the crisis, on one hand, by avoiding the destruction of overvalued capital through bailouts, and, on the other, by transferring the costs of these bailouts to the subordinate classes, to create the conditions for producing more surplus by depressing the value of labour-power. This attempt has been precarious and contradictory both economically and politically, because, although the state and capital have treated labour as superfluous and proletarian reproduction as a burdensome cost, proletarian reproduction is also a problem for capital. Proletarian reproduction is a problem, not only because of the economic limits under-consumption might pose on the realisation of surplus value, or the political problem of the social management of surplus populations, for whom political mediation no longer functions. At the limit, a crisis in which the value of accumulated capital is in question, in which capital integrates masses of labour as surplus into wage relation, and in which the wage can no longer guarantee subsistence,
is also a crisis of abstract labour time ‘as sole measure and source of wealth’, that is, a crisis of value as a relation.\textsuperscript{117} If the precarious reproduction of capital is to such an extent ‘decoupled’ from the reproduction of labour power,\textsuperscript{118} then the naturalised social necessity of labour as a condition for subsistence—and the associated existence of a class dependent on it—also appears arbitrary, despite the fact that it is still a necessary condition for valorisation.

These antitheses came to the surface in the Greek crisis, as the restructuring further reconfigured the dynamic of the class relation. For a growing proportion of proletarians, this second stage of the shift posed the problem of being absolutely dependent on a wage relation that integrates them as surplus, and can hardly meet their subsistence needs. The social management of their discontent posed a problem for the state and for capitalist reproduction, destabilising governments, and threatening uprisings.\textsuperscript{119} The abstract dynamic of class struggle has been present in the problem of proletarian reproduction, in the state’s problem of surplus population management, and in all the mobilisations against austerity. In attempting to manage this potentially explosive dynamic through austerity and repressive forms of social management (see Chapter V), the state has been reproducing its causes at the same time.

But this abstract definition of class struggle as the dynamic of the capital relation does not necessarily entail the politics, discourse or direct practices of class struggle, as a struggle between workers and capitalists, nor does it necessarily produce a class identity. Although it is more than obvious that the crisis in Greece brought on intense social unrest, this unrest was not expressed in the language of class struggle, especially if compared with the struggles of the 1970s. It is not that the mobilisations that took place did not concern social strata with opposing interests. Rather, it is that labour struggles were not dominant in the mobilisations, which did not define themselves as mobilisations of a class. This cannot be merely diagnosed as an insufficiency of class-consciousness caused by weaknesses of leadership of left organisations, which could be cured through the edification of struggling subjects and more rigorous organising efforts. Social subjects emerge in historical processes and conjunctures. Despite the important role of ideology, they are not the voluntary creation of organisational leaderships.

As discussed above, the dominant ideological tendencies of mass mobilisations were nationalist and democratic, produced by the very manner in which the restructuring was politically and economically enforced (the role of EMU structures and of financial governmentality appearing to override governmental authority). Yet such analysis can still not explain why a class identity was not an additional element in this discourse. The longer-term historical processes that impacted on the tendency of class identity to disappear are essential for a fuller picture. The two phases of the shift in the class relation’s dynamic provide a clue: class identity has historically rested on the centrality of labour in capitalist social reproduction, and, at the level of revolutionary ideology, the

\textsuperscript{118} R.S., ‘Present Moment’, 98.
\textsuperscript{119} The risk of such an uprising was ever present in this period, and was often discussed in the Greek financial press, even though it did not materialise beyond single days of riot. Chrístos Frágkou, ‘Crisis management ypó to fóvo tís Aristerás’ [Crisis management in fear of the left], \textit{Sofoklíous}, 26 April 2012.
horizon of a worker-managed society. The past 40 years have challenged both of these premises, with the demise of ‘actually existing socialism’, and with capital’s crisis-prone attempt, on a global scale, to render labour-power and its reproduction superfluous to its valorisation.

The previous chapter discussed the changes that took place in the Greek capitalist economy and society in the period of neoliberal restructuring from the 1990s onwards, and the ways in which these changes affected the labour movement and other social movements. By 2008, just before the sovereign debt crisis broke out, the labour movement bore little resemblance to that which had preceded it in the 1970s, and, instead, the types of contestation that took place were increasingly outside the sphere of production (the exceptions being public sector strikes and the emergence of small grassroots unions). The most significant social struggles that took place in the ‘00s were the students’ occupations in 2006–7 against the restructuring of universities, the movement against the pension reform, and the December uprising in 2008. The preceding period, with its tendency to push social contestation outside production, alongside de-industrialisation, undermined the traditional concept of class struggle, which had been centred on the subject of the industrial worker. By December 2008, ‘precarious youth’ (or even ‘marginalised youth’) had emerged as the most recognisable subject of the uprising.

In the crisis period that was to follow, the ‘youth’ went from being the ‘€700 generation’ to the generation of 60 per cent unemployment and unpaid work. In this same period, as we will see in the next chapter, the youth stopped being at the forefront of mobilisations but became merely one group among many. If the pre-crisis situation unsettled the application of traditional conceptions of class struggle, inspiring speculation over the potential of the young European ‘precariat’ for forming a new subject of struggle, the new crisis situation generalised this condition to such an extent, encompassing the middle classes, that it came to be a problem for the ‘people’. In the face of an apparently external imposition of the restructuring by international institutions and finance, the fetishism of capital further validated a national-popular response. The next chapter will analyse the possibilities and limits of the struggles that emerged amid these historical transformations.

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120 Alex Foti, ‘MAYDAY MAYDAY: Euro Flex Workers, Time to Get a Move On!’, RepublicArt, April 2005.
IV. Resistance to the Restructuring and its Limits

INTRODUCTION
The previous chapter examined the processes of crisis and restructuring, that is, the context in which the social struggles of the crisis period emerged. The dynamic of the class relation was reconfigured in a way that left no room to move for all those dependent on the wage, leaving them stuck between unemployment and extremely low-paid or frequently unpaid work. Unpaid or undeclared work became a necessary option for many unemployed amid the curtailment of welfare. The restructuring also increased their numbers, proletarianising an enormous section of former small-business owners. The previous chapter also looked at the roles of financial governmentality and the EMU structure in the imposition of the restructuring, as well as their validation of an ethnocentric type of political criticism, whose main concern was the better management of the Greek economy and the growth of its industries, conceived as capable of being separated from finance and world competition. The chapter ended with asking how, at a time of such an extreme polarisation of social inequalities, the traditional discourse of class struggle became even more marginalised, what forms of social contestation and identification became more dominant in this period’s mobilisations instead of class, and what were their potentials and limits. Here, I will attempt to answer this question, by looking more analytically at the struggles that emerged in the crisis period up to the end of 2014.

When this thesis was first conceived, its questions were coloured by the optimism that the mobilisations of the crisis period, from the uprising of December 2008 to the squares movement of 2011, would continue to escalate, producing new subjects and more radical forms of practical and theoretical social critique, which would challenge the social power relations of capitalism and the subjectifications they produce. During the years of writing, this optimism became less and less tenable, as the economic and social restructuring proceeded in full force despite these struggles, while social mobilisations became smaller and less frequent. From the 2012 elections onwards, until the end of 2014, fewer significant demonstrations or strikes took place, while the restructuring measures and heavy policing continued to affect the lower social strata directly, and unemployment continued to rise. What at first appeared to be political and ideological fluidity, a refusal of political mediation and a potential for unprecedented uprisings, soon seemed to settle into a polarised, nostalgic war of traditional political ideologies, with history and the nation as its main objects, the agenda being driven by the government itself (see Chapter V). The period ended with the ascent of a left political party, SYRIZA, whose base had closely participated in many of the movements of this period. This apparent recapturing has forced the questions of how and why this happened: what ‘defeat’ or ‘victory’ has really meant if the social relations contested in these mobilisations are carefully examined, what the limits faced by these practices of struggle were, and what attempts there have been to overcome them.
Before entering this discussion, the concept of the ‘limits’ of struggle should be more clearly defined. Towards what activities and what aims have there been limits? Are these aims defined externally in the analysis, according to certain ethical-political principles or communist utopias, or internally, according to the participants’ own self-definition? Could the very aims of struggles turn out to be their own limits, and if so, how could such a judgment be made? The present discussion does not aim to criticise social practices from the point of view of external ethical principles. At the same time, the ‘point of view’ of the social practices themselves cannot easily be defined. The social mobilisations and forms of organisation against austerity and the restructuring discussed in this chapter were often not univocal. In fact, they were very frequently characterised by internal distances between the different aims, political discourses and oppositional activities of their participants. To the degree that there was a commonality of either aims, self-definition, or, more often, a common negativity, an immanent critique of those struggles would be insufficient if limited to asking whether their practices live up to their declared aims. Instead, it ought to ask also if and how social struggles contest or inadvertently reproduce the social power relations and conditions that are presupposed by the problems that mobilise them. A potential discrepancy of this kind may produce internal distances within struggles which, rather than simply indicating disunity, can be seen as part of a process of self-critique. Such critique concentrates not only on the consciousness and discourse of struggles but also on the historical social relations of which struggles are part. In doing so, it identifies not only external (for example, policing and state violence), but also internal limits in struggles.

Still, the point of view of the author always affects analysis, both in terms of access to information and of the theoretical lens through which such information is interpreted. As was more extensively discussed in Chapter I, after beginning to carry out my fieldwork, in the absence of a broader movement in which I could participate, I decided against limiting my discussion to only the smaller movements or collectivities that I had experienced first-hand. Instead, I chose to carry out the more abstract theoretical work of discovering common threads and tendencies among the numerous smaller struggles that took place in this period, despite the fact that it would be impossible for me to participate in them all. I have also discussed the empiricist fallacy of the political ethics which prohibits speaking about social movements without participating directly. Experiencing a struggle can provide a perspective and a knowledge that is not accessible otherwise, but a broader analysis of struggles in their context of social relations and historical conditions is impossible under such a prohibition. The experience of struggle still does matter, so I have both drawn on my limited direct experience and have given weight to first-hand accounts and discussions found in blogs, forums, and political journals, as well as to informal discussions with persons who participated in movements or particular events.¹ All such discussions were conducted informally in confiden-
tiality, without collecting any personal data. Where first-hand accounts were unavailable, I have resorted to using newspapers and news websites that were sympathetic to the movements.

In considering the varied forms of oppositional activity within this period and contrasting them to one another, I was also forced to be selective. It was not possible, within the scope of this thesis, to describe each specific instance of social contestation in very much detail. Some struggles are presented in broad strokes, some are only mentioned, while others are presented in more detail because I considered them to be representative examples. Evidently, there is much room for error and misapprehension in such an endeavour, because the internal conflicts and dynamics of movements, which are particularly important for the analysis attempted here, are often not made public and are only known by participants, despite possibly being discussed in a collective self-critical process of a group or a movement. Because of my distance from certain events, my prioritisation of struggles may not be the same as that of those who have experienced them more closely. I can only hope that my presence in a number of group discussions and activities by neighbourhood assemblies, grassroots unions, the squares movement, and a number of other small collectivities, has provided me with some insight for this kind of prioritising.

The struggles of this period have been characterised by great diversity, but certain common tendencies can be identified. One of these is the weakness of the labour movement, already discussed in the previous chapters, but examined here in more detail. The gradual defeat of the Greek labour movement seemed to have reached its lowest point in these years. As explained in Chapters II and III, which presented two stages of the changing dynamic of the class relation, this weakness, the labour movement’s inability to put a halt to wage reductions, layoffs, and insecurity, and to begin posing its own affirmative demands, is not a specific characteristic of the labour movement in Greece. As elsewhere in Europe and most of the world, the neoliberal restructuring that began in the late 1970s and continued to proceed within the following decades undermined the labour movement, by removing structural protections and refusing to recognise labour organisations as ‘social partners’ whose stakes are to some degree incorporated into state decisions. In the crisis, labour not only lost its leverage but it came to be treated as superfluous, and the state’s role in proletarian reproduction was reduced to increasingly oppressive policing. Demands to the state could only be expressed within rigid limits, imposed by the threat of a sovereign default, given that the solvency of the Greek state depended on EU and IMF funding in return for austerity and restructuring measures.

The eclipse of a strong labour movement and its political hegemony did not entail social peace in the face of a restructuring that openly attacked labour. Yet the dominant self-identification and practice of the forms of social contestation that emerged in this period were not anchored on a workers’ identity, in contrast to the composition, discourse, and practices of the struggles that occurred during the previous important crisis of the 1970s. The labour struggles of this period and the discourse of labour rights remained in the background in the mass demonstrations and local organising of 2010–2014, despite playing some role on days of general strike. In the squares movement, the dominant collective subject was the democratic national citizen, while most of the new
neighbourhood assemblies and other local struggles and initiatives, which tended to be interclass, were not linked to labour struggles beyond a number of solidarity actions. In workplace disputes, struggles were fragmented, in most cases minoritarian, or could not gain momentum. Despite the fact that most of the movements and campaigns that took place in the streets protested direct and indirect wage cuts, that is, the deepening of capitalist exploitation, their demands were framed in national and political terms (democracy, sovereignty) and only marginally in the terms of class struggle. High unemployment, on top of decades of fragmentation, also disempowered nascent grassroots unions, and favoured the capital-friendly far-right argument for the empowerment of ‘our’ national capital, in order to create jobs, and the expulsion of immigrants who ‘take them’, which held sway among growing minorities of young proletarians. Such a pro-capital tendency also manifested in workers fiercely defending a new mine that was opposed by local residents on environmental grounds (discussed under ‘anti-development struggles’).

If the mass demonstrations of 2010–12 could be interpreted as part of an anti-capitalist struggle, they certainly did not dominantly present themselves in this way, although a limited practical questioning of the social forms of capital and the state could be identified in their moments of riot. The riots of this period, which were more short-lived than those of December 2008, but which also had broader participation, were among the few instances where the terms of the political debate on how to rebuild the Greek economy were themselves questioned, and the economy itself, its laws, rules, and impositions, were temporarily transgressed. Still, the practices of riot and their accompanying discourses were varied, with tensions emerging among the different tendencies. The nationalist tendencies dominant in the squares movement were also present in the accompanying riots, as well as in those that broke out in subsequent demonstrations.

As may already be clear, immigrants’ struggles were excluded in the constitution of this period’s dominant nationally-unifying opposition to the restructuring, which reproduced immigrants and other figures as socially marginal. The invisibility and marginality of their struggles was conspicuous, even when, in the context of increasing political polarisation after the middle of 2012, the cause of immigrants’ ‘rights’ became identified with left anti-fascist politics. Increasingly, over the crisis period, immigrants had become targets of vigilante violence, as nationalism grew and its more extreme wing was legitimised. Immigrants’ denigration to the most inessential kind of human life was the mirror image of the anti-austerity movement’s dominant ethnocentrism. Immigrants’ struggles and their relationship with the anti-fascist mobilisations that reacted to Golden Dawn’s electoral breakthrough in 2012 will be discussed last, in this chapter, and the discussion will be continued in Chapter V, with an analysis of the context and historical underpinnings of extreme nationalism and state repression. Chapter V examines the interconnections and exclusions between Greek and immigrant struggles, the state’s management of the crisis and the surplus populations produced by the restructuring, as well as its active cultivation of racism and its defence of traditional gender

roles as part of this crisis management. This chapter is incomplete without Chapter V, as will be clear in the conclusion.

Despite leaving national belonging virtually unquestioned, the social struggles examined here were internally heterogeneous, and their view of the future fluctuated between multiple ideals in tension or open conflict with each other. In this chapter, I examine these tensions and conflicts, and consider the limits of struggles as conceived above. In doing so, I consider whether an important limit was the fact that the continuation of struggles came up against what those participating perceived as their immediate needs of subsistence, in the context of a severe crisis. The movements of this period tended to address urgent problems of subsistence in the crisis by developing local forms of self-management and self-organisation, often rejecting political representation. A proportion of these evolved into small businesses or networks of exchange (of commodities or labour). Other groups, those which partially replaced the diminishing reproductive functions of the state, such as self-organised health centres, faced the ambivalence of whether their practice was charity or solidarity, and whether it was benefiting the state by providing a social cushion the state was no longer prepared to offer.

As will be evident in the following sections, the need for the means of subsistence was faced as a contradiction and did not produce a unity among participants in struggles. The question of class and relative priorities did emerge in interclass collectivities, although it was rarely articulated as such and could hardly challenge the interclass form of organising. With concepts like solidarity mystified but unable to operate without such a challenge, the unity of citizens in struggle disintegrated, and gave way, once more, to political mediation that reconstituted a relative unity from the outside, with SYRIZA’s ascent to power—particularly during the months of its open resistance to bailout agreements (January–July 2015). In this way, the question of subsistence translated into the economic survival of the nation-state first and foremost, that is, into the priority of capitalist reproduction.

LABOUR STRUGGLES

In a period of a ruthless attack on wages, labour rights and proletarian reproduction more broadly, although there was significant resistance, workers have not been able to organise themselves in a movement that would stage an effective defence. Although there appears to have been a high number of strikes over the 2010–2014 period, those tended to be in the public sector and in large unionised industries of the private sector. In the remaining sectors and workplaces, grassroots unions (see Chapter II) attempted to stage resistance under extremely difficult conditions. These struggles were, in most cases, disconnected from each other, except when GSEE and ADEDY launched

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3 Dimitris Katsoridas and Sofia Lampousaki, ‘Oi aperges to 2011 [Strikes in 2011]’, in Eidikí Ékdoši: Tetrádia tou INE, ed. Giannis Kouzis, Melètes 37 (Athens: INE-GSEE, 2012). There are no statistics of the strikes that took place throughout 2010–2014. This quantitative study of the strikes in 2011 is taken to be to some extent representative of the period, even though there appears to have been a gradual fall in strike numbers after mid-2012, as a result of defeats and heavy policing.
one- or two-day general strikes, which took place on 32 occasions through this period. The most important of those are described in the following section, because, particularly from 2011, they tended to have a broader social character than being centred on the labour movement. Despite the fact that the restructuring targeted primarily direct and indirect wages, labour struggles were not central or politically hegemonic in this period. They were overshadowed by the squares movement in 2011 (which, on the first day of demonstrations at Syntagma Square in Athens, did not even accept a strikers’ demonstration into the square—see the section on mass demonstrations), and by political concerns and anti-fascist campaigns after mid-2012 (see Chapter V).

According to the analysis of strikes in 2011 by Katsoridas and Lampousaki, around 445 strikes took place, almost all of which lasted for a single day or a few hours. There were 9 longer-term strikes, lasting fewer than 10 days, with the exceptions of the steelworkers of Elliniki Chalyvourgia and the workers of the television channel ALTER (discussed below). The writers recognise a tendency for workplace occupations to become more frequent (over 10% of cases). It is still made clear that all of these mobilisations were defensive, reflecting a rather desperate situation even for the relatively protected workers who were able to organise strikes. More than half of the strikes attempted to put a halt to the closure of the business where they worked, or to mass layoffs (here I include public sector workers’ protests against being placed in a labour reserve pool so as to be dismissed). The second most common demand of strikers was to receive unpaid wages. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the restructuring produced these two major issues with legislation that eased the process of company closures and mass layoffs, made it easier for employers to justify the delayed payment of wages, and enabled mass wage-cuts—the third most common cause of strikes.

The demands of these struggles were up against new legislation that threatened to nullify the remaining negotiating power of workers, as already discussed in Chapter III. For example, the Article 99, which gave employers the right to go bankrupt and liquidate their assets without fulfilling any obligations to staff; the law that criminalises the withdrawal of labour for unpaid wages if the employer can prove that they face financial difficulties;5 the ‘security measures’ that can ban workers from demonstrating outside their workplaces; and the attempt to do away with overtime pay for hospital staff.6 The restructured legal framework legitimised a type of work relation that was previously more typical under the precarious conditions of informal employment. In turn, informal employment itself tended to become more widespread, because, in addition to lack of labour pro-

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4 GSEE-ADEDY: Se apergiakó kloió i Elláda [Greece in the grip of strikes], Imerísiá, 27 November 2014.
5 Ar. 281 AK.
6 Táklis Geórgákópolous, ‘Eímeries giatítón: Spérnoun anémonu, tha therísoúme thyíelles? [Doctors’ overtime duties: They sow winds; will we harvest blizzards?], I.Augí, 8 July 2014. Overtime duty, particularly for junior trainee doctors, in Greece, can be up to 150–180 hours per month, as the EU directive to limit the maximum weekly hours to 48 is not being enforced. As if this legal framework was not already onerous enough, managers have often twisted existing legislation to elicit unpaid work. For example, when hospital doctors sought to withdraw their labour and demand several months’ wages, they were falsely told by management, using legal advisers they had hired, that they were legally obliged to work even when unpaid. (See forum posts containing several scanned official letters sent to medical staff by management, ‘To dikaióma épísechis ergasías’ [The right to withdraw labour], Forum Prótvováthias Frontídás Ygeías [Forum of Primary Health Care], April-August 2012, http://www.pfy.gr/forum/).
tection, the lack of demand for labour forced workers to accept unlawful terms of employment.\^7 Workers then fought not for better conditions, but for the very existence of a basic labour agreement: to work and to be paid for one’s work. In other words, they fought for stability within the wage relation, and to ensure that it remains an indirect form of exploitation, as opposed to a deception into working unwaged. As a testament to the inability of these mobilisations to get their demands met, it is indicative that, by 2015, the number of workers whose wages were delayed for up to five months had reached one million.\^8

Despite these obstacles, it would have been unfair to say that the workers who could do so did not put up a fight. There was, for example, the long-term strike of the steelworkers, which many looked to as an example of resolute struggle over 2011–12. The strike ended ungloriously in the beginning of August 2012, after over nine months of striking, when riot police broke into the factory and allowed the management in. After the strikers decided to return to work, the management fired six workers. Worse, 24 of the strikers were convicted from 21 to 23 months in prison for contravening a court decision against the strike and for ‘illegal violence’.\^9 Strikes, withdrawals of labour to demand unpaid wages, protests against layoffs, and in some cases workplace occupations against closures took place in hospitals, private language and lesson-support schools, couriers (ACS and others), telephone centres (Phonemarketing), mobile communications (Vodafone, Wind, HOL),\^10 mass media (ERT, Eleutherotypia, ALTER, and others),\^11 some factories (Viobeton, Coca Cola, and others) and shops (BlŽ, Metropolis, and others). Struggles by immigrant workers (Chalkidiki fishermen,\^12 agricultural workers in Crete, the Peloponnese and elsewhere), put their very lives at risk, as the cases of the shootings and torture of migrant workers by bosses in Nea Manolada have shown (to be discussed more extensively in Chapter V). In October 2011, in the week prior to the 48-hour strike of 19–20 October (discussed in the next section), there were occupations in a very large section of the public sector, which, nevertheless, did not last beyond the two-day strike.

There are two notable types of practice in the labour struggles of the crisis period that are worth discussing and contrasting to each other. The first is the practice of self-management as an attempt to continue running companies under closure, or by setting up co-operatives. The second is the practice of blockading or protesting outside workplaces by precarious or laid-off groups of workers who have formed grassroots unions and have very often been unable to organise strikes.

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\^7 Roula Salourou, ‘Efialtikês diastasëis lamvànei ë ë ë ë adîlîi ergasìa mësa stìn krisì’ [Nightmarish proportions of undeclared labour in the crisis], Kathimerini, 29 March 2015. It is important to note here that the payment of social security contributions is not automatic even when someone is formally employed in希腊. This means that the payment of contributions depends on the lawfulness of the employer. In the crisis, the number of employers who do not declare their workers has risen, as workers accept these terms out of need, particularly in the hospitality sector. According to statistics by the Ministry of Labour given out to the press, in 2014 undeclared labour was assessed to be at 13,85%.

\^8 George Tiki, Ta Nea, 25/4/2015.

\^9 ‘Se 21 ćos 23 mìnes fyláki ë ë ë ë ë katadikástìkan oi apergoi chalyourgòi’, I Augi, 9 April 2014.


These two types of practice represent contrasting worker situations (being inside versus being outside a workplace) as well as similarities.

With employers leaving workers unpaid and businesses closing down, the idea of self-management re-emerged, either in the form of taking over the fixed capital left behind by bankrupt employers or in the form of new co-operative businesses. These attempts at self-management, nevertheless, had little similarity, in terms of their strength, prevalence, and prospects, with those of the factory unions movement of the late 1970s. What might have caused the difference? It is not that labour legislation was more favourable in the 1970s, or that employers were more forgiving. Industrial production still was far more widespread, concentrating far larger numbers of workers with collective contracts and common interests in urban areas. As we have seen, the Greek economy was only just coming out of a period of boom and low unemployment, which had not been based on a wages/productivity deal similar to much of the rest of Europe, but rather on violent authoritarian suppression of workers’ organising. Even though the crisis had begun to impact Greece, the fall of the dictatorship unleashed that pent-up force, spurred on by the student movement, which had been the first to revolt. Democratisation created the hope that improvements were possible, particularly since the recent European history at the time had shown a real improvement in living standards and welfare for workers. PASOK supported the idea of self-management and nationalisation, and after its electoral victory, factory unions were formally recognised (despite their later undermining), and a number of nationalisations took place. The social democratic model had not been entirely delegitimised yet.

In contrast, for struggles that have taken place after the 2008 crisis, such favourable conditions are missing. After the restructuring over the 1990s and 2000s, workers are not only fragmented into a great variety of smaller workplaces, mostly in services, but the rate of unemployment has been extremely high and steadily increasing, while the notion of progress taken for granted up until the mid-1990s, that workers’ conditions and ‘democratic standards’ would improve as capitalism develops, has been debunked. If the cumulative posing of increasingly radical demands was once thought of as the way in which an improvement in workers’ situation—or, for the radicals, a revolution—could be produced, now certainly that prospect was not a visible horizon. This was also evident at the political level, in contrast to the politics of ’70s and ’80s PASOK. In the crisis, as SYRIZA gradually gained electoral power, it politically supported the self-management attempts that were taking place. As the prospect of forming a government and managing the crisis loomed, however, it moved away from its already modest references to nationalisation, and eventually, after its victory, it moved away from its prior stance against all privatisations. It restricted itself to extending the legal framework for setting up co-operatives (Social Co-operative Enterprises) which, significantly, was introduced in 2011 amid a barrage of onerous legislation for workers. From the perspective of the state’s social and economic management, self-management and co-operatives have been promoted as a way to deal with massive levels of unemployment at the same time as unemployment benefits were being radically slashed.

It is in this context that this period’s initiatives for the self-management of production have taken place: not as practices aspiring to a workers’ society, nor as the peak of a series of struggles with increasingly radical demands. Rather, they have been the result of workers’ efforts to prevent the closure of the company or production unit where they were employed. Vio.Me. was the only case of a straightforward attempt by workers to take over the factory and run it themselves. It has greatly inspired the political supporters of self-management in Greece and abroad. The workers at Vio.Me. were owed several months’ wages since May 2011 by the company’s absentee owners, who left behind enormous debts. They launched a legal battle and managed to confiscate the machinery and materials in the factory, aiming to continue production themselves. Helped by the new legislation for co-operatives, they formed a new company that aims to export ecological chemical products to private clients and other co-operatives within the EU. Yet, according to the workers, their attempt has hardly brought back sufficient income; they have persisted as a form of political action. They have looked towards a generalisation of such actions and the ideal of workers’ self-management, particularly that of factories, in order to question the advanced process of deindustrialisation. They have also formally opened up the management of the company and of production to supporters who express solidarity. By contributing a small donation, supporters are invited to participate in the company’s management assemblies. By March 2015, the factory employed 40 persons who earned the equivalent of an unemployment benefit. Meanwhile, at the time of writing,

14 Nokoléta Roússou, ‘VIOME: Énas chrónos gia to prōto autodiacheirizómeno ergostásiō’ [One year for the first self-managed factory], ΤΤ-ΧΥ, 11 February 2014.
15 Kōstas Papanthōnou, ‘VIOME - To peîrama pētyche: “Allázontas to ergostásiō, deixame óti allázεi ï koinōnia”’ [VIOME - The experiment was successful: ‘By changing the factory, we showed that society is changing’], Ι.Ανγί, 22 March 2015.
the legal wrangles with the previous owners over the company’s bankruptcy and the forfeiture of the land and buildings had not ended, threatening the continuation of the endeavour.16

The only cases that came anywhere close to that of Vio.Me, but not quite, are long-term strikes and workplace occupations in the media industry (ALTER, Eleutherotypia, and ERT) and the occupation of Kilkis Hospital. Kilkis received much publicity internationally as an attempt at self-management.17 In reality, it was an one-week workplace occupation in protest for delayed and radically reduced wages, which, at the same time, tried to meet patients’ urgent needs for free, managing the hospital democratically through a workers’ assembly.18 In the media cases, workers produced political communications or continued to work during their workplace occupations as a means of struggle, effectively running the productive units themselves, but without making serious attempts at making the takeovers permanent, perhaps with the exception of ET3 (the Thessaloniki branch of ERT, which is still run by workers at the time of writing). ALTER was a television channel that had entered a bankruptcy procedure, leaving workers unpaid. Workers took over the technical resources to broadcast protest messages from their strike and documentaries about other ongoing struggles. After three months, in February 2012, the broadcasting licence ran out and the occupation ended, with workers remaining unpaid.19 The case of Eleutherotypia came close to a formal effort to establish workers’ self-management as a very last resort in November 2012.20 Staff had already gone on a long-term strike having been unpaid for several months in 2011. In response, the company filed for bankruptcy under Article 99. Internal distances among workers became clear at that point, as one fifth elected to not contest the bankruptcy, with the hope of getting a job with the same employer in a new, restructured, venture. Still, the majority continued to demand their wages, and produced two ‘strike issues’ of Eleutherotypia, but without using the company’s own machinery, as they feared about the legality of doing so, and without any intention to run the newspaper themselves. A group of workers departed and set up a new co-operative newspaper called ‘I Efimerida ton Syntaktōn’ (the editors’ newspaper).21 Subsequently, in 2012 a type of compromise was reached with the employer, and the newspaper began production again, until the end of 2014, when workers again rebelled against working unpaid, and requested to begin procedures to form a co-operative. The publisher/employer’s response was that they were welcome to do so, if they

16 ‘Ατίμα ανακοπή τίς πτοχεύσεις τίς VIOME - Se ligous mīnes ĭ apōfasi’ [Request to halt the bankruptcy of VIOME - Decision in a few months], Alter Thess, 24 April 2015, http://alterthess.gr/.
19 Ergazomenoi ALTER, ‘To ALTER synechizei kai tha synechisei na ekpŽmpei’ [ALTER continues and will continue to broadcast], Ergazomenoi ALTER, 9 February 2012, http://ergazomenoialter.blogspot.gr/.  
21 Synéleusī énnisthōn, anisthōn, mplokākídōn, mairōn, anérγōn kai foitītōn sta MME, ‘O apergiakós agōnas stīn Eleutherotypia kai oi epicheirisiasaktēs tou vlpseis’ [The strikers’ struggle in Eleutherotypia and its entrepreneurial ambitions], Katαλππίσ Katαlipsiesia.blogspot.gr, 28 June 2012, http://katalipsiesia.blogspot.gr/2012/06/blog-post_28.html This is a report at a blog by workers in the media industry, who had participated in the occupation of the corresponding sectoral union, ESIEA, in January 2009, the aftermath of the December ‘08 unrest.
wished to use the amount of their unpaid wages as start-up capital to run the newspaper. At present it is unclear whether the workers have accepted this proposal.22

In other cases, self-management took the form of collective business ventures initiated by unemployed workers, with the explicit aim of the subsistence of their members (e.g. Collective Courier, a company set up by ex-employees of private postal companies; ‘To Kazani Pou Vrazei’ a collectively-managed kitchen/taverna in Thessaloniki) and/or accompanied by a discourse of self-management as radical or potentially revolutionary practice (e.g., ‘To Pagkaki’, a cooperative coffee shop;23 ‘Oi Ekdóseis tón Synádelfénon’, a publishing co-operative;24 ‘Syn-Állois’, a self-managed distribution network for products of ‘alternative and solidarity markets’,25 and more). These initiatives were created outside (or in the aftermath of) a context of direct labour struggle, and they overlap, in some cases, with ‘alternative economy’ initiatives, which will be discussed in the relevant section of this chapter. For the most politicised of these initiatives, their practice prefigures a post-capitalist society where workers would decide what they produce, how they produce it and where they distribute it, in dialogue with the rest of society, to satisfy needs.26 They argue that their practice, beyond simply being a solution for subsistence, opposes capitalist social relations, offering an alternative way of organising work. Workers try to break down internal hierarchies and to replace them with relations of solidarity. They make collective consensual decisions, they do not aim for profits—sharing out any profits or donating them to labour struggles and similar initiatives—and, above all, they prove that workers can work without bosses. Oi Ekdóseis ton Synádelfénon in particular insist that their practice separates itself from capitalist social relations. Their stated principle is that books must not be commodities but ‘social goods’, and that readers must not be consumers but ‘book lovers’.27 According to Pagakí, even though at present such initiatives cannot remain pure or separate from dominant social relations, their ideal is autonomy: networks of autonomous and anti-hierarchical forms of organising social life and production are, for them, the overcoming of capitalism.28

From the cases of Vio.Me. and Eletherotypia it is clear that workers who choose the path of self-management to survive closures face very unfavourable conditions, which—so far—at best provide them with an income similar to the unemployment benefit. Those who choose to set up new co-operatives also face the difficulty of business survival in a market characterised by mass closures for small businesses. According to Collective Courier workers, it took them a year of

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23 To pagaki, ‘lìga ló gia gia mas...’ [a few words about us], To pagaki: Kafeneion / kolektivia ergasias, October 2011, http://pagkaki.org/parousiasi.
27 Ekdóseis tón Synádelfénon, ‘Lìga lò gia’.
28 To pagaki, ‘lìga logia’.
working unpaid until they started to have a basic income from their work. The fact that the success or failure of these businesses has depended, as for every business, on capitalist competition within their sector means that, in order for them to be able to compete in the market under crisis conditions, a smaller or larger degree of devaluation of their members’ labour-power would have to be imposed. Business success, in capitalism, depends upon the profit motive and the ability to compete in markets on quality or price. Small businesses tend to attempt to compete on quality, because of their de facto higher costs in relation to the amount of business they receive; but this, in turn, means harder work and lower pay for the members of co-operatives. There appears to be little potential here to escape low-waged work through such projects.

The very existence of profit (particularly where it is reinvested and not shared out) and waged labour, in such projects, suggests the existence of exploitation. But even when there are no significant profits, working hard for a small wage is far from a favourable condition. These issues have been much discussed through this period between supporters of self-management and their critics. But even participants of such initiatives have often made comments regarding their self-exploitation, suggesting that they work very hard, and carry increased responsibility, considering what they earn. The casual recognition by some of the participants that the self-management of production maintains rather than challenges the core category of the capitalist mode of production—the exploitation of labour—shows that self-management, at least in these cases, is not the critique of the capital relation that it hoped to be. This recognition is often qualified with the defence that these initiatives are not part of a broader movement of self-management. Supporters of self-management argue that these forms of exploitation will end if a broader movement of self-management emerges. Such generalisation indeed could be a challenge to existing hierarchies of the division of labour. Yet, this criticism of exploitation remains at the level of its personification as the exploitative employer, reducing exploitation to a matter of hierarchy. It is assumed that the presence of a private owner of the means of production is the cause of exploitation. This reduction of the problem of exploitation to the question of individual or collective ownership, or to merely a problem of the hierarchy of the division of labour within a production unit, leaves unquestioned the fact that production is for exchange and for the creation of profit, which is to be reinvested to develop or expand the enterprise.

Self-management, at least in the form it has been promoted by most of its supporters, also affirms the conditionality of subsistence upon waged labour, which in turn depends on selling a commodity, despite discursive claims to the contrary. Book makers cannot thus be merely ‘book

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29 Informal interview with workers at Collective Courier, Athens, February 2012.
30 Discussion on self-management entitled ‘Synergeticískes morfèsh ergasías ton kairó tís krisís: Kritikískes proseggíseis’ [Co-operative forms of labour in a time of crisis: Critical approaches] with members of self-management projects at Fabrika Yfanet, as part of the event Communismos 2.0, 26 May 2012.
32 Ibid., Kooperatíva i kolektiva? I kataskeu/epilog tou órou kolektívías ergasías’ [Cooperative or collective? The construction/selection of the term work collective], http://autodiaxeirisi.espivblogs.net/. See also Orestís Varkalóís, Diniourgíkí Antitísis kai Anteukouia [Creative Resistance and Counterpower] (Athens: To Pagkáki, 2012), 29, 115. Both authors appear to argue that there
lovers’, because they produce to sell; book readers cannot stop being ‘consumers’, and books cannot become ‘social goods’, because they continue to be commodities; they are not freely available.\(^{33}\)

Exploitation and commodity exchange are then economic social relations that operate regardless of the subjects involved, and their ideas and principles. The institution of ownership is also still there, separating the enterprise owners (the workers) from the non-owners (everyone else). Only in the case of Vio.Me. was this partially challenged, both by allowing supporters to participate in management and by attempting to expropriate the factory buildings.

This separation, and sometimes conflict, between workers who act as owners of a workplace and those who are forced to be outside it appeared on several occasions in the crisis. The struggle around the public broadcaster, ERT, is an example of a dispute between workers with a special attachment to their workplace and specialisms, and those outside it, over access to means of production as a resource. This was the strongest example of the distance between the demand to defend a workplace and the challenge posed by those external to it, who, in this case, were not identifying as workers, but wanted to take over and collectivise the resource by using it for the promotion of many other struggles that were taking place at the time. In June 2013, after a dispute with the public broadcasting labour union, the government abruptly decided to shut down the public broadcasting and radio corporation, and lay off all of its thousands of staff.\(^{34}\)

The workers responded by taking over the buildings and continuing to broadcast an oppositional programme in support of their campaign to keep ERT open, while large demonstrations began to take place daily outside the ERT studios in Athens and Thessaloniki in protest of the closure. Supporters of the struggle formed assemblies, which wanted to enter the studios and collectively manage the programme (broadcast online, since the police had deactivated the transmitters). In the Athens headquarters, the issue of ‘ownership’ of the means of production then emerged: ERT employees, who hoped to be reinstated into their positions, did not want to allow ‘outsiders’ to enter the studios, and were protective of the studio equipment. It was clear that, for them, the struggle was about their jobs and wages. The opportunity to transform public television into a broader means of social struggle was secondary. Despite supporters’ attempts to convince them, workers refused, and only very selectively presented small parts of the proposed programme.\(^{35}\)

Consequently, the supporters is no significant difference between a social order founded on reward for labour, and one founded upon the free availability of goods. Bizarrely, they also insist that the money the participants of work collectives receive for their work are not a wage, because none of the workers receives a portion of ‘surplus value’ and they all are paid the same hourly amount. This, in their view, is not ‘waged labour’. One then wonders what the authors think a wage really is, other than a monetary reward based on labour time.


The self-understanding of participants in Ekdōseis tòn Synadelfón has also been similarly criticised with an essay by members of the grassroots union to which they also belong, Sýllogos Vivliou Chártou. In it, they discuss at length these problems, as well as that of participating in the union without being in the same kind of antagonistic relation, that is, being (collective) business owners. They do not cite, however, any incidents where conflicting interests caused friction with members of self-management projects.

\(^{34}\) ‘Greece suspends state broadcaster ERT to save money’, BBC, 11 June 2013, http://www.bbc.co.uk/.

\(^{35}\) Polyergaleio, ‘Τι (den) paízetai stín ERT’ [What is (not) aired in ERT], SKY-4, 13 June 2013, http://skya.espiv.net/2013/06/13/. Additional information was gathered from personal participation in the first day
started to grow weary of the situation and their numbers dwindled. In early November 2013, at a weak point, the television building was eventually invaded by the police, who forcibly removed all the workers. On the contrary, the workers at the ET3 studios in Thessaloniki were open to collaboration with the supporters’ assemblies and began to broadcast a political programme immediately. ET3 was still broadcasting a political programme until SYRIZA reinstated it in June 2015.

The other side of the separation between permanent workers attached to their workplaces and temporary, outsourced or otherwise precarious workers was evident in the grassroots labour struggles. As already mentioned in Chapter II, the formation of grassroots unions grew in the 2000s to defend the rights of precarious, temporary or outsourced private sector workers whose issues were not addressed by the major unions. Yet most grassroots struggles have faced serious difficulties in building momentum. In a great many cases (ACS, Blé, private school teachers, bookshop and publishing employees), campaigns were run by a small number of workers—with many of their colleagues having been intimidated by employers or having personal, clientelist relationships with them. In some cases, the struggles were not even run by workers themselves, but by ‘solidarity committees’ that organised protests on their behalf. With an increasing number of workers being unpaid for several months, grassroots unions have organised actions of withdrawal of labour in protest. Facing difficulties in organising strikes, and left unsupported by major unions, which mostly represented permanent workers, grassroots unions frequently resorted to practices alternative to strikes or occupations, that were not even internal to workplaces. The most common of these have been protests by employees outside workplaces such as shops, offices or postal collection centres, where public attention can also be grabbed while blocking the flow of incoming and outgoing business (for example, the cases of the confectioner ‘Blé’, the unpaid temps of the National Census, actions of the union of teachers in private schools, actions of the union of

of the supporters’ assembly in Thessaloniki, and a subsequent discussion with an active participant in the supporters’ assembly in Athens.


37 Discussion of SETTEA [Attica Union of Postal Workers] entitled ‘Οι εξελίξεις στον ταχηνευτικό κλάδο και οι αντιστάσεις των εργαζομένων σε δημόσιες και ιδιωτικές εταιρείες’ [Developments in the postal sector and workers’ resistance in public and private companies], Labour Centre of Athens, 19 January 2012; Meeting and discussion of grassroots unions and labour lawyers entitled ‘Τα εργατικά δικαιώματα της εποχής της κρίσης και των μηταμορφώσεων’ [Labour rights at a time of crisis and memorandums], Athens Polytechnic, 21 January 2012.

38 G.P., E.S. & E.P., ‘Εμπειρίες από τον αγώνα στον Βανκέτ’ [Experiences from the struggle at Banquet], O.A. Blog, 8 February 2012, http://o-a-blog.blogspot.co.uk/.

39 Unpaid dismissed workers of Blé, ‘Ο αγώνας στην Βλέ συνεχίζεται...’ [The struggle at Blé continues...], Prôtovoulá allilégeían stous apolýměnon kai aplòrōtous ergazoménous sta Blé Thessaloníkis, 2 May 2012, http://agwnasble.eu.pn. The workers who had been dismissed, while still being owed wages, from the confectioner Blé demonstrated outside the company’s high-street shops demanding to be paid. After two months of demonstrations, they received their wages.


41 Eléna Kalíméri, Kyríakos Dímaggioles, ‘Μια εργατική δομή, i apegia tis ACS kai to spásmo tis tromokratías’ [A workers’ structure, the ACS strike, and the breaking of terror], Barikit, 11 October 2013, https://barikit.gr/.

42 The grassroots union for teachers in private schools, SEFK, has taken action in support of workplace disputes regarding laid-off workers and unpaid wages, by staging protests outside schools. The union has faced intimidation by employers and dismissals of union members. One of its main priorities was the enforcement of collective agreements with employers. (SEFK, ‘Dráseis 2012’, Výglogos Ergazoménon sta Fronítistiría Kathigón, http://www.sefk.gr/). In the summer of 2012, employers of foreign-language schools in South
waiters and cooks, protests by subcontracted cleaners in the hospitals Dromokaitio and Gennimatas. These cases can be understood as a tendency for workers’ struggles to block production or business activity from the outside, instead of downing tools inside workplaces, sometimes even in the face of hostility by workers who see their own interests and those of their employers as identical: employers provide jobs and protests ruin this ‘opportunity’. The latter was not so rare in a broader context where the norm has been for most workers to continue to go to work, hoping that they would be paid at some point. Quitting a job would mean never receiving the amount owed, on top of being unemployed with no prospect of finding a new job. Often workers in withdrawal of labour who had blockaded or had been occupying their workplaces have had to deal with riot police, arrests, legal charges, revenge layoffs, threats, lockouts, bans from protesting outside their workplaces, new staff being hired to replace those protesting, and direct aggression from employers (for example, the cases of Chatzis patisseries in Thessaloniki, 3E printing, Coca Cola, Pentelikon hotel.

The frequency of such actions shows how the increasing numbers of those who navigate the space between unemployment and precarity are unable to intervene in the process of production from the inside, precisely because of their vulnerability. Their actions are by necessity limited

Attica signed a new collective agreement with an employer-controlled union that radically slashed the wages of foreign-language teachers to the rates of €3.52 per hour. This manipulation was condemned by the older union ’Vyron’. (Syllagos Ergazomeenon stin Idioteik Elpaideusi Nomou Attikis–Vyrion, ‘Pröskliši se diaprmaateücis gia tìn katartisi syntygiakis sýmvasis ergasias’ [Invitation to negotiate for collective contract], Kathigües Xénon Glösson Enotтики Protovoula, http://enotikiprotovoulaavyronas.blogspot.co.uk/2014/11/). The website and blog of the Union of Waiters and Cooks (Sýmateio Servitötön Mageiron, http://somateiosbiteralormageiron.blogspot.co.uk) lists a great number of protests and interventions outside workplaces where workers were unpaid or unjustified layoffs had taken place.

It should be made clear here again, as was pointed out in Chapter II (see the criticism of Poulatzas on the definition of ’productive workers’), as well as in Chapter III (see the discussion on financial capital and the capital fetish) that ’production’ in the Marxian sense does not refer to the production of material objects but rather to the production of value. Hence, the word ’production’ is used also when referring to the service sector.

According to Marx, capital in the retail sector is not productive because it does not add value to the product but instead it is essential for the realisation of its value in selling it. However this does not mean that the retail worker is not exploited through the appropriation of surplus labour.

Blockades of shops can therefore block production in the cases where shops offer original goods and services, or they can block the realisation of value. Whether those who carry out the blockade are productive workers is only relevant if the strategic presumption is made that only value-producing workers are capable of overturning the capitalist system. This latter view, which belongs to the Žpoque of the mass worker and the privilege of the factory worker as revolutionary subject, ignores the fact that blockages at any point of the production process from the inside, precisely because of their vulnerability. Their actions are by necessity limited

\[More security measures\], [Extra-judicial protest -] [Interview with sacked/unpaid workers of ‘Metropolis’], I Sýka, no. 5 (2013). This was the case with the mobilisation at Metropolis, a music sector, the word ‘production’ is used also when referring to the service sector.

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Polyergaleío, ’Synénhteümi me apolyménous/aplëforóus tôn “Metropolis’’ [Interview with sacked/unpaid workers of ‘Metropolis’], I Sýka, no. 5 (2013). This was the case with the mobilisation at Metropolis, a music chain, despite the fact that most workers participated in the protests and litigations against their employer (the same owner as that of ALTER, see above).


to the blocking or the undermining of production from the outside, and in this respect these actions are a symptom of weakness. Yet, from another perspective, being positioned on the outside of production puts into question the model of the workers who organise themselves in order to maintain their position in a certain workplace. Such actions intervene in, block, or demand to enter a workplace from the outside, undermining the privileged relation of workers to ‘their own’ workplace and means of production, a notion of ownership associated with self-management. To be sure, this relationship between worker and workplace has already been undermined by the proliferation of agency and temporary work: agency workers are like visitors to the workplace, and are not invited to take ownership of the process of production. As such, on one hand, they are in an objective conflict of interest with permanent workers, even if their demands are very often to become permanent themselves. On the other hand, as the tendency is towards further outsourcing, under increasingly exploitative conditions, it is also a tendency towards an increasingly estranged relationship to one’s work and workplace.

The difference between the politics of self-management and this new trend in insecure workers’ practices of struggle should not be underestimated. In the former case, workers aspire to manage their workplaces, the production process, and by extension, to create a society of associated producers. This aspiration is associated with a workers’ identity that aspires to a worker-managed society. In the crisis period, this ideal was demoted to a tool for continuing to have a job in the crisis—but it still presupposes an attachment to workplaces that is most common among organised permanent workers. On the contrary, in the latter case, outsourced and temporary workers have had little or no identification with their work or with their capacity as workers. They have been objectively positioned as external to the production process, demanding remuneration or re-employment. Theirs has been an attempt to re-enter the wage relation, which has thrown them out partially or absolutely. Yet, this attempt involved a lower ambition to maintain their identity as a certain type of worker, and little concern about the final product of the enterprise. Work and being a worker are faced as external compulsions. On the contrary, the identification with work that the politics of self-management promotes is perhaps the biggest reason that it has been the target of so much criticism. Working devotedly, and even unpaid, for the sake of a business, because it is ‘collective’ or notionally ‘anti-capitalist’, seems far too harmonised with the aims of the restructuring that already imposes the condition of working unpaid.

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51 For example, the struggles of hospital cleaners. Panattikí Enõsti Katharistrõn & Oikiaakou Prosõnikouv, “Pirame pisô tin axioprepeia mas” [We regained our dignity], PEKOP, 7 July 2014, https://pekop.wordpress.com/2014/07/07/.
53 See also, for example, Zeolás, ‘περί Αποτιμοφερήσεις’ [on self-management], A ruthless critique against everything existing, 27 May 2013, https://aruthlesscritiqueagainsteverythingexisting.wordpress.com/2013/05/27/. The author argues that, in self-management, ‘the worker himself [sic] enters psychologically and practically into a position of managing capital and the relations of production more efficiently in the interests of capital, since, by now, he [sic] is not simply in a relation of dependence where he tries to improve his position, but he is himself a capital owner, and subsequently the efficiency of capital concerns him directly, while, psychologically, he sees it not as a condition he is inevitably dependent upon, but as an extension of himself, thus entirely legitimising it and rendering it unobjectionable.’ (My translation).
The contrast described here was not always so clear-cut in practice, however, especially when it has involved complex situations of workers whose positions were to become outsourced, especially if combined with a gendered dimension. The struggle of the 595 cleaners of the Economics Ministry, which lasted for over 20 months and was successful, contained these dimensions. The cleaners were fighting to be reinstated into permanent positions, after they were dismissed in September 2013 to meet bailout requirements and to outsource the Ministry’s cleaning services. But the fact that they were the first to be targeted for dismissal attested to both the attempt to further devalue their ‘feminine’ labour, and their being perceived as easy targets, given that most of them were middle-aged women of low social status. After they were fired, and despite the announcement of outsourcing, in a great many public sector offices, office workers were asked to do the cleaning themselves, relegating cleaning to the category of unpaid work. For cleaners, it was thus important to emphasise the value of their work, and resist what they saw as unfair targeting of their gender and age, which, for them, meant that it would be very difficult to find new employment and finally get pensions. They reacted by daily protests outside the ministry and at Syntagma square, drawing attention to the value of their cleaning and caring labour at work and at home. They carried out stunts where they cleaned public sector offices, and stated in all possible ways that may of them

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54 The cleaners received support by SYRIZA campaigners, and were reinstated by the SYRIZA government in June 2015. Panagiôta Mpitsika, ‘Se nées théseis sto Youpurgelo Oikonomikôn 421 katharísies’ [421 cleaners in new positions at Economics ministry], To Vima, 23 June 2015.

55 Pétros Katsákos, ‘Oi apolyménes katharísies píran skótîpa kai farás’ [Laid-off cleaners picked up broom
were also single mothers. Their solidarity snacks for Syrian occupiers at Syntagma square (see section on immigrants’ struggles) similarly pointed to the social value of their ability to care for others. At the same time, their special social situation was disregarded by riot police, with whom they were forced to clash repeatedly, and endure heavy injuries, regardless of their pleas for police sensitivity to their age and gender. Here, despite the outstanding strength shown by those who were targeted for their womanly ‘vulnerability’, the demand for reinstatement into a permanent position called for a tactic of re-valorising ‘feminine’ caring work, which went hand in hand with work-identification. Thus, fighting against the devaluation of the category of the gendered division of labour into which they were cast left little space for questioning the naturalness of the category itself.

The impasse faced in this period by workers stuck in between unemployment and extremely unfavourable work relations may even be said to have overshadowed the classic political preoccupations of radical grassroots/autonomous unionism: the criticism of representation between workers and bureaucratic unions; the criticism of the ‘logic of delegation’ and the promotion of autonomous organising; the overcoming of ‘bourgeois legality’ that limits the type of actions workers can take; the overcoming of internal hierarchies of the division of labour; and making links between workers and other sections of the population.

Autonomous organising has been able to question negotiations by bureaucratic union representatives whose interests are to reach a compromise and maintain social peace at all costs, or who have party affiliations and follow particular agendas. However, this militancy soon met the limits of the broader impasse faced by labour. This was evident in the case of the administrative workers’ three-month strike at the National Kapodistrian University of Athens (EKPA) in September-December 2013. The union leadership wanted to fight merely for the exemption of EKPA from mass dismissals instead of fighting in coordination with other universities. When the union tried to promote a compromise disregarding the general assembly’s vote to continue the strike, its general secretary was removed and a Strike Committee was formed. The Strike Committee aimed to invite broad participation in collective decision-making procedures, but only a minority of workers participated in its meetings, preferring the voting processes of the general assembly. With this new form of organisation—and despite its inability to overcome the relation of delegation—the strike lasted far longer than it would have done otherwise, despite being declared illegal by courts, and in defiance of government threats that the police would forcibly end it. Still, as the time passed, fewer and fewer workers were prepared to continue the strike, facing lost wages, the criminalisation of the...
strike and the Strike Committee, lack of support by other universities, and pressure by the old union leadership. The strike eventually ended without achieving its aims. The strike at EKPA shows that, for autonomous unions to go beyond a compromise or a defeat, it is not enough to be militant, but they also need to have a strong negotiating tool. When workers are threatened with immediate lay-offs and company closures, in an environment of extremely high unemployment, this negotiating tool—withdrawal of one’s labour—is greatly weakened.

Another example is the case of the teachers’ intended strike over the National Examinations period of June 2013. Although the first-level unions (ELME) voted by 92% to go on strike, the higher-level sectoral union OLME eventually overturned this decision, because of lack of support from GSEE and ADEDY (the public sector labour confederation), in the context of the government’s threat that it would impose ‘political conscription’ on strikers to force them to return to work. The ELME could certainly still rebel and have gone on strike since they had voted to do so. But would they have had the strength to support their members and resist the ‘conscription’?

In the same context, there also appears to be a contradiction in the criticism of ‘bourgeois legality’, when one of the foremost demands of grassroots unions has been for workers’ legal rights to be enforced and not scrapped. Besides, the obstacle to this period’s struggles was not so much that they were confined within the prescriptions of the law. This is clear in the case of the strike at EKPA, which closed down and occupied university buildings, continuing for months despite being declared illegal. This period saw a far higher number of workplace occupations, blockades, and police- and court-defying actions than the pre-crisis period. Nonetheless, taking such actions could hardly challenge the resoluteness of the restructuring and its implications for workers.

The preoccupation with challenging the internal hierarchies of the division of labour and the divisions among different struggles, with a look to forming a broader unity or alliances, finds serious obstacles in a period where social divisions are deepened. There have been multiple examples of more privileged workers attempting to hold onto their place and opposing mobilisations by lower-level workers within the same unions. The conflict between senior doctors and trainee doctors over the issue of unpaid overtime, which affects primarily trainee doctors, is characteristic. Generally, managerial staff have been less willing to support strikes and occupations. Another
division, that between the more privileged and protected public sector workers and the more precarious private sector workers, deepened in the crisis and was heavily exploited by the government to undermine public support for public sector workers’ mobilisations. Although a failure by public sector workers could potentially have a negative impact on the rights of private sector workers, it is also a fact that public sector unions have rarely risked their members’ security for the sake of more precarious workers, so the lack of solidarity within a two-tier labour market seems endemic and unsurprising. The point is that none of these divisions are mere ideological distortions but they are objective conflicts of interest, or objective social hierarchies that cannot be sufficiently overcome by promoting the language of unity. Radical autonomous unionism has criticised the narrow focus on the interests of the workers of a single sector, and has attempted to promote workers’ solidarity, while also trying to break down the resistances of the more privileged workers. Yet the principles of unity and solidarity may overlook and act in spite of, instead of challenging, the hierarchical division of labour. Conflicts among workers in different positions may perhaps be more fruitful in terms of challenging these hierarchies instead of any attempt to bury them under a unified workers’ movement.

After all, autonomous or grassroots-level unionism, is still a form of negotiating with employers and its aim is a common agreement: the winning of some demands, without risking the loss of jobs. This involves making compromises. The demands of workers in this period indeed were far from radical. Their most ambitious goal would have been to return to or to maintain the work relations before the restructuring (permanent contracts, secure employment, wages increasing with inflation, the 8-hour day, the 5-day week, overtime pay—the type of demands represented by SYRIZA) which, in any case, were only ever consistently enforced in the public sector. Amid a restructuring where, not only is such a return out of the question at a national and international level, but getting paid at all is no longer taken for granted, the mode of organising and representation seems to be making less of a difference in terms of what demands are posed and whether they are won. Being integrated as surplus into the wage relation, the core demand of workers has been to integrate into it more securely, and it has been unsuccessful.

The weaknesses discussed so far produced and exposed the proletariat as a class that does not exist for itself, but only for capital. The failure of any remaining aspirations for the united ‘class for itself’ to emerge as a collective working-class subject was precisely the moment when the very existence of the ‘class in itself’ was revealed as dependent on the continuation of the relation of exploitation. The changing dynamic of the class relation has not only left the working class no room to form itself as a political subject, but it entirely dissolved it into a diverse mass of insecurely employed, frequently unpaid or unemployed proletarians, most of whom did not even identify as ones. It has crowded this fragmented proletariat between the limits imposed and the definition it given to it by the reproduction of capital. More clearly than ever, in this period, the class relation stopped appearing as a tug of war between workers and capitalists, whereby workers aim to take over society and run it ‘more fairly’. The class relation appeared instead as one where the side of

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67 See also R.S., ‘Present Moment’, 103.
labour, now a proletarian population rather than a united workers’ movement, was not able to pose
demands beyond those that reconfirmed its absolute dependence on capitalist accumulation. The
almost universal—and continually frustrated—demand for work suggests so.

The new configuration of the relation of exploitation established by the restructuring has
been that, for the relation to be reproduced, workers must be treated as surplus. Their options have
then been either to be among the 30% unemployed, or to work under humiliating terms, for an
insufficient wage. Although, in struggles under these conditions, proletarians were forced to face
the limits of being proletarians, as per TC’s claim,68 their reaction in the face of these limits so far
has been to try very hard, and unsuccessfully, to create the conditions of integrating more securely
into the wage relation. Their efforts included self-management, campaigns demanding to be re-
employed, and even supporting particular capitals that promise jobs, as we will see in the following
sections and the next chapter. In these cases, the reproduction of the relation of exploitation was
treated as essential to the reproduction of life. But being more deeply exploited only appeared as a
lesser evil than the social marginalisation and deeper poverty of unemployment, because the condi-
tionality of subsistence upon waged labour was itself barely challenged in these struggles, even as
the wage relation no longer guaranteed subsistence. Instead, exploitation was personified and re-
duced to a matter of workplace democracy. In such a context, the vague promise of a slight im-
provement to wage and labour rights—essentially a return to 2008 conditions—brought SYRIZA
to power.

**ORGANISATIONS AND/OR STRUGGLES OF THE UNEMPLOYED**

With the unprecedentedly high unemployment levels in this period—affecting, as discussed, about
one-third of the working-age population and over half of those under 25—one would have ex-
pected a surge of activity in new organisations of the unemployed. Yet this was not the case. There
have been a few organisations: SYRIZA’s Network of Precarious Workers and Unemployed;69
SOVA, a grassroots union for unemployed and precarious workers;70 groupings of unemployed
from neighbourhood assemblies;71 Syn.E.Ko.Ch., the assembly of workers in workfare pro-
grammes;72 and a few more local initiatives. These groups recognised the links between unemploy-
ment and unstable work in this period’s condition: the inaccessibility of unemployment benefits,
and the lowering of wages to almost the level of such benefits, meant that the condition of a great
proportion of the unemployed was one of working temporarily, and usually undeclared, in highly
exploitative conditions, or in workfare, as opposed to sitting at home with nothing to do.

Interestingly, and in contrast to the struggles discussed in the previous section, none of the
campaigns in which these groups engaged put forward as primary the demand for ‘jobs’, even
though they differed slightly according to their politics. SYRIZA’s network campaigned against

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68 Ibid., 121.
illegal employer practices and demanded free transport for the unemployed. The other groups campaigned for the same demands, but also for access to unemployment benefits, and against the new workfare programmes introduced by the government, which institutionalised extremely low-paid and unrewarding conditions of work\footnote{Three new forms of workfare were introduced in this period. (a) ‘Training vouchers’ (epitagés katártisís): one-month training seminars on new technologies accompanied by a €500 benefit. ‘Beneficiaries’ had to sign out of unemployment benefit to obtain this benefit. (b) Programmes of public-benefit work (Prógrámmata Koinófóliougr Ergasías): five-month employment in the public sector and NGOs for a maximum of €625 pcm, which was reduced to €490 after 2013. The programme was used to cheaply compensate for staff shortages in schools, hospitals and other public services caused by restructuring policies. NGOs were purposely set up to benefit from the programme as subcontractors of various public services. Importantly, this employment was not entitled to the rights that apply under regular labour contracts. (c) Workfare programmes of five-month ‘work experience’ for those under 29, in private-sector beneficiary companies for €400–460 pcm depending on qualifications. See N. 3845/2010 AK.}—let alone that workfare ‘beneficiaries’ had to endure payment delays that lasted several months.\footnote{ÔÒEmpa’zoun tous anérgous sta pentámínaÓ [They taunt the unemployed in the 5-months], Eleuthéryntípía, 25 January 2014.} Still, because of relatively small numbers of participation, these organisations could not pose their demands with any significant force. They were mostly limited to relatively small demonstrations outside OAED (Organisation for Labour Force Employment) and high-traffic areas of public transport (to campaign for free transport). This activism led to some modest achievements for workfare workers by 2014—for example, to be paid on public holidays according to national insurance regulations, and to be paid on a monthly basis, when in 2012–2013 the payment was made in three portions and with significant delays.\footnote{Synéléusí gia tìn Kykloforía tôn Agōnōn (SKYA), ‘Apologísmos tou agóna enántia sta koinófelli (apó Álimo òs Kaisarianí)’ [Assessment of the struggle against ‘common benefit programmes (from Alimos to Kaisariani)], I Sýkka, no. 7 (2014).} Still, there appear to have been disagreements among these groups on whether they should pose ambitious political demands—as, for example, the removal of workfare programmes and the expansion of benefits to all the unemployed—or aim for modest, seemingly achievable demands, such as to have workfare be formally recognised as dependent labour.\footnote{Ibid.}

The reason for the difficulty in taking a unified position on this last question is probably also one of the reasons for low participation in these organisations. The demand for a universal unemployment benefit and for free transport might have been worth fighting for, but it appeared unfeasible.\footnote{Ibid.} On the other hand, small achievements, such as being paid on time, required disproportionate campaigning in relation to what was eventually gained. Another important reason for the lack of large-scale organising among the unemployed may have been the very fact that their most pressing need is employment or alternative ways of obtaining the means to live, and these organisations did not offer pro-active solutions to this problem, unlike, for example, movements of the unemployed such as the piqueños in Argentina.

Still, given extremely high levels of unemployment, it is difficult to explain the relative absence of a generalised demand for ‘the right to work’ by the unemployed as a collective subject. Instead of this, as we have seen in the previous section, there has been activism demanding the re-employment of specific employees in specific workplaces, or, alternatively, attempts to create em-
employment through self-management and ‘alternative economy’ projects (see the section on ‘Self Organisation’). This shows that this demand was not posed to the state at a greater social level, but only to employers at a contextual level, suggesting the delegitimation of addressing a demand for ‘jobs’ to a state that was bankrupt and was in the process of laying off masses of public sector workers.

While, then, the unemployed were invisible as a separately constituted subject in this period, they still made their presence known through their actions. To an extent, these were actions geared towards meeting contemporary basic needs through a variety of local, but still collective routes: demanding the expansion of unemployment benefits, demanding re-employment, organising self-management and alternative economies. These, as we have seen and as we will see, were not generalised enough and could only offer piecemeal relief to the problem of being ‘surplus’. The proportion of young unemployed and precariously-employed persons arrested in the riots of 12 February 2012 (see next section) indicates the impasse of political, legal as well as ‘alternative’ avenues towards meeting these basic needs. The riots, in attacking banks and looting shops, symbolically and (temporarily) materially confronted the structures that confine proletarians to a condition of privation and debt. These will be discussed in the next section.

MASS DEMONSTRATIONS AND RIOTS

One year before the onset of the debt crisis, the riots of December 2008 brought to the forefront the youth as a central figure of social unrest. The killing of a 16-year-old boy sparked a riot that lasted several days, and its spreading and composition was associated with the already decreased labour-market prospects of what was then called the ‘700-euro generation’—soon to become €400 in a matter of three years. As we have seen in Chapter II, that was preceded in 2006 and 2007 by persistent student struggles against the restructuring of universities, with occupations that lasted for almost an entire academic year. The entrants into the labour market were the first to feel the crisis, and the first to react to it, initially in an organised way, and later in a disorderly social explosion that defied all the ambitions, expectations, and assumptions of student movement militants. The young, often immigrant and marginalised, crowds of rioters were joined by more orderly demonstrations and attempts at politicising the riots’ legacy, by occupying buildings (notably the building of the GSEE, the trade union confederation) and forming local assemblies that were meant to continue the struggle. The legacy of December 2008 was to enlarge the anarchist/anti-authoritarian milieu with young people, and to increase the social acceptability of acts of protest that previously the left viewed as destructive ‘provocations’, such as occupying buildings and rioting.

This was evident already in the year that Greece entered into the bailout agreement. As soon as the first set of restructuring measures began to be discussed in parliament, there was a response with large demonstrations and general strikes declared by GSEE. The largest demonstration of 2010 was on 5 May 2010, the day the first bailout’s restructuring measures were being voted, and it revealed that the level of violence in social contestation was rising. The crowd was furious, and at a certain point the police who were guarding the parliament at Syntagma square were over-
powered. Fierce riots broke out, in which a number of shops and banks were burnt. Tragically, this resulted in the death from fire of three workers who had not been seen inside a shuttered branch of Marfin Bank. This event would be used politically in the future against the the escalation of protests, as well as the left as a whole. It took until the next year, May 2011, for large protests to resume, and they did so spectacularly with the ‘Aganaktisménoi’ movement of public square occupations.

From the start of the crisis to the 2012 elections there had been an alternation between, on one hand, long periods when workers’ struggles and other initiatives strove to win defensive demands without any apparent success in generating a wider movement, and, on the other hand, large, persistent demonstrations and unexpected social explosions, which seemed disconnected from the dynamic of ongoing struggles and initiatives. The movement of the squares, which involved almost two months of continuous protests, was the only exception. Otherwise, the most explosive mass protests contrasted the weakness of movements and local struggles, which faced great difficulties. At the same time, social explosions did not last or expand.

An important characteristic of the large demonstrations and the squares movement of this period was that, while the question of the wage was of critical importance (see Chapter III and the previous section), the labour movement was not only unable to become a hegemonic force within them, but often it virtually seemed to have no voice. This was regardless of the fact that the protesters’ demands indirectly concerned the wage in their opposition to austerity measures. Democracy and the commonality of the nation were instead the discourses that brought together broad-based discontent.

The defensive demands of these large demonstrations were nevertheless presented as impossible precisely because their implications were not contained by national boundaries. Protesters were confronted with the risk of a threatened default that could send shockwaves to the global financial system and bring about a wider recession and deeper impoverishment. Even if they won a battle, it was unclear how they could win the war when it was no longer fought at the level of a national economy, but at that of negotiations with creditors, the EU and the IMF, in the midst of a global crisis with Greece as one of its epicentres. Facing this situation, it was extremely difficult to stage a defence that was proportionate to the attack those measures effected on the wage, employment, and the survival of small businesses. The risks involved delegitimised the demands against the restructuring, which fed the political crisis and the protests’ escalation into intensifying riots up to the 2012 elections.

As became blatantly clear in the 2012 elections, the threat of default was openly used as a political tool to promote voting for austerity parties. Although the threat became less effective as successive austerity packages continued to worsen the situation for the lower strata, this did not feed into a return to large demonstrations and movements. Over 2012–2014, the debate over the restructuring was politicised into a conflict between right and left nationalisms (see Chapter V). SYRIZA eventually gained power, even though, after its victory, it is clear that the political change was not capable of stopping the succession of bailouts conditional upon austerity.
The Squares Movement (May-July 2011) and Its Aftermath

As we have seen, in 2011 there was a large number of strikes. GSEE called six general strikes, accompanied by demonstrations of growing size and intensity. The ‘Aganaktisménoi’ (indignants) movement, which began on 26 May, with occupations in the capital’s most central square in front of the parliament (Syntagma square), as well as other squares across the country, lasting until the end of July, was the biggest and most significant event of resistance to the austerity measures that were being imposed in that year. The movement, inspired by the Indignados movement in Spain that had begun only weeks earlier, as well as the Tahrir Square occupation in Egypt, can be said to have expressed the deep legitimation crisis of parliamentary politics at that moment. Most importantly, it was also novel, as a form of struggle, in terms of its composition, its forms of practice, and for the resilience that great numbers of people showed in the street.78

The incongruence between the necessity of the wage for subsistence and the lost legitimacy of workers’ demands was clear here. An important characteristic of the movement was that, at a moment when the question of the wage had become critical, as it was rapidly becoming unable to cover the cost of basic commodities for subsistence (see Chapter III), this was emphatically not a labour struggle. It was, in fact, in the beginning, inimical to labour unions and the left, even if its demands indirectly concerned the wage.79 The squares movement mobilised the subject of the Greek citizen towards the rejection of Greece’s political system, in an expression of lost hope in demanding anything from it, combined, contradictorily, with a demand against austerity and a desire for national unity. ‘Burn the parliament’, was one of the most popular slogans, and the movement was presented (with enthusiastic support from mainstream media, in the first few days) as one that rejected political parties and traditional forms of organisation such as unions: ‘Greek citizens’ were presented as being peacefully united as ‘Greeks’, in opposition to foreign (finance capital, EU, and IMF) political and economic control over the country.

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78 All the descriptions of the movement come from either my presence in it or following the events very closely via live audio and video streams of the assemblies and demonstrations, as well as online forums. My diary of the events was published here: Break the Blackout, ‘Updates from the Greek Squares and People’s Assemblies’. Mute, 1 July 2011. http://www.metamute.org/community/your-posts/updates-greek-squares-and-peoples-assemblies.
79 On the first day of demonstrations, ‘when a trade union march of the DEI (National Electricity Company) workers passed near the square they were booed away. The main reason was not so much that the unions did not represent them well but that the call was explicitly to come down without a flag or banner, as people, not as a group of workers making demands for themselves (which is what civil servants are increasingly seen as). That of course is not miles away from nationalist / rightist anti-strike discourses but it is also something different.’ Ibid.
As discussed in Chapter III, this discourse of national unity was itself provoked by the way in which the crisis and restructuring appeared on the political scene: as an ‘external’ material blackmailing, imposed either by the institutions that monitored it (the IMF, the ECB and the EC) or by the anonymous agency of ‘banks’ and ‘financiers’. The fetishism of capital, produced by the distance and apparent disconnection of finance capital from labour and the process of valorisation, in turn produced a particular understanding of crisis, as the domination of an international élite of powerful politicians and financiers upon the nation-state and its ‘people’. Via international institutions, it appeared to be this élite that eroded national sovereignty and invalidated democratic processes. The predominance of the demands for democracy, the retrenchment into anti-imperialist nationalism and xenophobia, and the subject of the national citizen reflected the way in which the restructuring was imposed politically.

In reality, this national unity was not so straightforward. The occupation at Syntagma square was divided, from the very beginning, into an upper section, which was on Amalias’ Road, facing the parliament, and a lower section, which was the main part of the occupation in Syntagma square. The upper section was where nationalist organisations, such as the ‘300 Greeks’, had set up stalls. It tended to attract crowds with Greek flags, ultra-masculine groups of young nationalists who shouted slogans the loudest, and conspiracy theorists holding eccentric self-made banners. The lower section was where assemblies were held. This section was dominated by activists from the left and anarchist political scenes, who had hope that a ‘political fermentation’ through discussion

80 The ‘300 Greeks’ was an organisation that attempted to summon patriotic pride against the humiliation of being nationally indebted and the corruption of politicians. ‘300’ refers to the heroism of Leonidas’ ‘300’ in Thermopylae. The idea was that Greek citizens would unite and re-empower their country in an orderly and lawful way.
would generate new political subjectivities and unite the struggle. Yet no political affiliations were openly revealed, because one of the rules was for the squares protest to be ‘party-less’, ‘colour-less’ (in the sense of party colour, not skin colour) and ‘flag-less’ (with the exception of the Greek flag, of course). This opened the way to all kinds of party activists and newcomers with political ambitions to spread their ideas and become known, without attaching (yet) their ideology to a voting choice. This political division was already evident from the Facebook calls to join the protest. Some event pages, filled with Greek flags, were calling on all ‘indignant Greek citizens’ to rise up, while others, following the Spanish example, called on everyone to unite under the demand for ‘real democracy’.

Despite these differences, the lines between the two sections often became blurred, not only spatially, but in terms of practices. There were also some nationalist, and even racist, speeches in the assemblies, and there were reports of racist attacks by participants in the sub-groups that were later formed. In general, the notion of national unity that went ‘beyond politics’ was the driving discursive undercurrent of the movement, both in its upper and lower parts. This was, it seemed, after all, not only a protest against the entire political system (in a context when most government politicians were afraid to go out in public for fear of attacks), but also against imperialism, harking back to the nationalism of the movements of the late ’70s, but no longer under the clear hegemony of the left. It was not surprising, then, that Mikis Theodorakis, the 80-something anti-dictatorship activist and composer of songs for that struggle (who later turned to the right), was the only politician allowed to stage a rally in the square while it was occupied. The rally was massive, but his speech was indicative of the nationalist and racist tendencies already present: ‘Our national wealth’, he said, ‘will be taken over by Turks and blacks from Timbuktu.’

From the very beginning, the movement seemed contradictory. On one hand, it seemed like a conservative nationalist explosion, with the ‘Greek citizen’ at its centre. On the other, its slogans were hostile to the central instrument of state politics, the parliament, and it seemed like a spontaneous movement, with very wide participation by people who had never been involved in protests before. The rejection of traditional politics seemed to also promise a potential for a new type of mobilisation that could develop a critique of representation structures and the state. It was, at the same time, a protest against austerity, which betrayed a certain class content to it, even though the latter was broad, given that, apart from cuts, labour market deregulation and layoffs, the Mid-Term programme of reforms also removed protections for small businesses. These characteristics attracted many anarchists and those on the communist extra-parliamentary left, whose

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81 The expression ‘indignant citizens’ (aganaktisménoi politeis) has a history of being used by the far right to present themselves to the media without revealing their political identity, when staging protests against immigrants, gypsies and squatters. Perhaps as a result of this coincidental connotation of the Greek translation of the Spanish word ‘indignados’, the more conservative wing of the movement preferred the word ‘aganaktisménoi’ to describe the movement, while the left wing preferred to call it ‘the movement of the squares’ or to use the slogan ‘real/direct democracy now’.

82 The Mid-Term programme and the corresponding executive legal framework (N. 3986/2011 AK., FEK Α’ 152/01.07.2011) outlined cuts to services, wages, pensions and (what little remained of) benefits, and public sector layoffs, along with a long list of privatisations. It also aimed to deregulate protected industries and professions, for example Taxi companies and drivers. It further forecast that despite the scale of cuts, by 2015 Greece’s external debt would only have been reduced by a tiny fraction.
influence became strong in the assemblies, even though the dominant force (inside the organising committee, the only one whose members were not rotated) was that of SYRIZA members who hid their party identity. This left and anarchist influence meant that the call for ‘real democracy now’ quickly changed to ‘direct democracy now’, and calls for self-organisation overshadowed the anti-corruption discourse that had dominated the Spanish Indignados movement. The call for ‘direct democracy’ rejected, in principle, the address of demands to a denounced political establishment and parliamentary system, it rejected dominant avenues of representation, and attempted to create structures of self-organisation—‘taking our lives into our own hands’.

The ‘direct democratic’ imaginary envisioned a system of inclusive, bottom-up decision making, self-organised resistance and mutual support in neighbourhoods and workplaces, inspired by the movements that had sprung up in Argentina during the 2001 crisis. It was captivated by the notion that a more ‘decent’ life would be possible, if only the citizens had the political power. The assemblies were the central tool of decision-making for the movement, and later ‘thematic’ groups were formed that took on particular responsibilities (like food and cleaning, or art and making banners) or worked on collecting information on topics that concerned the protests, such as the sovereign debt. There was a group that offered free school support to children, one that advocated for workers and the unemployed, one for gender, one that discussed the meaning of direct democracy, a legal team, a medical team, and more. The dominant conviction was that direct democracy, as a form of decision-making, would be able to make capitalist production commensurate with meeting human needs, or, in its rather more militant version, that the democratic self-management of production would ensure those needs were met. The discourse of self-management, coming mostly from an anarchist tendency, and the broader conception of ‘alternatives’—involving much speculating around alternative currencies and the autonomous circulation of agricultural products—sought to provide ideas for surviving the crisis, or, less modestly, ways out of capitalism.

All those ambitious ideas encountered limits within the square, as well as at a later stage, as they began to be attempted by the neighbourhood assemblies promoted by the movement and other groups that tried to create alternative economic structures (see the following sections). The square became a temporary self-organised enclave in public space, which, however, could not retain its separateness. The attempt to develop more immediate social relations within the square (the rejection of money, a free collective kitchen, free lessons for homeless children) quickly reached the limit of an all-encompassing capital relation (so, soon, we saw the return of money, and the closure of the kitchen, because it attracted too many homeless and addicted persons). The language of autonomous self-organisation and self-institution was also limited by the fact that the movement was also driven by a demand addressed to the state—namely, the demand to drop the Mid-Term programme.

83 The gender group organised discussions around the impact of crisis on women and LGBTIQ persons and on gendered violence. It also organised ‘theatre of the oppressed’ performances. Generally, the gendered aspect of relations in the square reproduced everyday gendered relations outside it, since these relations were not openly questioned. The most obvious distinction was that between the hypermasculine, aggressive slogan-shouting in the upper section of the square and the somewhat more relational approach to co-existence in the lower section.
These ideas were also unable to expand into workplaces and this was not because of the difficulties faced by labour struggles in general. Despite the left and anarchist class-based discourse that was often expressed in the assemblies, most of the movement’s activity and composition was interclass. The movement’s dominant citizenist, democratic discourse was intrinsic to this interclass character, explainable by the austerity measures’ devastating effect on small businesses. Attempts by militants to bring up the discourse of class conflict came up against the principle of national unity. In the midst of a relentless attack on the wage, debates around ‘what is to be done’ were unable to refer to a common class experience. Supporters of the movement claimed that the Syntagma square assembly proved its class credentials—or the strength of its proletarian contingent—by instigating the general strike of 29 June 2011, having put pressure on GSEE. However, sporadic calls for a long-term general strike and other direct actions at workplaces remained at the level of political language.

The imagined unity of national citizens organising democratically against a failed system of government also meant that immigrants were excluded not just exceptionally, by racist individuals, but by definition, by the very concept of citizenship, except in the token action of inviting immigrants’ organisations to speak and organise events for one day. The boundaries of the space were unspokenly—but unambiguously—national and racial. The self-policing of these boundaries by a rotating group of ‘peacemakers’ ended up kicking immigrant street vendors out of the square, based on the excuse that no trade was allowed within the space. Despite the active expulsion of violent racist groups from the occupation, the movement’s definitional citizenism and nationalism was rarely challenged. The call for ‘direct democracy’ and self-institution itself also appealed to national pride, with evocations of ancient Athens. Again, the democracy, while direct, was also to be exclusive: it was the Greek citizens who were meant to participate.

This provided a favourable environment for groups of ‘autonomous nationalists’ to take part in the movement. Their presence, demanding ‘jobs for Greek workers’, and the frequent violent attacks on immigrants by small groups of young men, took place in the context of a ‘popular’ national unity, which blamed the delegitimation of workers’ demands on immigrant workers. This nationalist, racist tendency would grow throughout this period, as was most evident with the rising strength of Golden Dawn (GD, Chryší Aug) in the 2012 elections. Yet it should be noted already that this trend was the result of a complex process that began long before the crisis, as will be discussed more extensively in Chapter V. The squares movement did not instigate this rise, since Golden Dawn did not participate in the movement, but rather it revealed the strong appeal of nationalist discourse and patriotic direct action as forms of opposition to the restructuring.

84 This discourse often referred to Cornelius Castoriadis’s work, particularly that which has valorised an idealised image of ancient Athenian democracy—a much-needed boost to the humiliated Greek national identity. See, Cornelius Castoriadis, Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy: Essays in Political Philosophy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

85 The word ‘popular’, in Greek, like in French, has a broad class connotation, used historically by the left to bring together workers, peasants and petit-bourgeois in struggles against larger capitals, governments, and ‘foreign powers’. The use of the word in the struggles of this period suggests a similar division. However, in contrast to these historical struggles, this time the unity was not formed under the hegemony of the labour movement.
The movement’s practice of organising, working, sharing, thinking, and even living together for those who had set up tents in Syntagma square, provided to many participants a sense of solidarity and hope that a lot could be achieved by finding others who were hit by the crisis. However, the boundaries of the movement’s self-organised practice against the social relations it opposed were perforated in many respects. First, it was able neither to recognise its internal divisions of class nor to challenge its racialised national boundaries. Second, it could not create autonomy in any actual sense, because of its de facto heteronomy: the material dependence of each individual on the state (not only through benefits, pensions, wages, and welfare, but at the most abstract economic level, its guarantee of money and currency), which fuelled the movement’s protest against the new measures. The movement’s ideal of alternative civil-society organisational structures could not overcome the fact that those structures did not question the very cause of its inability to autonomise itself either from dominant class and racialising social relations, or from the state.

The movement never actually opposed the state, but instead discussed the possibility of a national citizens’ state, which would manage the economy democratically. Democracy itself, in this radical democratic ideal, could be able to guarantee a ‘decent life’ for everyone, under the presumption of a direct determination of the political form over the economic outcome. This outcome was taken for granted, despite the fact that this political community ignored existing inequalities and power relations among its members in the name of unity, and was constituted by the exclusion of immigrants, beggars, and other misfits. This discussion itself, of course, was dominated by persons already involved in political organisations, who debated among each other, under the supervision of SYRIZA’s organising committee. Any discussion of actual opposition to the state, then, or the language of storming the parliament, was hyperbolic. While the assemblies made plans to surround the parliament on demonstration days, this was proven, in practice, to have been far from the agenda, as few people turned up on time to do so. This also demonstrated the limited authority that the Syntagma square assembly had over the demonstrations that took place.

Ridden with contradictions, the movement experienced a fleeting sense of victory during the general strike of 15 June, which escalated into extended riots. The general strike, which had been called by GSEE before the squares movement had begun, was not so significant as a strike than it was as a massive demonstration. That was a high point of struggle for the wider oppositional movement, with the prime minister almost resigning. The police repression and extensive anti-police clashes and rioting that took place during the strike brought up renewed conflict within the assemblies, when the majority rejected a motion that condemned ‘violence in all its forms’. This moment was a major turning point that brought to the surface an unending debate around protesters’ violence.

The movement’s relative tolerance of persistent clashes with the police is not so much indicative of an anarchist influence as it is of a wider tendency towards the use of such practices. Although these practices were typically associated with anarchists, since December 2008 a growing number of rioters in demonstrations were lower-class Greek and immigrant youths, who were more-or-less unrelated to the anarchist milieu. Since the crisis, the age range also began to broaden,
as we will see in examining the case of Keratea. On 15 June, photos of rioting old-aged men and women began to circulate in social media. Altogether, the rioters accounted for a significant subsection within the movement, to the extent that much of the assembly audience responded to conspiracy theories about ‘violent agent provocateurs’ by declaring that ‘the rioters are us’.

The next important event, around which the very life of the movement—and its core defensive demand—was constructed, was on 29 June, when the Mid-Term programme was being put to the vote. Once more, the demonstration was extremely large, and, amid the news that the Mid-term was being passed in parliament, rioting, as well as police repression of the demonstration became exceptionally fierce. Experiences of police assaulting protesters ruthlessly, and of motorcycle-mounted police driving indiscriminately into crowds that had been hiding in pedestrianised alleys, convinced more of those who had previously favoured peaceful protesting that police violence was not the result of provocation but of the state’s extreme intolerance of demonstrations. This shift would still not translate into further protests at that stage. With the squares movement weakened by the defeat of its core demand, as well as its internal incongruences, combined with zero-tolerance policing of the square, the occupation only lasted for three more weeks. This was already a significant achievement, considering that August is the holiday month, when the city becomes empty, and the heat is hardly bearable. Amid threats that the few remaining tents would be forcibly removed by the municipal police, the square was further depopulated, until the police made their surprise attack, ransacking the now small occupation, on 24 July.

It is possible to say that the internal distances within the squares movement—between extreme nationalism and a democratic anti-racism; between making demands and rejecting them in favour of self-organisation; between petit-bourgeois and proletarian tendencies; between violence and non-violence—produced new discourses and practices among those who struggled. However, these also carried their own new problems. The discourse of democracy openly embraced the nation, even though the criticism of racism, and the presence of a few non-Greek participants, continued to challenge patriotic narratives until the end. Self organisation emerged as the only viable practice in the face of the state’s obstinacy, but everyone’s inevitable dependence on state and economic structures meant that it was extremely hard to create ways to escape the all-embracing imposition of austerity.

Beyond the opposition between either demanding from the state, or turning to another form of organisation, there was also the ‘third’ option, that of the violent attack on the state—or rather its symbols, its politicians and its functionaries. Rioting was the ‘fighting back’ at the violence of austerity, police oppression, and—for those who also broke into and looted a few high-end shops—against the barrier of poverty, which is a barrier of access to commodities. On the other hand, the tendency of various forms of violent practice to become more broadly acceptable and more broadly practiced may have been in effect a criticism of the power of the state, but it did not at all entail a deepening criticism of the state itself, and certainly not the nation, as was even more evident in subsequent events. Everyday attacks on individual politicians limited social criticism to questions of individual responsibility and truly patriotic leadership.
In this respect, there was a clear distance that remained between two dominant utopian visions in the squares movement. First, the utopia of a political form, that of direct democracy, and democratic economic management, which, once established, would harmonise social inequalities without producing conflict. Second, the utopia of national unity and pure, uncorrupted patriotic leadership that would be able to restore the national economy and provide jobs for Greek citizens. In the face of the current level of ‘treason’, this new leadership would be justified in installing itself by force. These were certainly not the only discourses in the movement, as it did allow for a polyphony, although it is significant that these were the strongest, as it became even clearer in later events. Still, the legacy of the squares movement for antagonistic practice should also be recognised. They are the practices of self-organised action against austerity; the creation of structures of solidarity and mutual support in the crisis; the notion that citizens can refuse the payment of new taxes or bills; the legitimisation of occupations of public space; the endurance of enormous numbers of people in the face of serious police violence and heavy use of tear gas. These elements figured in the struggles of the following months and years.

October 2011

Despite a sense of pessimism in relation to winning demands, and the marginalisation specifically of the wage demand in the squares movement, the labour movement made a strong but brief reappearance. When the government announced measures that would invalidate existing collective-bargaining agreements, open the way for wages to fall below agreed minimums, and impose mass layoffs and 30% wage cuts in the public sector, a general strike was announced by the major unions in October. That provided a basis for a week of grassroots activism in workplaces to push for participation in the strike and for occupations in the public sector. The strong support for the strike led GSEE to announce its extension to a 48-hour strike. The public sector occupations were exceptionally dynamic, especially in cases where they were met with obfuscating resistance by managers or by sectoral unions. Athens waste collectors, despite their vilification by mass media for the impact on ‘public hygiene’, and the prefecture’s attempt to break the strike by outsourcing the waste collection, insisted on their strikes and successfully blockaded private collection vans.

The week of mobilisations was also accompanied by a series of small demonstrations by local

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86 N. 4024/2011 AK.
87 ‘Me katálipses ypourgéiôn apantóoun oi ergazémonoi: Kiñêtopoítseis katá tíis ergasiakís efédreías’ [Workers respond with ministry occupations: Mobilisations against placement in labour reserve], Nautilopοrti, 4 October 2011.
88 ‘Mpará én katalípscs - 48óri i geníki apergía’ [Barrage of occupations - 48-hour general strike], TVXS, 13 October 2011.
89 Personal communication by a participant in occupations, clerk at a public sector pension fund, 14 October 2011.
neighbourhood assemblies.\textsuperscript{91} The massive scale of the general strike of 19–20 October, with increased participation from the private sector, added to the paralysis of the country’s public services and infrastructure.\textsuperscript{92} Despite the strength of the strikes, that level of grassroots organising was still short-lived, and occupations in the public sector could not be sustained without wages being paid,\textsuperscript{93} while the general strike was, once more, unable to achieve its aims. Despite what was called by many ‘the mother of all strikes’ and one of the largest demonstrations in decades, which many thought could topple the government, the parliament did pass the bill. This sent the message that the unprecedented escalation and magnitude of mobilisations was not enough to win a battle, and that worse was still to come.

This impasse of demands, the future of poverty level wages and high unemployment, combined with extreme police repression, did seem, by that point, to coincide with increasingly forceful clashes at demonstrations, both against the police and between demonstrators. The serious clashes during the general strike of 20 October in front of the parliament between the Communist Party union cadre (PAME) and anarchist and other demonstrators who had clashed with the police the day before are indicative of this tendency.\textsuperscript{94} On the second day of the strike demonstrations, the PAME bloc joined the mass demonstration for the first time in years, against its usual practice of carrying out its own separate orderly A to B marches. But it chose to do so by taking over the space in front of the parliament, and effectively guarding it with its disciplined lines of men, stopping any demonstrators who wished to push against the police lines. In all the significant demonstrations since May 2010, an enormous section of the crowd had aimed at pushing against the police lines that protected the parliament, so KKE’s stance clearly put a damper on the dynamic of demonstrations up until that point. The Communist Party’s discourse justified such an action, since it has consistently branded all rioters as ‘agent provocateurs’, whose aim is to defame and break up demonstrations.\textsuperscript{95} In the aftermath of the squares movement, however, this discourse was no longer convincing. It had become clear to demonstrators that the police would attack them and dissolve demonstrations with teargas on the slightest excuse. Indeed, not only did they do so, but this time a PAME unionist also died from the teargas.\textsuperscript{96}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item ‘Evdómaina kinìtòpoisèç: Genìki àpérìga stis 19 Oktòvriou’ [Week of mobilisations: General strike on 19 October], \textit{To Vima}, 10 October 2011; ‘Se kloiò pallàïkou “óçhi”, i vouli tou “nai”’ [The parliament of ‘yes’ surrounded by mass popular ‘no’], \textit{Eleuthèrontèpia}, 20 October 2011.
\item ‘Mparàz katalìpseç: ’Tî-XîS; Discussion with participant in occupations, clerk at a public sector pension fund, 17 October 2011: workers were told by unions that their wages would still be paid on the first days of occupation, but not later on.
\item ‘Se kloiò pallàïkou “óçhi”,’ \textit{Eleuthèrontèpia}.
\item A representative example is the reception of the riots of December 2008 in \textit{Rizospàstis}, the official newspaper of KKE. The word ‘hood-wearers’ in Greek has been used both by the right and parts of the left to condemn rioters. In its left-wing use, it connotes the hooded nazi collaborators who pointed out rebels to the Gestapo during the German occupation. Nikìs Mpolìgìlìpolìs, ‘Koukoulof-roi’ [Hood-wearers], \textit{Rizospàstis}, 10 December 2008.
\item Dimitrìs Galànìs, ‘Enas nekròs kai dekàdes traumaçies sto syllàlìrírio sto Êntagma’ [One dead and tens injured at Syntagma mass rally], \textit{To Vima}, 20 October 2011.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
For anarchists and members of other unions, the protection of the parliament by PAME’s lines was a provocation. The militarist machismo of the confrontation was a given: PAME blocs are usually surrounded and protected by strong young men carrying flags with heavy masts that can be used as weapons—the same type of flags typically carried by anarchist demonstrators ready for a fight. The historic enmity between the two political camps is also well known, with the party traditionally branding anarchists as provocateurs, and anarchists despising the Communist Party’s Stalinist ideology and internal organising structures. It was then perhaps not so surprising that a vicious street battle was sparked. The conflict was widely understood as a political one between anarchism and Stalinism, and as a depressing instance of disunity at a very critical moment. Anarchists wanted to attack the parliament at any cost, while the Communist Party wanted to strategise and keep the demonstration under their control. Indeed, this was a short-sighted sectarian clash within an enormous demonstration, in which most protesters did not identify with either side. But its occurrence can also be interpreted symbolically.

At a moment of a persistent weakness of the labour movement and the social marginalisation of workers, the Communist Party attempted to take advantage of this new spark of struggle and promote itself by showcasing its traditional leadership role: reaffirming productive labour and creating an orderly movement of workers who can in theory take over state power. Yet not only does the Communist Party’s own power fail to correspond to this nostalgic ideal of the class, but it also rejects any emerging potential in contemporary struggles that does not correspond to this ideal. The Communist Party’s performance of that ideal, a strong and cohesive working class, which is proud of its work, and poses a threat to the state precisely by its numbers, hierarchical organisation and discipline, has managed to turn into an obstacle for contemporary struggles. Anarchists’ disorderly charge against the Communist Party bloc symbolised the fragility of this nostalgic act. Even at the highest point of labour struggles in this period, then, the ghost of workers’ power was exercised, not only by the state, but from within the movement itself.

After the strike was over, things began once more to return to the everyday regularity of campaigns that had gained some strength from the squares movement but were unable to escalate. A pattern was beginning to emerge between, on one hand, small, local campaigns, and, on the other, sudden flurries of activity and large explosive demonstrations that seemed to leave little legacy. The angry interventions across the country against political celebrities at the school and military parades of the 28th October national anniversary were similarly unconnected to specific ongoing struggles. They were expressions of popular, patriotic discontent against politicians, ranging from parading pupils turning their face away from the President of the Republic, to heckles and assaults against the state officials’ platform. In Athens, the crowd’s hostility led state officials to

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98 Ibid.

99 ‘Mataiósis kai epeísoðía stis paretláseis se oíli tì chòra’ [Cancellations and disturbances at marches across the country], To Vima, 28 October 2011.
abandon the platform, and the crowd took it over. The military parade was cancelled, but some of the armed forces did parade in protest, amid cheers by the crowd. The meaning of this national anniversary, which commemorates the refusal of the dictator Metaxas to surrender to Mussolini’s forces in 1940, is perhaps significant here. Retrospectively, although parts of the left also participated in these protests, they transpire as another expression of the radical authoritarian-nationalist anti-government tendency evident in the squares movement. This tendency was vague and still in flux at this moment, but, as we will see in Chapter V, after the elections it adopted a clearer anachronistic far-right narrative that was nostalgic for the Metaxas’ regime.

Both of these events, despite not effecting the slightest change of policy, demonstrated the depth of the political crisis.\textsuperscript{100} This became even more evident when the prime minister, George Papandreou, in an attempt to disassociate himself from the disintegration in his party over the vote, proposed a referendum on Greece’s participation in the Eurozone in the first weeks of November.\textsuperscript{101} This provoked forceful reactions from the EU, from most parties, as well as within his own party.\textsuperscript{102} Papandreou then resigned, claiming that he did so in the name of democracy.\textsuperscript{103} A new technocratic coalition government was soon formed under Lucas Papademos, with the right-wing New Democracy and far-right LAOS (Laikós Orthodoxos Synagermós, Popular Orthodox Rally) joining PASOK in a promise to carry on with the restructuring.\textsuperscript{104} This created a temporary stability, and once more, effected the familiar return to the everyday regularity of campaigns that were unable to escalate.

\textit{The Riots of 12 February 2012}

The events of the demonstration of 12 February interrupted another period of low-key social mobilisations that had never taken off. This was the last—and the largest—truly mass event of the period up to the end of 2014. It was sudden, as, on the two days prior, the 48-hour general strike failed to attract participation, despite the significance of what was being voted in parliament under the second bailout—a restructuring package that entailed even deeper cuts on wages.\textsuperscript{105} This lack of participation seemed to express the impasse felt after the fruitless general strike of October 2011. In contrast, 12 February was a large-scale social explosion. The city centre burst with possibly up to half a million people. Yet it was clear that there was no longer any hope for the satisfaction of demands towards the return of the previous social contract. The police forces on their part made sure this was fully understood by emptying Syntagma square very early in the day. Insofar as the

\textsuperscript{100} Païlos Papadōpoulos, ‘To dramatikó paraskínio tón dyō etón tou mnímoniou’ [The dramatic backstage of the two memorandum years], \textit{To Vima}, 16 October 2011. This article claims to expose the backstage struggles within PASOK in the crisis, and their climax in October 2011.

\textsuperscript{101} ‘Papandreou: Dimopīfisma stis 4 Dekemvrīou me erōīma “nai i óchi sto Eurō”’ [Referendum on 4 December on the question: ‘Yes or no to the Euro’], \textit{Ethinòs}, 3 November 2011.

\textsuperscript{102} ‘Dýskoles ères perná stis Kânes o prōthypourgós G. Papandreou’ [Hard time at Cannes for the prime minister G. Papandreou], \textit{To Vima}, 2 November 2011.

\textsuperscript{103} Kerin Hope, ‘Humiliating end to Greece’s social reformer’, \textit{Financial Times}, 6 November 2011.

\textsuperscript{104} Kerin Hope, ‘Papademos named new Greek PM’, \textit{Financial Times}, 10 November 2011.

\textsuperscript{105} N. 4046/2012 AK. Specifically, among other labour ‘reforms’, the second package reduced the minimum wage by 22\% and by 35\% for those under 25; limited the validity period of collective agreements, so that minimum wages could be paid after their expiry; and froze wages until unemployment falls below 10\%. 
government, the parliament and mainstream media were concerned, Syntagma square, where all the cameras were stationed, was empty, and the protests did not exist. In the invisibilised side streets, extended riots broke out, in which participation was unprecedentedly widespread in terms of social milieu, while age boundaries expanded further. Rioters, whether it was the organised ‘black bloc’ or casual groups of demonstrators, were cheered on by the crowd.

The fact that the streets remained relatively empty on the days of the general strike but they erupted on the day Memorandum II was being put to the vote, the fact that it developed into a day of clashes and the most widespread rioting since December 2008, reveal not only the degree to which even defensive social demands had been delegitimised by that point, but also the way in which protests centred around a contradictory relation to the state. Demands were impossible, all that was received was heavy policing, and yet it is to the state that these riots addressed themselves, violently, avenging the marginalisation of their voices. Once more, the discontinuity between the participation in social and labour struggles or other self-organised initiatives on one hand, and the participation in large demonstrations like this one was radical. This was not a culmination of struggle but a break with everyday normality.

The subjects who emerged in such events—and soon disappeared, returning to private lives as if nothing had happened—were not formed within formalised movements or shaped by collective experiences of everyday struggle and collective interpretations of it, but instead they seemed to appear seemingly out of nowhere, having been formed by everyday experiences of meeting new barriers in individual, isolated private lives. Still, those subjects were not a sum of individual subjectivities, nor did they emerge ex nihilo in the event, but their practices and the way they articulated their fury had been produced over time, not just by their social position in the ‘economic base’, but also, it seemed, by the way in which their experiences of police violence and state recalcitrance interacted with how they had understood their own identities up to that point. In the face of the peak of such a long-running obliteration of any kind of negotiation, in the face of policing becoming the main mechanism of social reproduction, the polarity between violence (‘wild youth’ / ‘anarchists’) and non-violence (the ‘dignified labour’ of KKE / the left / Indignant ‘citizens’), which had emerged in the early squares movement and the October strike, was also overcome.

In the clashes with police, participation was broader than ever. Rioters were no longer distinguished by looking like young proletarians or politicised anarchists: this practice had been legitimised for others too. The police was the core target against which demonstrators turned their rage, built up over a year of increasingly intolerant and punishing policing. It had no longer been just immigrants, anarchists, and leftists who were oppressed by police, but regular ‘citizens’ as well. In particular, the section of participants, already present with similar characteristics in the ‘upper part’ of the Syntagma square occupation and in the 28 October protests, who saw the crisis as a conflict between ‘the citizens of the nation’ and ‘traitor politicians’, was extremely visible and active in the rioting. Many rioters even called the police ‘germanotsoliadiés’, likening them to the paramilitary forces of Greek collaborators set up by the German occupiers in WWII.
This was a significant indication of the often startling political and ideological flux that characterised the period just before the 2012 elections, as the political crisis deepened the possibilities of social criticism in a haphazard way. Only two months later, in the demonstration in the memory of Dimitris Christoulas—a man who had committed a public suicide in protest against the bailout agreements—members of the ‘300 Greeks’ patriotic organisation were shouting the anarchist slogan ‘cops are not the workers’ sons, they are the bosses’ dogs’. While the rightist, patriotic strand of the Aganaktisménoi had questioned the democratic state in ways familiar to the history of the Greek far right, it had been unheard of for patriotic citizens’ organisations to riot against the police and to use the discourse of ‘workers’ and ‘bosses’. Conversely, a demonstration of pro-armed-struggle young anarchists protested Christoulas’ death with slogans that attempted to place themselves, as supporters of the terrorist organisation ‘Cells of Fire Conspiracy’, within a notional lineage of communist national liberation struggle: ‘EAM, ELAS, Pyrines tis Fótiás’.

This apparent flux of political boundaries nonetheless did not produce a unification or a new collective subject, whether at the level of practice or ideology, as became clearer after the elections. In the 12 February riots themselves, while fighting against the police was in general accepted, one would observe variations, even disputes on the street, as to what types of rioting were acceptable. Internal distances emerged between those who only clashed with the police, those who also smashed and burnt banks, and those who went on to loot and burn shops and even entire buildings.

Beyond clashes with the police, the smashing or firebombing of bank branches appeared to also have gained broader acceptance, which was significant, considering how traumatic the deaths at Marfin Bank had been in 2010. This can be explained not only by the generalisation of household debt in the crisis, but also by the fetishism of finance, and the role of financial governmentality in the imposition of the restructuring, as discussed in Chapter III. When the crisis manifests itself as public debt, whose burden is then passed on indiscriminately to the lower strata, while financial institutions are known to have been bailed out by states Europe-wide, finance capital immediately appears to be the beneficiary of widespread suffering. Finance, as capital in its highest level of abstraction, appears to beget profits through pure usury, through the wanton, parasitical exploitation of ‘productive’ capital. On the contrary, ‘productive’ capital, that which produces and distributes tangible commodities, that which provides jobs, is seen as victim of the crisis, or, at least, as unconnected to any of its causes.

This may partially explain why this wider acceptance of bank burning did not extend to attacks on and looting of shops, and why the question of private property only emerged with regard to shops, as some protesters tried to intervene and protect them. The rejection of looting perhaps also reflects the wide distribution of small property and the large size of the lower middle class in Greece, as well as the interclass character of the demonstration. While wider participation in the riots then appeared to effect a generalised criticism of state power, law, and finance, the limits of this criticism were that placing the nation, its ‘people’ and its national ‘productive’ capital above the state and law was a condition of the criticism’s possibility. Lower-middle-class participation in the
riots, given the abrupt proletarianisation of this class, may also partially explain why, for a section of rioters, the property and secure trade of national citizens was sacrosanct.

The practices of expropriation and of the destruction of shops and buildings created an internal distance: on one hand, a lower-middle-class attitude towards ownership and the nation; on the other, the majority of young, unemployed, and immigrant rioters,¹⁰⁶ who directly attacked property and the sanctity of commodities by not only expropriating them but also wantonly destroying them, and confronting those who attempted to stop them. Their actions reflected their lack of future, in opposition to a certain hope that held onto the democratic or violent replacement of ‘traitors’ and the reaffirmation of national unity, national capital, and the concreteness of private property. This internal distance emerged within a demonstration that had already turned into a day of major social unrest, and which had already moved far away from the logic of older types of demand struggle, eradicating the last remaining concerns, still marginally present in the squares movement and in the October strikes, of the ‘respectable’ presentation of the movement (‘peaceful’ demonstrators being attacked by a ‘brutal’ police / the ‘dignified workers’).

Expropriation and destruction, through their practical social criticism—of property, the commodity, of exchange, and of the economy more broadly—contained a dimension that had already also been expressed in a more orderly way in the self-reduction campaigns of neighbourhood assemblies (discussed in the section on ‘self organisation’ below): the wage can no longer be demanded—it is then forcibly taken via the taking of commodities for which the wage may have previously paid. In a situation where being a proletarian has again begun to mean being poor, collective action that interrupts fundamental laws of the capitalist system (the laws protecting property), which delimit access to the means of subsistence, is taken more and more frequently. This has not been unique to Greece during the crisis. In many riots that have broken out, from London (August 2011), to Sweden (May 2013), to Argentina (December 2013) to Ferguson (August 2014), proletarian rioters have expropriated goods, either to meet their immediate needs, or to resell them. Such rioters are often immigrants or people of colour, who face not just the limits of their proletarian condition, but also racialisation.

Riots and looting appeared to be at a clear distance from attempts to create alternative communities of ‘solidarity’ within an unbearable society, and were certainly at a distance from attempts to defend ‘honest business’ against ‘parasitical’ banking. Yet, their negativity and destructiveness has not been a negation of capitalism, but rather a temporary interruption. The concreteness of material damage, the temporary questioning of the limits that the commodity form imposes on subsistence, the reentry of looted commodities into the market, limit this interruption to a mo-

¹⁰⁶ A police statement about the composition of arrested rioters suggests that most of them were young and unemployed, or privately—that is, most likely, precariously—employed: ‘According to the announcement of the Greek Police (EL.AS.), out of the 79 arrested in total, 53 are Greek and 26 are foreign nationals. As regards their age, three are minors, 14 to 17 years old, forty-one are 19 to 29 years old, twenty-seven are 31 to 39, and eight are over 40. As regard their occupations, there were: fifteen unemployed; four students; eleven private employees; two self-employed; one lecturer; one trainee lawyer; one car driver; one director; two builders; and thirty-nine did not declare an occupation.’ ‘To profil tôn syllífhéntôn’ [The profile of arrestees]. To Vima, 13 February 2012.
mentary redistribution of wealth or to a symbolic act of destruction. Short interruptions may nevertheless foreshadow more radical and lasting ones—their significance cannot be simply dismissed because of their limited character.

Perhaps a more crucial limit of the 12 February unrest is that, despite the participation of immigrants in rioting, in contrast to December 2008, its character was national. The composition of the demonstration, as well as its context, was associated with a demand, no matter how defunct, which presupposed the demanding subject of a citizen. This citizen faced not just the degradation of everyday life, but also the national question of Greece’s sovereignty and economic dependence. While, at the time of the events, appeals to the nation seemed explainable by broad ideological and political fluidity, retrospectively it appears that the question of national integrity was posed as one of major importance for a great section of the Greek population. The way in which the nation (and, with that, race) emerged as the focal point of conflicts in the post-election period is discussed in the section on immigrants’ struggles and anti-fascism, as well as in Chapter V.

THE ‘NON EXISTENT’ STUDENT MOVEMENT

The passing of the Mid-term Programme in June 2011 was followed by August’s fast-tracked vote on the new higher education bill that limited degrees to three years, flexibilised work contracts, and rationalised university management, making further steps towards a business model for higher education. Importantly, it also abolished the university asylum, which had played an important practical role in social mobilisation, providing a space where protesters could avoid police violence. It was evident that the bill contained measures to preempt student protests, and put an end to student militancy in universities. If the student protests against the bill were weak, however, this was not because of police repression. The bill was responded to with university occupations across the country, most of which lasted for a month, and were joined by some school occupations, by pupils who protested about the lack of school books. These occupations and protests had a broad discourse against the more generalised closing down of a ‘future’, and made interventions in schools, hospitals (to protest the newly introduced entry fee), the electricity company, and radio stations, attempting to make connections with other sections of society that had been affected. Yet they were held together by a relatively small and gradually decreasing number of people in each university.

This was a far cry from the student movement of 2006–7 in terms of duration and participation. Some of those who participated explained this weakness as a result either of generalised pessimism in the face of the state’s recalcitrance to demands and the increasing difficulties of eve-

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107 Expression used in discussions among students who supported the occupations in Athens Indymedia.
109 See the section below for an explanation of the new property tax introduced via electricity bills, which the students were also protesting.
110 This was particularly the case in Thessaloniki. See Anar, ‘Ενίμπροσφι από Θεσσαλονίκη: φοιτητικό κινήμα/δράσεις’ [Update from Thessaloniki: student movement / actions], Athens Indymedia, 24 September 2011, https://athens.indymedia.org/post/1335812/.
Others attributed it to a reigning apathy and the power of the individualist, ‘careerist’ ideology of those students who, empowered by a media campaign in their favour, organised themselves against university occupations, to avoid missing their examinations or an entire term of study.\footnote{Ibid.}

What might have been the difference between 2006 and 2011? Perhaps more plausible than the notion of a radical ideological shift within these five years might be the aftermath of the sense of defeat of the squares movement. It may also be that, indeed, when everyday life becomes increasingly difficult because of a shortage of income, being a student, particularly one who misses terms of study for the sake of a struggle that already seems lost, can appear as a luxury. Indeed, the internal debate concerned occupations as a means of more general protest, rather than to defeat the new bill itself. Then again, material exigency is not a convincing explanation, considering that demonstrations against the bill, which did not put any obstacles to studies, were also very small. A core question has not been asked: how the bill would immediately affect students. Here, the distance between the politicised students of the left and everyone else becomes clearer: this bill affected more directly a left institution in universities, the university asylum, which, despite decades of condemnation for the ‘lawlessness’ it supposedly fostered, and violations by police, had been maintained up to that point. The students who were generally more politically active were the ones who were the most concerned about having nowhere to escape when persecuted by the police. The rest of the measures involved a rationalisation of university structure and management, which, compared to the level of cuts introduced with the bailout, appeared like minor tinkering: the reduction of the years of study; the introduction of business and the exclusion of students’ say in university management; opening schools to private funding; steps towards the privatisation of university real estate; the elimination of free textbooks. If a broader movement across the country failed to put an end to a much more significant worsening of life, would students stage a great struggle concerning university management? The timing of the bill was perfectly placed to face the least possible resistance.

Nevertheless, according to some participants in the student movement in Thessaloniki, there was also a qualitative difference in the 2011 struggle in comparison to those of 2006–7. This was the opening up of political conversations, within universities, about the relationship between the production of knowledge through their studies and the social problems caused by the crisis and restructuring outside the university.\footnote{‘Anoiçtés scholés gia kleistá myalá’ [Open Schools for Closed Minds], Protagma, 24 September 2011, http://protagma.wordpress.com/2011/09/24/.} According to this view, the ‘autonomous’ student organisations were on this occasion able to overcome their isolationism and enter into productive conversations with other students. This reflected the space for discussion and action beyond political identities, which had been created in the squares movement, and led to interventions into other social spaces, beyond narrowly-defined student interests. This ‘opening’ of the student identity led to the

111 Ibid.
emergence of more low-key, everyday mobilisations in universities like the one around the student club (lēschī) at Aristotle University (Thessalonīki) in 2013. The campaign aimed to defend the ‘social character’ of the student canteen against the University’s introduction of security that prevented non-students from getting free meals.\textsuperscript{114} This excluded immigrants and homeless persons who had previously benefited from the arrangement, as well as graduates who were now unemployed. The limits of the campaign were soon clear, however, as, on one hand, many students did not identify with this demand, and, on the other, it was difficult to create links with the groups who would benefit from it, because of their specially precarious status. As a result, the campaign’s activism had only a temporary result, so long as its members were prepared to keep the doors open by the force of their numbers.\textsuperscript{115} Again, it appears that the immediacy of personal or sectional interests imposed by the crisis left little room for links between groups with different needs and interests.

After the Autumn of 2011, the waves of student protests that followed were even more low-key, unable to respond to the intensifying policing of university spaces. With the abolition of asylum, riot police invasions into universities and arrests of students and striking staff became much more common. Students’ ‘stekia’ (social spaces organised by students) were also attacked for their political activities by both police and university managements, while university spaces were more and more closed down to student use.\textsuperscript{116}

The next significant wave of student protests was in November 2014, in conjunction with a wave of high-school occupations. As discussed in Chapter II, since the early 1990s, school occupations have taken place almost every year, and often in Autumn, both for high-school students to demand improvements, as well as to act out a kind of youthful refusal of school routine. Short term occupations have also frequently taken place each year around the Polytechnic Uprising anniversary of 17 November. These waves of protest in 2014 would not have been significant, had it not been for the higher level of repression they faced at a time when the New Democracy-led government was facing decreased public support, but continued to pursue its declared aim of ushering in a new era of left ideological defeat (see Chapter V).

The school occupations, which were short-lived but reached 500 across the country, were organised by high-school students to protest new examination regulations that made it very difficult to pass, insufficient resources and facilities, and the lack of teaching staff for certain lessons.\textsuperscript{117} The increased difficulty in passing study years, causing as much as 25% failure in some cases, was the biggest issue cited by high-school students, because effectively it would push a greater number to

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{This social character of the student club was one of the University’s commitments up until 2013, as is clear by the apologetic announcement about the requirement of a student card to receive a free meal. See ‘Ex-afálist tou diákoymatos Dórēan sitísis’ [Safeguarding the right to Free meals], Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, \url{https://www.auth.gr/units/596/rights_freemeals} accessed on 14 May 2015.}
\footnote{Tuiavii, ‘Mia prosphátheia na anichneúsoume ta ória kai tis dynatótes tou agōná mas sti lēschī tou APTh’ [An attempt to detect the limits and possibilities of our struggle at the AUTh student club], SKYA, 1 March 2014, \url{http://skya.espiv.net/2014/05/24/}.}
\footnote{Organising student groups, ‘Unchained A.P.Th. giati?’, APTh Unchained!, 1 May 2014, \url{http://authunchained.blogspot.co.uk}. Such a series of events are described by a group of students who organised the festival ‘AUTh Unchained’ at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, to protest against the closure and policing of university spaces, and to attempt to reclaim them.}
\footnote{‘Anavrasmós stín Paideía’ [Turmoil in Education], I E∫imerída tón Syntaxtión, 4 November 2014.}
\end{footnotes}
give up their studies and seek low-paid work. In response to the occupations, the Minister of Education, Andreas Loverdos, warned that this would have legal consequences, while the prosecutor of the Supreme Civil and Criminal Court, Areios Pagos, ordered local prosecutors to bring actions against school occupiers. Tens of students were arrested in schools around the country, as well as, in some cases, their parents. Loverdos also requested a police investigation into a 15-year-old student who called for school occupations via a Facebook page. While riot police invasions into occupied schools have taken place in the past, this kind of immediate and systematic repression of occupations was unprecedented.

University students’ mobilisations in the same period were in direct response to university deaneries’ attempts to prevent occupations. In the University of Athens, the deanery suggested that student unions and assemblies should be bypassed by electronic voting on the matter of occupations. At the Athens University of Economics and Business (ASOEE), the deanery put the entire university under a lock-out. At the Law School, the deanery called the police in response to an attempt at occupation, and a number of students were injured. In response, students called a demonstration for the same evening of 14 November, the date when many student assemblies had voted to begin occupations, and a co-ordinated meeting of student assemblies was planned at the Polytechnic. After the demonstration, which was relatively large, clashes with the police took place, particularly around the Polytechnic, as students attempted to get into the university campus. Despite the ferocity of the police, and a number of students getting injured, most students managed to enter the Polytechnic. Their enthusiasm was disappointed by the leaders of the left network, EAAK (Enia Anexartiti Aristeri Kinisi), who decided that they and their bloc—which was significant—would leave and would not participate in the meeting.

Overall, as in this case, the student struggles of this period were characterised by internal divisions, and difficulty to expand, generalise or escalate, while at the same time having to face heavy policing. All of this meant that universities themselves were changing rapidly. They were no longer to be spaces of protest and free political activity, as they had been (less and less) in previous decades. Occupations would no longer be tolerated. In this respect, it will be interesting to see if SYRIZA’s 2015 victory will entail a reversal of these tendencies to tighten policing and the legal frameworks that have facilitated them, or if, instead, it will utilise them to safeguard its own attempt to manage the crisis.

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118 Dialekti Aggelii, Nikos Fotopoulos & Dimitris Terzis, ‘To Néo Lýkeio évgale tous mathiitês ston drómo’ [The New Lyceum took students out into the streets], I Efimerida tôn Syntaktikon, 4 November 2014.
119 Andreas Loverdos was Minister of Health in 2012 and was responsible for ordering the arrests and public humiliation of HIV-infected women in the name of the ‘public health’ of men who paid for sex. See Chapter V.
120 ‘Apostaseis Loverdou apó tin eisaggelikè éreuna gia tis katafleseis stà scholeà’, To Vivoa, 5 November 2014.
121 Ibid. For example, in Lamia, nine students were arrested because they were occupying their school, and eight of their parents were also arrested and charged with ‘neglecting to supervise a minor’.
122 ‘Chiliades kósmou stìn porefà tôn foiti- tôn - Rpsî chimiôn kai xîlo sto Polyteknîko’ [Thousands of people in the student demonstration - Teargas and beatings at the Polytechnic], Eleutherotypia, 14 November 2014.
123 Eleutheraki Parénvasi Filosofikis, Imerologia mias fytetinis nyhtas kai mias “peittismenitis” fygomachias [Diary of a bright night and of an ‘enlightened’ desertion], Leaflet, 15 November 2014.
SELF-ORGANISATION

Neighbourhood Assemblies

The squares movement, as already mentioned, had the ambition to expand its practices of self-organisation into neighbourhood and workplace assemblies. This was not a novel ambition, as neighbourhood assemblies had already been set up during the December 2008 uprising (and some existed even earlier than that) many of which were still functioning. While workplace assemblies remained an idea, several new assemblies were set up in neighbourhoods around Attiki, and a few in other cities around the country. In Attiki alone, by Autumn 2011, there were around 50 local assemblies. The new assemblies differed to those of December 2008, in that activists of the left (as opposed to the anarchist/autonomous political milieu) were much more present in them, and in their emphasis on political openness and ‘addressing wider society’. ‘Direct democracy’ and ‘taking our lives into our own hands’ were their slogans, following on from the squares movement.

Autumn had brought a rapid slashing of indirect and direct wages in both the public and private sectors via cuts and emergency taxes. The assemblies attempted, in a variety of ways and selecting different priorities, depending on their particular composition, to address these problems, as well as local problems involving urban space. Despite the varied composition and variations in the political discourse of each of the assemblies, it can be said that their activities broadly included: collective nonpayment of taxes and fares (‘self-reduction’: for example, blocking ticket validation machines in Metro stations as a way of demanding free transport, campaigning against the payment of the entry fee for public health centres and hospitals) solidarity actions and demonstrations with organisations of workers and the unemployed; the defence of public urban space from privatisation; occupations of buildings and/or urban space; anti-fascism; participation in demonstrations; a variety of forms of self-organisation and sharing of resources (collective kitchens, clothes exchanges, ‘social groceries’ giving out donated goods); and alternative economy projects (time banks; alternative money; getting cheaper agricultural produce direct from producers).

The older neighbourhood assemblies with a more anti-authoritarian composition were the first to initiate many of these actions, particularly those of self-reduction, over 2010–11, and, for many of them, those forms of activism had already reached various limits by 2011. According to an account of the movement against transport fares in Athens, which had been run by a coordination
of neighbourhood assemblies, and involved daily interventions in buses and Metro stations, the movement was unable to promote the generalisation of a *politised* refusal to pay (as opposed to quietly passing used tickets to one another, which did seem to generalise). Such politicisation was thought of as essential to legitimise and effect free transport at a time of high unemployment and shrinking wages. After several months of daily actions, the activists became tired. In retrospect, they realised that they had neglected to take into account the needs of those in their own groups who may have been unemployed or had fines to pay, through an overemphasis on the the political-ideological aspect of their actions.\(^\text{128}\)

In comparison, the second wave of neighbourhood assemblies tended to be more practical, although coloured by slightly more mainstream-leftwing types of discourse. Organising against paying the new ‘emergency’ property tax attracted a lot of the attention and energy of many assemblies. This tax, which amounted to hundreds of euros annually, was charged via electricity bills, with the accompanying threat of electricity cutoffs should it not be paid by the deadline. This mode of imposing a tax was indeed harsh at a time of high unemployment, and particularly for elderly owner-occupiers, so the reactions against it were strong. The new neighbourhood assemblies provided a way to organise against paying this tax, by collectively protesting, getting legal help for impacted residents, as well as reconnecting the electricity for those who could not pay. This attracted many local property owners to neighbourhood assemblies. The campaign against the property tax, which was largely driven by these assemblies, was partially successful, succeeding in having the tax disassociated from electricity bills.

While this campaign had, by its nature, an interclass, citizenist, and legalistic character, it also did not shirk from taking action that openly defied the law and advertised its doing so. Electricity reconnections, which were not only carried out for those affected by the tax, but for anyone who had been unable to pay their bills, were an act that questioned the commodity-status of electricity, that is, the inaccessibility of a basic necessity unless one can pay. Along with other similar acts of self-reduction, these practices at the same time revealed even more strongly the historic shift away from direct wage demands. With the labour movement officially defunct, these practices reclaimed a fraction the wage indirectly and in defiance of the normal laws of exchange.

Still, there was also a limiting aspect to the anti-tax campaign, as many assembly participants recognised.\(^\text{129}\) The issue of the property tax monopolised the meetings in many assemblies for several months, marginalising other issues like closing hospitals, unemployment, and unpaid wages. In some cases, local property owners did not even actively participate in all the organising efforts around the tax, leaving that responsibility to the more politicised members, and merely turning up to catch up with developments. Some assemblies questioned themselves as to why they were treated as a support service, as this, at times, produced disagreements with participants who did not own

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\(^{129}\) This was a repeated observation of participants in the newer assemblies, which was reported in the first coordinative meeting of neighbourhood assemblies (old and new) from across the country, on 13 January 2012.
property. While it would be unfair to say that the property tax campaign exhausted the assemblies’ activities, it did bring to the surface the pattern of a problem that appears to be specific to neighbourhood assemblies as a form of organisation.

Since the peak of participation during the squares movement, neighbourhood assemblies’ numbers had begun to dwindle by the first months of 2012. The complaint that local participants had surrendered to a ‘logic of delegation’ and did not actively participate was common to both newer and older assemblies. To the extent that assemblies put any effort into ‘addressing wider society’, and attracting a broader public to their campaigns, they were repeatedly let down, with the exception of the tax issue. While it seems plausible that there is a socially-widespread habit of delegating responsibility, and not only accepting, but feeling safest within, structures of leadership, perhaps there were also other reasons for the depopulation of the assemblies.

The attempt to form a community on the sole basis of living in proximity to one another may not be unproblematic in itself. This type of community seems to have brought to the surface the differences among individuals, as much as it brought them together to solve common problems. The limits of organising on the basis of a locality and a simple democratic principle become more evident if we consider that a connection to a place as small as a neighbourhood is stronger when small property ownership is involved than when someone is a tenant and is forced to move frequently as rents fluctuate. The distribution of small property in Greece is broad enough to guarantee the numerical dominance of property owners in many neighbourhood assemblies. There were several material ways in which the residents of the same neighbourhood would have been affected by the crisis in different and deeply unequal ways. Some could be young and unemployed with difficulty in paying their rent; others could be owner-occupier pensioners who cannot pay their bills and taxes; some others could have a business that is failing; yet others may have been affected by the reduction in property values. These differences cannot be formally negotiated within the democratic form, which, by its very premise of bringing together formally equal individuals (citizens), fails to go very far beyond the contentlessness of bourgeois equality. The inability of the form to recognise and challenge social hierarchies arising from property ownership (the co-presence in assemblies of landlords and their tenants, who were the ones at risk of electricity cutoffs while landlords were avoiding the tax, or who may have sometimes been in a dispute with the landlord) while giving priority to the problems of owners, confirmed that, unless questioned, the relationship to a locality can be by default dominated by the property relationship to the land. To the extent that assemblies assumed a universality to already exist within them, this universality disguised the material inequalities to which bourgeois society is designed to remain blind.

The activities that, on the contrary, did acknowledge and attempted to question class and other social hierarchies, such as solidarity actions in coordination with workers and unemployed groups, or solidarity with immigrants in areas where openly racist groups were active, were out-

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130 See note above.
131 The latter was a personal experience: my landlord, who also participated in the local neighbourhood assembly in order to contest the tax, later refused to return my deposit of two months’ rent. This was a case of a blatantly self-interested participation in the assembly.
ward-facing. Exploitation and social domination were clearly understood to exist, but there was a wish to expel them from the assembly itself, while at the same time allowing the assembly to be democratically inclusive. This amounted to a tension between a questioning of structural forms of power in capitalist society, and a desire to create a space of universality identical to that of bourgeois democracy: equality is ‘for all’, everyone is treated ‘the same’. The particularity, in capitalist society, of being part of class, race, and gender relations, remained unrecognised in the organisation’s form, until it was expressed in internal conflict.

The attempts of neighbourhood assemblies and other groups to overcome internal differences and cope with the crisis through the creation of co-operative structures, alternative economies and other self-organised projects have similarly faced internal limits. These are discussed in the next section.

Solidarity Initiatives and ‘Alternative Economies’

[Exchange value or, more precisely, the money system is in fact the system of equality and freedom, and … the disturbances which they encounter in the further development of the system[,] disturbances inherent in it, are merely the realisation of equality and freedom, which prove to be inequality and unfreedom.]

With the shrinking or complete absence of both direct and indirect wages (benefits), and with basic state services such as health and education becoming both dismantled and less accessible, there have been several attempts to create alternative structures to support forms of subsistence. This self-organising activity presented itself as a necessity in the crisis, and was itself shaped by it. It ranged from simple initiatives like collective kitchens, to collective gardens for agricultural goods, to the formation of alternative local economies and distribution networks, to the establishment of cooperatives, to self-organised health services. In most cases, these activities had the ambition to not be merely a means of subsistence, but to effect a social critique. This ranged from an open criticism of capitalism and capitalist power relations, to a criticism of money as a mediator of social relations, to a criticism of the lack of social solidarity and ‘monetary diversity’. Money and the form of exchange, including the exchange of labour, are central concepts that these practices have been concerned with. In this section I will attempt to analyse these initiatives’ practices, both at an abstract level and by reference to some examples, in order to assess whether they can live up to their ambition to assist subsistence as well as perform a practical social critique.

Commodity exchange was the core social form that mediated community relations in ‘solidarity’ economy initiatives, alternative currency networks, exchange networks, or time banks, whose numbers rapidly increased in the crisis, and have been promoted in mainstream media as effective

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survival strategies. The idea behind these schemes has been, on one hand, to create economic activity where there is little and, on the other, to create communities and relations of solidarity among the residents of a local area. A localised currency, whether time-based or not, restricts options for exchange to the interior of the exchange community, and protects its members from external competition. It could be said to be a form of micro-protectionism that strives to form a community among its members. These two aspects of these initiatives, the emphasis on exchange, on one hand, and the concern with fostering a community of solidarity on the other, are closely interlinked and create the potential for an internal tension.

Communities based on alternative forms of exchange are not independent from the wider economy, nor is the socioeconomic status of its members defined within the community. Even at the simplest level of exchanging the products of home-based production, there is an external dependence for basic raw materials that an individual urban household is not able to produce. These raw materials or property that, in each community, each member already has or does not have is a given that the community does not seek to alter. This means that the members of an exchange community do not begin on an equal footing, even if they begin with the same number of ‘credits’. The community is penetrated by existing inequalities that are exacerbated in the crisis, and it is hard for it to remain unaffected by the devaluation of labour power, precisely when the exchange that takes place between individuals is one that is considered ‘fair’ (i.e. the going rate based on supply and demand) at a broader social scale.

This is because it is the socially-generalised act, and not the means, of exchange that equalises different activities with one another, defining their exchange value, even if this happens at an abstract social level, behind the backs of exchangers. But an act does so not as an isolated voluntary act but as its social average, continually redefined from the historical moment when commodity exchange on the principle of equivalence was socially established and became the standard of capitalist material interactions. This principle of equivalence remains the same in every act of

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135 This argument relates most directly to projects such as ‘Nea Guinea’ (http://neaguinea.org) whose aim is to create autonomous networks of household and collective production and ‘self-management’ of food (urban gardening), health (production and use of herbal remedies, yoga classes), clothing (knitting etc.), building and even energy (seminars on building small ecological generators). It is clear that this vision aims for households or collectives to be able to produce all or most of their needs independently of capitalist networks of production. Nea Guinea does not specify the cost of raw materials for the most complex types of production (generators) or how the products of home production are to be exchanged or distributed.


137 We might refer here to Alfred Sohn-Rethel’s work, *Intellectual and Manual Labour: Critique of Epistemology* (London: Macmillan, 1978), which links the emergence of money as the universal equivalent to forms of thought and social organisation: the quantification of activity through an abstract equivalent corresponds to abstraction in thought and scientific quantification. The important implication of this form of critique is that
exchange regardless of its form of mediation, and regardless of who the exchangers are. The exchangers, so long as they wish to make an ‘equal’ or ‘fair’ exchange, this exchange should correspond, in some way, to the market prices of the exchanged goods or services. Any divergence will require some kind of justification, be it the higher quality or higher cost of raw materials of a certain commodity, or even an appeal to ethics (as for example in ‘fair trade’ goods). Nevertheless, this divergence ought to be minimal.

Similar, then, to the case of neighbourhood assemblies, the universality and equality presupposed here by ‘equal’ or ‘fair’ exchange, using a medium that is uncontrolled by the state (an alternative currency), is a formal equality founded on equivalence, no different to that facilitated by the state, which is in tension with the notion of ‘solidarity’. What is taken as given, what is not questioned, is property, taken as a defining and unalienable characteristic of every individual: what each individual ‘has to sell’, what each ‘can offer’. Whether one person ‘owns’ nothing but their own body and can only ‘offer’ their labour power, while another person owns a house with a garden that needs gardening, or several hectares of fields with fruit that need picking, or hotel rooms that need painting, is theoretically of no concern to such a ‘solidarity economy’, as long as the alternative currency is used according to the rules and is not counterfeited. Here, one has to ask whether the members of the community benefit in the same way by entering into such a relation. Through an alternative exchange network, the painter-decorator who paints hotel rooms gets ‘credits’ that they can only spend at a limited number of local outlets, in order to cater for their basic means of subsistence. The hotel owner, in contrast, is able to rent the newly-painted rooms, perhaps now at a higher price, for profit in real—i.e. state-guaranteed—money. This can be even worse for the worker in the case of moneyless exchange, where what is often offered—typically in a context of the broader devaluation of labour-power—is food and accommodation, effecting an even deeper type of dependency. The exchange community is not formally concerned about this. But since the act of exchange takes place in the same way as it does in the rest of the economy, one wonders exactly at which point an act of ‘solidarity’ took place. Even if, in a great proportion of cases, alternative currency exchange takes place between persons who are in similar economic hardship, the social principle remains the same: a formal equality that has the sole effect of perhaps increasing the total amount of money circulating in an economy, without questioning the material inequality of participants.

This principle can also be seen in time banks, where the general equivalent is time, and labour time is exchanged with labour time only: ostensibly there are no employers, but only people who work for each other. While in other micro-markets a general equivalent measures exchange not only exploitation, but the imposition of the principle of equivalence on all facets of social life is itself historicised and denaturalised.


value, and the value of abstract labour is defined in exchange, time banks attempt to define the value of abstract labour on the basis of concrete labour time. Different types of labour are not freely equalised in the act of exchange, but rather their value is predefined by the length of time that each concrete act of labour consumes. In this way, the qualitative aspects of labour, such as productivity, intensity, and complexity, are ignored. According to this definition of equality, all types of skills and all levels of capacity and productivity are formally worth the same. The ideal time bank exchange is when two persons agree to do something for each other in equal lengths of time, they get to know each other, and create a sense of community. Still, the formal mediation of this give-and-take by the time bank, the very principle of this temporal equality, restricts, rather than facilitates what individuals could do for each other in the name of solidarity, as, for example, helping each other when in need without asking for something in return. While the time bank allows for informal free decisions as to which types of labour are exchanged with which, thereby allowing some space for time gifted in relation to what this time might earn in the official currency (for example, a lawyer helping out an old lady in a rent dispute with her landlord, while she knits some socks for him), the time bank also restricts the meaning of this act to equivalence (1 hour of legal work = 1 hour of knitting socks). It disguises its meaning as a potential act of solidarity, or of the free sharing of one’s resources, that may have taken place regardless.

This reduction of acts of solidarity to equivalence has the potential to also produce the opposite result, if the participants of the time bank begin to demand from it to guarantee a ‘fair exchange’. This would immediately raise the issue of the qualitative differences of concrete labour, so that standards may be instituted as to how much work has to be done within an hour, or as to whether highly skilled labour can be exchanged with less skilled labour. The effect of this would be not only to cancel out the principle of solidarity, but also to make the time bank increasingly similar to the official form of money.

The perspective that has been promoting alternative or moneyless exchange relations as something more than an increase of economic activity presents money as a type of domination instead of what it is: an abstract equivalent, a function, the most sufficient medium of exchange. Commodity exchange necessitates money, it is not ‘dominated’ by it. Exchange, the division of labour, abstract labour, are presupposed by the production of surplus value, in other words, by exploitation. They are not ‘genuine’ relations that then come to be appropriated or corrupted by the form of money and capitalists. ‘Monetary diversity’ might then increase the number of exchanges that take place in an economy at a time of crisis, and it might create a limited sense of independence from mainstream banks and the state, but their very principle reproduces existing social relations that are based on a formal concept of equality, going against, instead of promoting, relations of solidarity that would criticise this formal type of equality.

140 For an example of this perspective, which has been promoted extensively in mainstream media, see: Andreas Roumeliotis, ‘Antallaktikī oikonomīa’.
141 Ibid.
There have also been projects that do not criticise the form of money, but rather they criticise ‘intermediaries’: those traders who mediate between producers and the shops, and profit from the process of distribution. These projects attempt to circumvent a situation where produce is bought at low prices by supermarkets but is sold at very high prices to consumers. They create more direct networks of exchange between producers and consumers, which bring down prices and make markets available to smaller agricultural producers. The produce is then sold at street markets organised by neighbourhood assemblies or other local ‘solidarity’ associations. This type of activity began to attract attention in February 2012, when potato producers from Drama, in protest against low wholesale prices and the burying of 70% of their production, gave away for free ten tons of potatoes at the 24th Agrotica Trade Fair in Thessaloniki. Their act attracted attention to the disjunction between the hardship of producers and overpriced produce in supermarkets, caused by the artificiality of demand, when such a great proportion of agricultural products never makes it to the market. While this is a campaign within the very rules of the capitalist economy and does not claim to do otherwise, it does question the profit motive in a situation of high levels of food supply existing alongside acute hardship in the crisis. But the emphasis on the criticism of intermediaries could be exaggerated. In Greece, daily street markets, where agricultural producers can set up stalls, have been a well-established institution. These initiatives increase the number of outlets and opportunities for producers to sell directly, and so they increase the pressure for lower prices. While, then, these types of networks do not effect any kind of radical criticism of social relations (for all we know, the ‘small producers’ could be employing immigrant labour under the slave-like conditions that have become the norm in Greece) they can be understood as a collective attempt to increase the average wage indirectly, by pushing for price deflation in basic goods.

Alongside projects that are centred on exchange, there have also been other projects, often organised by the same groups, that perform activities more similar to solidarity or charity. These are projects that collect donated food, unwanted clothes (usually promoted as clothes exchanges) and unexpired medicine to give locally to others who might be in need. This extends to the provision of free services such as free nurseries and lessons for children, and free self-organised primary

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142 For example: the collective ‘Kypseli’ (https://colectivakipseli.wordpress.com), which aims to link small agricultural producers of ecological products with urban consumers; the network ‘To Ntoulapi’ (http://tontoulapi.espivblogs.net) which aims to broach similar links, and to share resources about producing and exchanging quality affordable food; ‘Zikos’, a self-managed grocery in Exarchia, which promotes the ‘horizontal and solidarity trade of food products’. This structure comprises a ‘Market Without Intermediaries’ which links urban consumers with small producers from non-urban provinces (http://syl-kat-exarcheion.espivblogs.net/gallery-2).

143 ‘Patates moirasan paragōgoi sti Thessalonikí’ [Producers gave away potatoes in Thessaloniki], To Vima, 4 February 2012.

144 A great number of neighbourhood assemblies are involved in such activities, as, for example, ‘Zikos’ in Exarchia. But also a great number of local authorities have started such projects. The projects are commonly called ‘social groceries’, but essentially they are food banks created through donations. Still, even though the state does not fund them, access to them is restricted. For example, the local authority of Piraeus requires a list of forms of identification and proof of income, so as to allow access strictly to those with extremely low incomes. Δήμος Πειραιώς, ‘Κοινότητα Παντοπόλεως, Τμήμα Κοινοτικής Δραστηριοτήτων, Δικαιολογητικά’, Δήμος Πειραιώς, http://www.pireasnet.gr/.
health services provided by volunteers.\textsuperscript{145} As these projects often insist that their activities are not charitable but they are acts of solidarity, we should examine what this really means. What is the difference between charity and solidarity? According to its definition, charity is the voluntary giving of help to those in need. The Greek word used in these discussions is ‘philanthropy’, which literally means ‘love for humanity’. The history of the word belongs to the Christian ethical tradition. In this relation, there is a giver and a recipient. The recipient is not meant to give back, as the giver will be rewarded by God. In a less religious context, through the history of bourgeois philanthropy, the giver helps because they feel sorry or guilty for the recipient, or, more cynically, for publicity or social control over the recipient. On the contrary, solidarity, in the English language, suggests not one-sided giving but mutuality, common interests, interdependence, and trust. In Greek, the word is ‘allîleggî’, and similarly its etymology means ‘mutual reliance on one another’. As I already tried to show above, solidarity is mutuality, but it is not an ‘equal’ exchange. Rather, it is a mutuality based on need and inter-reliance, the ability to recognise and respond to one another’s needs.

The question then is, is solidarity something that defines the characteristics of an act itself, or can it merely be a subjective ethical position, a ‘good intention’ that must be taken at face value as soon as it is declared to be so? What is the difference between charities collecting bags of goods at supermarkets, and neighbourhood assemblies collecting donated bags of food in social centres? Perhaps the only non-subjective difference is the context and the lack of mediation. To the extent that a neighbourhood assembly, alongside its food and medicine collections, organises campaigns that themselves question social power relations, in which the members support one another, it can speak of solidarity. The limit to the creation of that context of solidarity is yet again the unrecognised interclass composition of these assemblies and other local associations. If the members’ interests are at odds, and they seek to overcome this democratically instead of addressing existing inequalities and social hierarchies, how can they form a relation of mutuality?

The discourse opposing charity and voluntary work to solidarity has also been very prominent in self-organised initiatives for health. There are many such local health initiatives. The most well-known of those that see themselves as acts of solidarity and as part of social movements are the Social Solidarity Health Centre in Thessaloniki—which began in the context of the 300 immigrants’ hunger strike in 2011—and the Social Space for Health in Petralona, Athens.\textsuperscript{146} A similar initiative also began during the crisis in Exarchia. The necessity for these centres arose as increasing numbers of people are losing access to healthcare as they lose their jobs or work informally, while most immigrants never had access. The centres are run by health workers who offer their services for free, and all space, equipment, and medicine is donated. They are usually openly politicised and


\textsuperscript{146} ‘Keîmeno gia to symplîrîoma enós chrîónou apò tî Apergîa peînas tôn 300 apò tous giatoîs tôn 50 tîs Thessalonîkîs’ [Text on the anniversary of the hunger strike by the doctors of the 50 strikers in Thessaloniki], \textit{Migrants’ Forum in Cntr}, 26 January 2012, https://fmkritis.wordpress.com/2012/01/26/.
part of doctors’ struggles against the dismantling of public healthcare, and campaigns for free universal healthcare, attempting to enact its decommodification in practice. Here, participants have been very aware that they are offering services which the state has made inaccessible to the unemployed and immigrants (see Chapter III), and could be seen as attempting to replace state provisions by volunteering.

Political initiatives can see that they exist alongside charity projects such as Médecins Du Monde, who have indeed taken up the challenge to provide services to marginalised immigrants and the unemployed in Greece. In their attempt to distinguish themselves, and remain independent from the state, NGOs, the church or corporations, these projects have had to negotiate a balance between the symbolic or political meaning of their activity and its actual effectiveness, which, due to the way the health industry is organised in capitalism, is impossible without a major source of funding. The decommodification of ‘health’ is faced as a task that is enormous and far beyond what a small group of health workers can achieve. The point then becomes not so much to provide a complete service, or to save the lives of all those neglected by the state healthcare system—which would essentially amount to straightforward volunteering that directly replaces previously paid labour with unpaid labour—as it is to help others, to the degree that one can, using one’s skills and limited time and resources, and to create an example, a fleeting picture, of how access to healthcare could be free.

Still, for solidarity to materialise fully, participants in health initiatives face an additional obstacle, because healthcare has existed historically also as part of the state’s management of the population. Health workers’ practices are defined by the knowledge produced by the modern science of medicine, which is itself premised, on one hand, on a power relation between doctor and patient (typically mediated by the state), between the researcher and the human body as object, and, on the other hand, on a social definition of health and illness that is itself a form of power. This type of critique is not necessarily new to health practitioners in such centres, as demonstrated by the texts written by those involved at the Social Space for Health, which runs in the occupation of a closed down health centre in Petralona, Athens. In this project, participants have attempted to question the power relation of doctor and patient, by creating a space for the sharing of information on health, in the place of a specialist’s desk. The focus there is on learning and helping one another rather than the provision of service. Indeed, the Health Space at Petralona did not form itself in order to meet needs but in order to enact an example of a different form of relating. In this sense, it differs from the Solidarity Health Centre in Thessaloniki, which was originally set up to support the immigrants on hunger strike in February–March 2011, who had no access to the public health service. Very few immigrants use the service at Petralona, and its participants in the health space mostly belong to the same local social network. In every case, the validity of the word ‘solidarity’ depends on the way social networks negotiate the social inequalities within its composition.

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147 See also Chapter V on the form this took in the crisis.
148 Koinonikós chóros gia tìn ygeía tis laikís synélēusís Petralónōn, Koukakiou kai Théseiou, 1 diarkís diádikasía tís autoorganíson tís ygeías sta Petralona (mérós 2o) [The continuing process of the self-organisation of health in Petralona (part 2)], Pamphlet (Athens, 2013).
Yet the limits these efforts can face are not only internal but also external. Freely sharing healthcare and knowledge, or even better, co-producing health knowledge, is both a critical and a necessary act addressing hardship in the crisis, and producing relations of solidarity. It is, however threatened by ‘healthcare’ being systematically commodified everywhere else.

Here we come to the question of ‘alternatives’ and the possibilities that alternative practice can open up. Insofar as its practice does not come into confrontation with what it wishes to overcome (in this case, the principle of exchange, health as a form of power, the hierarchical division of labour, health service as a commodity), but, instead, merely coexists with it, the object remains intact, and the activity remains circumscribed. In the cases examined, as in health centres, where uncalculated exchange, or even giving without return, were practiced, mutual support was circumscribed by the scarcity imposed by the restructuring, and the inability to meet one another’s needs. The members of such communities have no access to surplus wealth, but only to surplus labour-power, that of surplus proletarian populations thrown out of production. The energies of this population can be, and are, given away, in the form of free labour, but this cannot, again, guarantee anyone’s subsistence. Solidarity will continue to be circumscribed by poverty, unless it questions more broadly the rules of economic rationality and the social form of value and equivalence that governs capitalist social relations, making subsistence conditional on waged labour.

There is, then, a difference between the generalisation and convergence of ruptures that come into conflict with existing social relations, and the enlargement and spreading of alternative autonomous collectively-managed spaces, or, even, the multiplication and enlargement of what have been called ‘the commons’; collectively-obtained spaces (buildings or land) to be used as social spaces and resources for subsistence, or spaces that are collectively appropriated and occupied—which tend to be more politically driven and have been strongly attacked by the state in this period. Occupying spaces that are private or about to be privatised begins by challenging private property and coming into conflict with the state. Yet, collective spaces can also quickly come into conflict with their outside in another way. The form of the autonomous, spatially-delimited community is at the same time grounded on a form of common ownership, whether it is legally recognised or de facto claimed. The fact that such ownership is in common does not stop it being a form of ownership which sets up certain boundaries. A spatially-delimited community is then set within boundaries which it often polices according to certain criteria set by the community. The multiplication of communities alone does not necessarily entail the overcoming of these boundaries, and thus such communities are constituted by various forms of conscious or unconsidered exclusions, which may or may not advance their critique of existing social relations. Obviously, there is a dif-

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149 Caffentzis, ‘Future of “The Commons”’.
150 The popularity of collectively managed land for agriculture has increased in the crisis, as for example in the project ‘Periastikés Kalliérgeies’ (PERKA) in the wider urban and peri-urban region of Thessaloniki (http://perka.org/).
151 Here I am referring to the police attacks on and closure of several political squats and social spaces in the centre of Athens from January 2013 (Villa Amalias, Lelas Karagianni, Skaramaga, ASOEE). Anta Psarrá, ‘Kataλlψeis, i émmoni idía tou N. Dendia’ [Occupations, the obsession of N. Dendias], TVXS, 3 September 2013.
ference between actively excluding the police from an occupation and inadvertently or unwillingly excluding immigrants from it, because of the community’s inability to overcome existing social and cultural divisions.

The tension of such a community with its outside is most evident in projects that aim to ‘liberate’ public space from privatisation but also to maintain its internal political integrity. If a lovingly-planted occupied park, wished to be a haven of community and solidarity in the middle of the city jungle, is as much a public space as any other in the city, it will inevitably be a locus of the same social tensions that exist in the rest of the city. To the extent that the community defends the space from the police, it then also finds that it has to protect itself from the petty crime (mostly selling counterfeit cigarettes, drug dealing and drug use, usually carried out by immigrants) that has just discovered a new safe space. In Athens, this tension has led to the policing of such spaces by its members, often culminating into violent expulsions. Here, a new, autonomously-instituted rule is imposed, and the invaders who disrespect it are expelled. The new social principle of harmonic coexistence in the occupied space, evidently, has limited means to negotiate the fact that those invading ‘criminal elements’ belong to the most systematically oppressed, racialised, and even dehumanised, sections of capitalist society.

Self-organised communities and initiatives have been the most creative aspect—in the sense of producing new social groupings or organising communities—of the struggles against the restructuring. Yet this creativity faced a core ambivalence, between a practice of exchange between equals/equals, and practices of unrestrained or unquantified solidarity, that is, a mutuality beyond the principle of equivalence. I have argued that, for projects that prioritise the principle of exchange, ‘solidarity’ is a misnomer. An interaction based on the exchange of equivalents, and hence on a formal notion of equality that presumes an abstract individual, cannot be solidarity, because this perpetuates precisely the forms of exploitation and domination to which formal bourgeois justice is blind. In the fewer cases where forms of equivalence were surpassed, and uncalculated exchange, or even giving without return, were practiced, as in some neighbourhood assemblies, solidarity health centres, or in collective kitchens, this practice was circumscribed by proletarian dependence upon the wage relation and the so-called ‘real’ economy under crisis, in which the calculation of value was continually reimposed.

LOCAL ANTI-DEVELOPMENT AND ECOLOGICAL STRUGGLES
Local struggles against development projects may at first sight appear not to be related to the crisis and the anti-austerity movements, and to occur in this period contingently. But the fact that two such local struggles of unprecedented intensity took place within this period is not a coincidence. These struggles share the core characteristics of the anti-austerity movements of this period: they are interclass, and, in them, the themes of community and property reappear in full force. These

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152 In particular, the campaigns against drug dealers and drug users in Exarchia led to the formation of ‘Groups for Popular Defence’ (Omádes Laékis Autoámysnas). These groups also actively expel members of Golden Dawn from the area.
two struggles are the movement in Keratea, Attiki (early 2011) against the creation of a new landfill site, and the struggle in Skouries, Chalkidiki (2012 and continuing at the time of writing), against the opening of a goldmine. In both cases, the concerns of the residents were both ecological—concerning the conditions in which local residents would live, the quality of their water, the fate of the area’s woodlands—and economic—in that property values would collapse, the quality of the soil would become unsuitable for agriculture, and, in the case of Skouries, the local tourism industry would be negatively affected.

**Keratea**

The case of Keratea is particularly interesting because its practices of interclass, cross-ideological self-organising, involving blockades, the occupation of spaces, and confrontations with police preceded and anticipated the movement of the squares.

The residents of Keratea have been troubled with the question of waste management since 2001, when the government’s waste management project for the Attica region selected locations near Keratea and Grammatikos as landfill sites. Since then, the project had not got off the ground because of the towns’ legal challenges to the government’s project. The residents’ objections have been that a more technologically advanced and environmentally-friendly waste management project is possible, and that, in the case of Keratea, the chosen location on the hill of Ovriokastro is inappropriate. First, the site is close to a recognised archeological site. The entire region of Lavreotiki is of archeological interest, partly because of the ancient ruins of mining tunnels running underneath the region, dated back to the 5th century BC. These tunnels also pose risks that toxic waters from the landfill could easily find their way to Lavreotiki’s popular sea shores. Second, the Lavreotiki region has been formally recognised as an area of special natural beauty. Third, the landfill site is close to local farmland and houses, which will be subject to compulsory purchase. The farmland partly receives water from a spring on Ovriokastro, and the Mouzaki stream, whose waters come from the hill. The development is expected to deteriorate the quality of local land as well as devalue the properties in the area.

In December 2010, the government outsourced Attica’s waste management from local authorities to private companies whose owners have held powerful positions in the Greek economy. On 11 December 2010, it announced that the new landfill works were authorised to begin. The government had been given an ultimatum by the EU to close down existing unregulated landfills.

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155 FEK B’ 852/03.09.1980.

156 Specifically, the management of the landfill site at Grammatikos was undertaken by Helector S.A., owned by George Mponmpolas (also the owner of a major television channel, MEGA TV, and the high-circulation newspapers, *Ethnos* and *Imerisia*). Helector collaborated in the project with Mesogeos S.A., which contains capitals owned by Spyros Latsis via Eurobank, as well as the shipowning Laskaris Group. Mesogeos then undertook the works at Keratea, via a joint venture with Proet S.A. and Edraco S.A. Gelantali, M., ‘Latsis and Laskaris brothers in the garbage game’ [In Greek], *Eleutherotypia*, 27 February 2011.
fill sites and begin operating the new, more technologically advanced ones by 28 December, or pay a fine.157 Meanwhile, Keratea residents had begun to blockade the local Lavriou avenue to prevent the machinery from reaching the site. In the early hours of 11 December, large numbers of riot police, accompanied by vehicles for the landfill works, attempted to reach Ovriokastro. A large number of residents came out to prevent them, arguing to the prosecutor that private land in the area had not yet been purchased by the state, that the Archaeological Council had not approved the project, and that fresh litigation on the project was pending in the courts. The prosecutor sent the police away, but they returned in the evening. The encounter escalated into severe clashes with the residents, who claimed that riot police attacked them with teargas, trapped and assaulted older persons, including their mayor, and humiliated arrestees by taking their clothes off. They responded by rioting against the police.

The clashes continued in the following days on the highway and in the town of Keratea, and descended into a kind of vendetta between residents and riot police, which lasted 128 days. Police made first-time use of rubber bullets and water cannons in Keratea. According to residents, the riot police was gratuitously violent, threw teargas into their balconies and yards, damaged private cars and other private property, demolished the huts in which they met to organise, and even stole private items. They avenged this by attacking the local police station and burning police officers’ cars. Residents also sabotaged the machinery at the landfill site. Transit through Lavriou avenue was closely policed throughout this period, with residents finding it difficult to access the farmland in which they worked.158 After the first months, police themselves began to voice objections about being asked to carry out such a fruitless and dangerous operation for such a long time.159 Meanwhile, the Lavrio County Court issued repeated decisions to prohibit the continuation of the landfill works, until the outstanding procedures were carried out (compulsory purchase orders; archaeological and other official studies; planning permissions).160 On 18 April 2011, the riot police forces withdrew from the area and no further efforts were made to continue the works, and the machinery and works vehicles were passed on to the control of the local authorities.161 While there has been no attempt to continue the works at the time of writing, the New Democracy-led coalition government did attempt to restart the process in 2013–14.162

Fighting against the landfill and against the police forces appears to have united the residents of Keratea beyond prior political or class-based divisions and age differences, and to have

changed their views about oppositional practice. The town’s unity was evident by the fact that, every time riot police made an unanticipated attempt to break their blockade or to make arrests, the church bells would ring, alerting residents to go and reinforce the blockade. According to the police, more than a thousand combative demonstrators faced them on a daily basis. Those who participated in the fight say that the entire town was up in arms every day, and, through the struggle, they began to meet their neighbours and improve their relationships with each other. Most of the actions defending Ovriokastro were not pre-organised, but were decided and enacted by small groups on the spot, and this was accepted as an effective aspect of the movement. Rioting also became an accepted practice, among older residents as well, justified by what they saw as wanton police violence.

Residents were particularly outraged by the hostility with which television channels portrayed their struggle. One TV presenter even claimed that the rioting at Keratea was ‘led by a bunch of Albanians’, a comment that was both racist and malicious in its attempt to stir racist sentiment among Keratea residents and against the movement. Such kind of ‘news’ were cultivated by the police authorities, who leaked to the media the suggestion that in the movement there were ‘Albanians’ who could ‘smuggle rockets’ from the neighbouring country. Indeed, many Keratea residents were of Albanian descent, but their background did not stand out in the movement because of their background. The government’s attempt to use the mainstream nationalism of movements to its advantage by cultivating racism via the media, and the broader role of mainstream television channels as opposition to movements, would later provoke a generalised anger against media and journalists, which later became particularly evident in the squares movement.

The movement in Keratea, indeed, had several common elements with the squares movement, and so it should be seen as part of similar sociopolitical or ideological trends, despite the fact that its aims were local. It could even be seen as a precursor, and perhaps one of the inspirations, of the squares movement, given that opposition to the memorandum and to austerity was already building up, and Keratea residents, understanding themselves as part of such opposition, often wondered what would happen if practices like theirs invaded the centre of Athens. This self-understanding of being part of a broader, as-yet undeveloped, movement was evident in the use of anti-IMF slogans and Keratea residents’ understanding of their local problem as the result of the country being under IMF control. Notions that politicians were self-interested and corrupt, favouring corporate interests, were also prevalent in Keratea, as in the squares, although in the latter the focus was on banks. These two points of reprobation, political corruption and ‘betrayal’,

163 Ibid.
165 Lambropoulos, B. G. ‘ΙΕΛ.ΑΣ. φοβάται... vomvardismó stín Keratéa’ [Greek Police fears … bombardment at Keratea]. To Vima, 23 March 2011.
166 Katrios et al., 128 Days.
167 Katrios et al., 128 Days.
were mainstream responses to the crisis of citizenship, which deepened as the restructuring progressed.\textsuperscript{168}

In terms of its composition, this was an interclass movement, given the universal ecological impact on the area and the wide spread of property ownership in smaller towns. The formation of political identity on the basis of locality was still not unique to the case of Keratea. The local neighbourhood assemblies that sprung out of the similarly interclass squares movement also attempted to build unity on the basis of locality, although in Keratea this local identity was particularly strong. Locality suggests not only the defence of private property but also of common territory, and this was a struggle focused on the occupation and defence of one. Similar to the way in which the squares movement was territorialised as a space for the movement, Ovriokastro was also turned into a space where the movement could meet and organise, a space to be defended not only for its qualities but also for its functions. In terms of their combative practices, like the residents of Keratea, a large section of participants in the squares movement were drawn into forms of street-fighting that were novel to them. Over this period, increasingly violent practices of riot were legitimised within movements, when back in December 2008 such practices were limited to minorities of mostly young people. In Keratea’s movement the broadening appeal of such practices became evident for the first time.

Overall, the movement’s discourse and practices were unlike the traditional practices of either the left-wing or the right-wing traditions in the country, but a particular configuration of right-wing and leftwing discourses, combined with unprecedentedly combative street practices, and spontaneous, decentralised organising. The movement in Keratea achieved its aims—even if its victory could turn out to be temporary—unlike the other struggles of this period, perhaps not so much because of its characteristics common to this period, because of the support it received from the local authorities of Lavreotiki.

Similar to the movements that followed it, the struggle in Keratea criticised the government and acted combatively against the state’s disciplinary apparatus often breaking the state’s laws. Yet it did not question the state but sought the recognition of its demands by the state. The state’s radical rejection of these demands led it to escalate its practices. This escalation entailed the destruction of property, in the name of defending ‘smaller’ property and what was considered to be collective territory. The movement’s discourse was not purely anti-capitalist, but against ‘bigger’ capitals, international institutions, and their power to affect government decisions, which they saw as having a disastrous impact on ‘small’ property and ‘ordinary citizens’. In these respects, the movement in Keratea was also limited, like many of the movements that followed it, by producing a community of citizens grounded in property relations.

\textsuperscript{168} Ibid. See also Chapter V.
Skouries

Like Keratea, the movement in Skouries was a locally-based territorial struggle against a development project—a goldmine—that would affect the ecology of the local area, and by extension local private property and agricultural, recreational or touristic uses of the land. Similar to Keratea, local residents’ acts of sabotage were followed by police invasions into Ierissos, and arrests of participants in the movement. The struggle in Skouries was not as successful, considering that the goldmine has begun works and has already destroyed a large area of woodlands, even though locals continue to protest at the time of writing.

Skouries is the location of a contested open-pit and underground goldmine on mount Kakkavos, on the north-east of the Chalkidiki peninsula (Municipality of Aristotelis) in Northern Greece, near the coastal towns (and summer resorts, given their beautiful beaches) of Stratoni and Ierissos. The area already hosts two other mines, also owned by Hellas Gold since 2003,169 when the state transferred the assets to the company. This transfer has been a significant point of criticism, given that it took place without economic assessment of the assets’ value or an open competition process, and relieved Hellas Gold of taxation and royalties to the state. On 23 February 2011, the European Commission decided that Hellas Gold ought to repay the Greek state €15 million in illegal state subsidies,170 which have not been paid back.171 Beyond the costs to the state of this transfer, residents of the region who oppose the mine are also concerned by the environmental impact of the project. The goldmine in Skouries is set to be the largest of the three mines, involving deforestation of an area larger than 2.5 square kilometres, and open pit mining of 24,000 tons per day.172 The impact of existing mines has already been visible, as the Stratoni coast has often become bright orange with heavy mineral deposits from the mining, and researchers from the Greek Centre for Marine Research have claimed that much of marine life has disappeared from the Stratoni coast.173 Campaigners, having collected a series of critical reports from sympathetic Greek scientists and metallurgy specialists, criticise Hellas Gold’s Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for proposing a metallurgical method that is not recommended on soil composition with high percentages of Arsenic, as is the case in Skouries.174 They also claim the EIA underestimates the scale of

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169 Hellas Gold was owned by George Mpompolas’ Aktor S.A., until it was transferred to the Canadian El Dorado Gold, in exchange for a significant proportion of shares in El Dorado Gold. This means that, in this case too, the interests of major media outlets were also implicated (see previous footnote on the companies that undertook landfill works in Keratea). Vasilis Georgas, ‘Se Kanados ólos o ellínikós chrysós’ [All of Hellenic Gold passed on to Canadians], Eleutherotypia, 20 December 2011.


171 ‘Ófanta ta 15 ekat. pou chrístasthe tis “Ellínikós Chrysós” sto krátos’ [The €15 mil. “Hellas Gold” owes to the state are missing], I Avgi, 10 July 2013.


173 Sakis Apostolakis, “Γαλάζια Σήμα” στη νεκρή θάλασσα του Στρατόνιου’ [“Blue Flag” given to the dead sea of Stratoni], Eleutherotypia, 24 June 2014.

deforestation that will be needed, the depletion and pollution of water resources on Kakkavos mountain, the amount of mineral dust (Arsenic) that will be unleashed to the atmosphere, and the impact on the soil and ecosystems. These impacts, they fear, will destroy local tourism and agriculture. The impact on water resources is a special cause of worry, since the company plans to deposit mining effluent into two water streams that pass through Skouries. These two streams end in the Kryonerio-Kampos basin, which supplies water to all the settlements in the southern Aristotelis region.

Although residents in the region have opposed mining for decades, the crisis deepened the conflict, as the governments over 2011–2014 promoted mining as a mode of ‘development’ that could help the country out of the crisis. Over this period, the mine at Skouries was repeatedly stopped from beginning works by local legal campaigns against Hellas Gold’s rights to exploit the region. When the company was finally given permission to begin works in 2012, demonstrations and blockades at Skouries escalated, culminating into clashes with police forces, and leading to police violence and several arrests with the charge of ‘revolt against the state’. The escalation of mobilisations in Skouries coincided with a period of heavier state policing, as we will see in Chapter V, which strongly impacted on movement participants.

On 17 February 2013, 40 masked persons broke into the mining site and set fire to containers, generators, and other machinery belonging to Hellas Gold. Five days before this incident, the Forest Inspectorate had approved the deforestation of an area of 1,754 square kilometres. The movement had declared in an article that this was a casus belli against the mining works. According to campaigners, some of the constructions that were destroyed by the sabotage act had been illegally erected. After the attacks there was heavy police presence in Ierissos and Megali Panagia, particularly around the meeting places of the anti-goldmine campaign. Arrests targeting the campaign in most local towns were carried out repeatedly over the following months, forcing arrestses

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175 Theochára Zágkas et al., ‘Οι επιπτώσεις του φυσικού περιβάλλον από τη λειτουργία μεταλλεύματος (exóryxís chrysoú) stis Skouriás Chalkidikís’ [On the environmental impact of the operation of gold mines in Skouries, Chalkidiki], Report by the Scientific Committee of Teaching and Research Staff (Thessaloniki: Faculty of Forestry and Natural Environment, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 8 July 2013), http://dasologoi.gr/images/users/admin/sko13.pdf.


180 Tolis Papageorgiou, ‘Αγνός gia tí zoi i to thánaít. Ta psémnata telefísan. Símera sympatriotés, na pe-táxoume apó to tópo mas tin Eldorado Gold kai to Mpompola’ [Fighting for life or death. Lies are over. Today, compatriots, let’s throw Eldorado Gold and Mpompolas out of our land], Hellenic Mining Watch, 11 February 2013.

181 ‘Synechzetai to órgio tón paramonión apó tin Ellínikos Chrysos sto dásos tón Skourián, tóra ypr tón epípleís tou k. Dédna’ [Hellenic Gold continues the orgy of illegalities in the Skouries forest, now under the supervision of Mr. Dendias], Hellenic Mining Watch, 22 February 2013.
to provide DNA evidence. Even high-school students were arrested to testify, and blog writers were arrested for ‘inciting’ the sabotage.\textsuperscript{182} By 27 February, over 50 arrests had taken place. Residents demonstrated daily outside police stations, and motorised demonstrations against police persecution from one town to another were organised.\textsuperscript{183}

On 7 March 2013, large numbers of riot police surrounded Ierissos, blocking the two entries to the town. The riot police had been sent to carry out arrests in the town. Six extra police squads were also sent to counter protesters who tried to stop the riot squads from entering the town. They tried to disperse protesters with teargas, but some of it was thrown into a local school, causing breathing problems to school children. Four arrests were eventually carried out, but only two of these persons were indicted, for misdemeanours unrelated to the sabotage at Skouries.\textsuperscript{184} In response, one of the largest-ever demonstrations against gold mining took place in Thessaloniki on 11 March, with participation assessed to be over 15,000—a large number for any kind of demonstration in the northern city.\textsuperscript{185} On 10 April 2013, protesters attacked the Ierissos Police station, taking out objects and setting them on fire. At 3am, riot police raided the homes of two campaigners and arrested them. Ierissos residents, with church bells ringing like in Keratea, came out to protest outside the police station, and as it was empty, they broke into it and caused damages. Protests followed through the day in Polygyros and Thessaloniki.\textsuperscript{186} Yet the strength of the campaign did not pay off. Over 2013–14, Hellas Gold carried out the deforestation of Skouries, amid protests which continue at the time of writing.

What is special about Skouries as a movement in the crisis is that it has opposed a capitalist investment, opening the question of the meaning of ‘development’. What was presented as a universal good—increased economic activity and employment, advanced industry—was questioned from the perspective of the land’s prior condition and use. Maintaining the woodlands was not a purely ecological demand; it also entailed maintaining the value and economic productiveness of the land that local residents owned. Further, it was clear that the profits from this exploitation of the land through gold extraction would not benefit the local town: Hellas Gold made no promises of any other form of social investment beyond offering jobs to a proportion of the local residents. On one hand, then, the movement was a criticism of the privatisation of land; the damage of woodlands, waters, and coasts as essential to biodiversity and recreation; and the fact that there was no significant benefit to residents to counterbalance such damage. On the other hand, this was also a defence of smaller private property and business, its value, and its worth as a source of subsistence.

\textsuperscript{183} Struggle Committees of Chalkidiki and Strymonikos Gulf, ‘Viázetai i alitheia, viázetai o tópos kai i zóî mas’ [The truth is violated, our region and our lives are violated], Coordinating Committee of Associations of Stagira-Akanthos Against Gold Mining, 20 February 2013.
\textsuperscript{184} Dina Batzia, ““Empõlemi zôni” i Ierissos” [War zone’ in Ierissos], ELEFTHEROTYPHIA, 7 March 2013.
\textsuperscript{185} Sakis Apostolakis. ‘Poreía - stathmóς stí Thessaloníki katá tou chrysoû’ [Milestone demonstration in Thessaloniki against gold], ELEFTHEROTYPHIA, 11 March 2013.
\textsuperscript{186} ‘Polemos stín Ierissós: Eivolti tôn MAT se spíti stín Ierissós. Dýo syllápsis gia tìn epitèshe stis Skourió̂s’ [War in Ierissos: Riot police raid homes. Two arrests for the Skouries attack], IEFIMERIDA, 10 April 2013, http://www.iefimerida.gr/.
Crucially, the conflict was from the very beginning not only between the region’s residents and Hellas Gold, but also between residents themselves. While residents of Ierissos, Nea Roda, Ouranoupoli, and Ammouliani have been mostly against the goldmine, the residents of Stratoni, Stageira, Paleochori, and Neochori, from which most goldmine employees have been recruited, have been in favour. The residents of Megali Panagia have been divided in half.\(^{187}\) Mine workers and anti-mine campaigners have engaged in a vicious feud, that has divided towns and communities in the area.\(^ {188}\) Demonstrations and blockades at Skouries against the mine have invited frequent counter-demonstrations by Hellas Gold employees, which have often escalated into clashes,\(^ {189}\) and scuffles have broken out in the towns’ cafés.\(^ {190}\) The active supporters of the mine argue in favour of ‘development’ and the ‘right to work’, accusing anti-mine campaigners and ‘hypocritical ecologists’ of exaggerating the damages caused by mining and cultivating unfounded fears.\(^ {191}\) According to residents who oppose the mine and who had participated in or are familiar with previous campaigns against mining in the region, this conflict is not merely based on a difference of opinions and interests, but the mining companies have strategically recruited staff in order to split communities. Over the period 1989–2001, the regional alliances in relation to mining were continually reconfigured, depending on the mining companies’ recruitment strategies and the location of the mines, so much so that villages whose majority was against mining on previous occasions support the mining this time, and vice versa.\(^ {192}\)

To be sure, the net number of new jobs to be created by the company has been disputed, considering the predicted loss of jobs and incomes in tourism and agriculture. By July 2013, it was announced that 3,025 workers would be hired by Hellas Gold via an EU and state-funded training programme, and, out of those, only 866 would receive contracts lasting a minimum of four months. The latter would continue to be paid partially via state funding.\(^ {193}\) So much, then, for the development’s supposed contribution to the overcoming of the sovereign debt crisis. Not only was the mine sold for an amount detrimental to the state budget, not only would taxes not be collected, but even the workers’ wages would be paid for by the state, and workers would not even get permanent contracts. Despite this, the Labour Centre of Chalkidiki (local branch of GSEE) has also openly supported Hellas Gold, bringing legal action in its favour when the Aristotelis Regional Planning

\(^{187}\) Alexandra Tzavella, ‘Dekaefá chiλiómetra chοúrizoun dýo kósmous stí Chalkidikí’ [Seventeen kilometres divide two worlds in Chalkidiki], Eleutherotypía, 6 July 2013.

\(^{188}\) For example, the members of an initiative that opposes the mines at Megali Panagia has accused the mine employees of drunkenly defacing anti-mine materials and beating two women who were part of the campaign. Prótovoula Enántia stis Vlaktikóftes, ‘Ótan o ánthròpos chásei tìn axióprépeiá tou chrísmí mopoiéi álla mása’ [When people lose their dignity they use other means], Prótovoula Enántia stis Vlaktikóftes, 1 July 2012 http://proevla.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/.

\(^{189}\) ‘Entásí se díamartíría katoíkíon enántía sta metalléa stis Skouriés’ [Tension at protest by residents against Skouries mine], TVXS, 20 March 2012.

\(^{190}\) Eleutherotypía, 6/7/2013.

\(^{191}\) Prótovoula Políton Dímou Aristotéli, ‘Gia poia “oikologia” kai poious “oikologous” milame stí VA Chalkidikí?’ [What ‘ecology’ and ‘ecologists’ are we talking about in NE Chalkidiki?], Prótovoula Políton Dímou Aristotéli, 23 December 2013, http://politesaristoteli.blogspot.co.uk/2013/12/.

\(^{192}\) Ntòpios ex’ apostáséov, ‘Sto velúdino chrysórycheio tís VA Chalkidikí: I anáptyxi, o koinóítites, Í alllegýi’ [Inside NE Chalkidiki’s velvet goldmine: Development, struggles, solidarity], I Sjuka, no. 5 (2013).

\(^{193}\) Marios Aravantinos, ‘Ellínikes Chrysós: Théseis ergasías me xéna “kóllva”’ [Hellas Gold: Job creation with borrowed plumes], To Konti Tis Pandoras, 8 July 2013, http://www.koutipandoras.gr/.
Authority ordered the company to cease construction in Skouries because it had no planning permission.\textsuperscript{194} Government ministers and MPs, as well as mainstream media, which, unsurprisingly, supported the mine, have promoted this particular workers’ campaign—the only workers’ campaign they have promoted through this entire period—in order to present the anti-mining campaign as minoritarian.\textsuperscript{195}

The internal community conflict around mining is important in the context of crisis for bringing to the surface and rendering problematic the politics of workers’ identity and its relationship to capital, when workers are integrated as surplus by the wage relation. The miners—previously a symbol of the traditional working class—actively supported the goldmine, the central state authorities and the police, in order to save their jobs, often helping out in policing the movement. They also often violently clashed with the anti-goldmine campaign, and were frequently invited to appear in the media to support the government’s policy. Interestingly, in response to criticism against the Labour Centre of Chalkidiki for bringing legal action in support of Hellas Gold, a defender of this action showed off his communist credentials: ‘Lenin, writing in 1899, about the development of capitalism in Russia, argued that “on this particular matter, the latter (the interests of labour) coincide with the interests of big industrial capital”.’\textsuperscript{196} It is this precise coincidence that comes to the surface as the inevitable element of workers’ identity at a time of crisis, revealing the politics of work (secure integration into the wage relation) as dependent upon the continuation of exploitation and all other forms of damage that this might entail. The miners’ movement in Chalkidiki is a living example of the fact that to affirm ‘labour’, in these circumstances of crisis, is to affirm a category of capital.

Doing so, however, is far from being as simple as making a political ‘choice’. As discussed previously, the politics of subsistence in the crisis mystifies the fact that ‘subsistence’ can have opposing meanings not only for different parties, but it can be contradictory within the same party. For the miners, on one hand, having a job is essential in order to buy the means to live; on the other hand, perhaps living on polluted land and breathing polluted air will not exactly improve their life expectancy. ‘Choosing’ a precarious job and, at the same time, defending capitalist ‘development’, ignoring the destructive effects such development can have, is founded on a condition where having a job and a wage at all is experienced as a privilege of such proportions that it is worth allowing the destruction of the physical environment on which one’s life depends. Thus, miners face two equally undesirable options: either economic difficulty because of unemployment, or health and economic difficulty because of the destruction of the resources for living. As will also

\textsuperscript{194} ‘Prosfygi sto StE apó tin Ellinikós Chrysós kai to Ergatikó Kéntro Chalkidíkis gia tin diakopi tôn kataskeuastikóin ergasióin’ [Action brought to the State Council by Hellas Gold and the Labour Centre of Chalkidiki regarding the interruption of construction activities], Hellenic Mining Watch, 26 June 2013, http://antigoldgr.org/blog/2013/06/26/.

\textsuperscript{195} The ND MP Adonis Georgiadis has been particularly supporting of mine workers’ mobilisations. ‘Sygkentrósi yper ton metallérfi sti Chalkidiki’ [Demonstration in favour of the mines in Chalkidiki], Voria, 2 March 2013, http://www.voria.gr.

\textsuperscript{196} My translation of both comment and quotation: Vladimir, ‘Thoughts on “Prosfygi sto StE apó tin Ellinikós Chrysós”’, Blog comment, Hellenic Mining Watch, 27 June 2013, http://antigoldgr.org/blog/2013/06/26/.
be discussed in Chapter V, the depth of proletarian dependence on its relation to capital can translate into support for capital, instead of opposition to exploitation—a condition taken advantage of by Golden Dawn in its attempt to create its own pro-employer labour unions.

Significantly, there was also a gendered dimension to this conflict: while the miners’ campaign in support of the mine has been male dominated, many of the anti-mine protests were largely carried out by women, who were disproportionately represented in the movement. If the reasons for this are not simply to be taken as an essential connection between femininity and nature, one ought to ask how women’s sense of themselves, their social roles and their position in the division of labour in the affected Chalkidiki communities are linked to this struggle. An interview with women from the movement, which was published in the cooperative newspaper *I Efimerida Ton Syntaktkon* alongside an open letter inviting other other women to get involved, is revealing.197 In this interview, women from Ierissos presented their role in the movement, particularly after multiple arrests started taking place, as that of providing emotional support to their children, parents, and partners who suffered stress from the repeat arrests and riot police forays into the town. The close relationships between these women in the small community of Ierissos meant that they all shared that suffering. They campaigned for the release of arrestees and against what they saw as a lack of justice and the violation of the right to the presumption of innocence. The reasons they quoted for fighting against the mine were the familiar ones—pollution of the air and land, the destruction of agriculture, the ‘selling out’ of state assets—but with emphasis on their social role of caring for others, and particularly their children. They also expressed concerns regarding the social integration of children after their frightening experiences with police. The ‘Women’s Open Letter’ described their encounters with the police and its methods of crowd control (teargas, beatings, arrests; interrogations; invasions into houses and schools). Still, it emphasised their worries about the authorities beating, arresting, and imprisoning their ‘grandsons, sons, fathers, and brothers’. Strategically using the emotive weight and drama of the figure of the ‘mother’ in Greek culture, their letter attempted to appeal to the feelings and gain the solidarity of other women in the country as carers of men and children.

Another interview with women from Ierissos shows that not only did they present themselves in this way, but that, through the movement, they practiced a sort of collective responsibility for the struggle, both through women’s protest marches in Skouries, where they had to face police repression, but also by sharing everyday tasks of childcare, cooking, cleaning, and other types of household maintenance: ‘When there is a mobilisation and we have to be away, groups are organised for cooking and collective baby sitting. We no longer worry what will happen to our children.’

“We carry out lots of tasks together: writing collective texts, organising actions. The first serious collective act of solidarity we did was in 2010: Stratoni had been flooded (n.b. the mine workers’ village, where El Dorado is based) and we cleaned houses and cooked collectively.”198 Despite the

198 Dina Daskalopoulou, ‘Ierissos: To chório pou émathe na morízetai ta pánta’ [The village that has learned to share everything], *I Efimerida Ton Syntaktkon*, 28 April 2013.
fact that most of these are typical gendered tasks, these women still felt that something had changed in their social role through the struggle, because they were now engaging in a public affair instead of only taking care of private affairs in the home. They were out in the public sphere, fighting politically and through their street actions: ‘In this struggle our very role as women has changed. Previously we were just women of the household; now we have transformed into guerrillas.’

Women’s self-definition, or at least their self-presentation, in these interviews and Open Letter did not challenge cultural norms—what Sherry Ortner has described as the norm of women’s ‘intermediate’ status between nature and culture—but instead reinforced and utilised them to justify the value of their struggle to other women, who were presumed to also identify with these norms. The women of the struggle themselves identified with their position as ‘mediators’ between nature and culture through their naturalised caring roles: socialising children, nurturing and giving voice to emotions, and ensuring that the basic natural resources (air, land) are there for the future generation. But beyond explaining women’s concerns as a ‘connection’ to the wildness of nature and as a criticism of the destructive calculating reason of capitalist development, women’s arguments proposed an alternative rationality of care, of which they presented themselves as the guards, and which they promoted into the public sphere, beyond their traditional confinement in the privacy of a household. It is then through their self-identification as carers, and as the guardians of the physical and emotional well-being of the persons under their care, that women tended to position themselves publicly against the mine. To a notion of proletarian reproduction through the wage and the ability to purchase the means to live, they opposed a notion of social reproduction that prioritised a more immediate concern with the body and emotions. Yet, in affirming the side of ‘care’ in this opposition, women attached it to themselves as a natural responsibility, instead of insisting on its generalisation and the denaturalisation of its gendered character.

Moreover, the conflict over Skouries was not really one between capitalist reproduction and a non-capitalist mode of living that it attempted to subsume. The property relationship of locals to the land is precisely the dimension that would prohibit any depiction of the movement in Skouries as one between ‘local communities’ on one hand and ‘capital’ on the other. At the economic level, it could be described as a conflict between the interests of small property and small capitals (small agribusiness; small businesses dependent on tourism and hospitality) one hand, and those of ‘large’ capital on the other, together with the workers dependent on it. Yet such an economic description of the conflict would still be missing the dimension of access to the physical resources of life, such as air and water. The picture would also be incomplete without mentioning the dimension of a certain attachment to this region of Chalkidiki as a place for what is called its ‘beauty’, experienced by its residents and by regular visitors from the broader area of Northern

201 Ibid.
Greece. Admittedly, the theoretical tools required to analyse this aesthetic and emotional aspect of the conflict are not sufficiently developed here, and would require a further exploration of the links between identity, a sense of place and the sensual experience of the non-human-made (but always human-affected) world.

THE MOVEMENTS’ ‘OTHER’: IMMIGRANTS’ STRUGGLES AND ANTI-FASCISM

Subjects are constituted through exclusion, that is, through the creation of a domain of deauthorized subjects, presubjects, figures of abjection, populations erased from view.202

As we have seen, the dominant subject invoked in the interclass moments of this period’s movements was that of the politically independent, active national citizen. This was the case partly because the restructuring appeared as an externally-initiated punishment, and partly because it did not only affect workers but also small businesses. The associated citizenist discourse had leftwing and rightwing tendencies, both of which befitted the interclass composition of the movements. These two oppositional tendencies, both of which were characterised by different types of nationalism, clashed over the ‘problem of immigration’, which emerged provocatively with Golden Dawn’s (GD) electoral breakthrough in May-June 2012 (discussed more extensively in Chapter V). But while the left (including a significant section of the anarchist/antiauthoritarian milieu) offered solidarity to immigrants and fought against GD, its priorities changed after the arrests of GD’s leadership in Autumn 2013. This development revealed that the anti-fascist left’s priority had been the political defeat of far-right nationalism and its replacement by a leftwing anti-imperialist one, while the issues of immigrants, which were not at all resolved by the arrests, had been secondary. Leftwing solidarity with immigrants already treated them as external to ‘the movement’ anyhow. National citizenship was never questioned as the unspoken, naturalised requirement for belonging.

This was evidenced in the separation between an overwhelmingly Greek anti-fascist movement, and groups and communities of immigrants, with whom the movement built inconsistent relationships. The latter carried out independent struggles with which anti-fascists expressed solidarity while, most of the time, maintaining a distance. Only in rare cases did the two participate in a common struggle. In this section I will examine immigrants’ struggles in this period and their separateness from and marginalisation by the movements against the restructuring, and sometimes even the anti-fascist movement that grew after the 2012 elections. This separateness and marginalisation of immigrants’ struggles and voices was symptomatic of the unquestioned national essence implicit in the forms of political and social identification characteristic of both anti-Memorandum and anti-fascist discourse. As we will see more analytically in Chapter V, much of the anti-fascist discourse in

this period very often evoked the *patriotic* anti-fascism of the civil war, as opposed to questioning the givenness of Greek unity. In effect, the fight between fascism and anti-fascism frequently presented itself as a fight between two forms of nationalism. Anti-fascist nationalism advocated the rights of migrants, while reproducing their otherness through its political practice.

It must be said, before even beginning to discuss immigrants’ struggles, that the subject of the ‘immigrant’ is not a unitary one, but refers to a diverse category. We are talking, first of all, about immigrants who entered Greece as proletarians, looking for work or escaping war or persecution. Within that category, the different immigration waves since the 1990s should be distinguished. For example, the experience and status of Albanians and other immigrants from Eastern Europe who have managed to integrate economically and culturally to an important degree is very different from that of more recent immigrants, who also happen to not be European. Having said that, the experience of African and Asian immigrants is also very different from that of Albanians because racialisation based on their physical appearance alone puts them in a lower social position automatically.

Immigrants’ struggles have been, unsurprisingly, the least visible out of all of the struggles discussed here, both because they did not receive the same degree of broad support and publicity, and because immigrants without a legal status prefer to keep a low key to avoid coming into confrontation with the police. Many confrontations then have taken place not because immigrants sought them, but because, especially in the crisis, they became the number one police targets, usually on the mere basis of their appearance (see Chapter V). The great majority of actions by immigrants have been in response to racist police abuse, street violence, and murders, but there have also been strikes to demand unpaid wages. They have involved demonstrations, internment camp uprisings, labour strikes, and hunger strikes.

The first immigrant struggle of this period, and one of the most significant and most publicised, was the hunger strike by 300 immigrants from January to March 2011 demanding legal permits to stay in the country. The first 250 North African immigrants, who came mostly from Crete, approached parties of the left for help to obtain a space for their hunger strike. The supporters proposed the occupation of a space at the Athens Law School. As soon as the occupation and hunger strike began, the racism of the media response defied expectations, foreshadowing the escalation of racism that was to be promoted by governments and media through this period (see Chapter V). Hunger strikers were presented, particularly by right-wing students, government politicians and mainstream media, as indigents who brought dirt and disease, ruining the reputation of

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203 The immigrants also demanded ‘that residence permits are no longer connected to work credits; that all of those who lost their permits for the above reason are re-legalised; the vindication of everyone whose application was rejected in 2005, after their application had originally been accepted and after they had been forced to pay thousands of euros each; the establishment of a permanent and open procedure for complete legalisation, which will process applications continually; an end to the criminalisation of our comrades in solidarity with us, who have been treated as suspects of criminal acts by the authorities’. ‘Hunger strikers’ assembly decision: 21/02’, *Anoichti Prítovoulia Allíkogeías stous 300 Metanástes Apergoús Peínas*, 22 February 2011, https://allilmap.wordpress.com/2011/02/22/.

204 Nikos Mastoras & Stelios Vradelis, ‘Mazi k apergía peínas apó 300 paránomous metanástes’ [Mass hunger strike by 300 illegal immigrants], *Ta Néa*, 25 January 2011.
the Law School and turning it into a ‘bomb that threatens public hygiene and security’. The foremost ‘problem’ the media and government politicians identified was the fact that the hunger strike was housed in the Law School, and they insisted on the ‘absurdity’ of the immigrants’ demands. Within four days, after forcing the university deanery to close down the Law School and lift the university asylum (which was then still in force), the government issued an ultimatum that the police would invade the university unless the hunger strikers were rehoused. This unyielding counter-attack on the occupation and its left mediation, which was accused of ‘politically exploiting humanism’, was seen as a sign of the escalation of policing and state repression that was to come.

Still, after the rehousing, government politicians were still concerned by the fact that the new location was in the centre of Athens, and not in its southern outskirts, which was their original intention. They feared that the hunger strikers’ presence in the centre might allow ‘various forces that are invested in social conflict to “cross ways”’. Despite the government’s insistence on a hard line against ‘illegals’, fifty more immigrants began a hunger strike in Thessaloniki on 14 February. After 44 days of hunger strike, and after several strikers had been hospitalised, the relevant ministers agreed to discuss with the strikers. Eventually, the hunger strikers were given legal permits to remain, which included the right to travel to their country of origin as well as the right to work. The ministers also agreed to reduce from 12 to 8 the number of years required to achieve legal status, as well as reduce the number of national insurance contributions required to renew the permits and to gain access to the health service. However, this did not last. Over the following years, the stickers were involved in continual wrangles with bureaucracy, and organised street protests to have this agreement implemented. Most urgent, for them, was that work permits had not been given, considering they had also lost their jobs as a result of participating in the strike. In 2014, the new minister of public order, Nikos Dendias, put an end to the renewal of the 6-monthly renewable permits granted to some of the hunger strikers. They were subsequently charged with

205 “Kataulismós lathrometanáston i Nomíki” [The Law School has become a camp for illegals], To Êthnos, 25 January 2011.
206 Dóra Antóniou, ‘Sygktousí me fónto tì Nomíki’ [Conflict with the Law School as backdrop], Kathimerini, 26 January 2011.
208 Apostolos Lakasas, ‘O anthropismós, vorá stín politikí ekmetálleusí’ [Humanism, prey to political exploitation], Kathimerini, 25 January 2011.
209 Autonome Antifa, ‘Tésseris méres pou den (thléi na) tís thymáta kanénas’ [Four days nobody (wants to) remember], Autonome Antifa, no. 22 (2011): 6–7.
210 Ibid.
211 Ibid.
212 ‘Message by the assembly of fifty hunger strikers in Thessaloniki to the Mayor and the members of the City Council’, Anoichti Prítovolía Alliléggiís stous 300 Metanástes Apergoús Peínas, 14 February 2011, https://allilmap.wordpress.com/2011/02/14/.
illegally staying in the country since the start date of their permits (i.e. for 3 years), and were convicted to 4 months imprisonment and €1,500 fines each.\textsuperscript{215}

Despite this eventual defeat, this was a significant step forward for immigrants in Greece, who, for the first time, initiated and carried through a major struggle, placing their issues centre-stage of a racist political scene. The hunger strike, according to the migrants, was used as a tactic of last resort, after the failure of other forms of protest.\textsuperscript{216} They directly addressed the state, which was seen as the only authority able to solve the problem of clandestinity and continual police persecution realistically. Yet, the distance between the immigrants and their politically-motivated supporters became clear even in this relatively successful collaboration between them. The political mediation of the struggle by the left alienated anarchist/anti-authoritarian supporters, who were against the negotiations around rehousing and wanted instead to fight for the defence of the university asylum.\textsuperscript{217} Conversely, left supporters viewed anti-authoritarian supporters as disruptive. Both sides, however, while contributing practically to the struggle, appear to have been more focused on their groups’ and organisations’ political objectives than on the practical and social benefits that this struggle would entail for immigrants.

This stance can be seen even in a text that is self-critical about the tendency of the struggle’s supporters to prioritise questions of ideology and consciousness and their failure to build lasting social bonds with immigrants.\textsuperscript{218} Despite this critique, the author argues that the Law School was a wrong choice of location because it had been clear that it would entail another university asylum violation. He also insists that the method of hunger strike was inappropriate, because the state was only pressurised by it on the basis of the humanitarian logic of international human rights laws and institutions, as well as because it signalled to other immigrants that they can only achieve anything by risking their very lives.\textsuperscript{219} While this criticism of the hunger strike is strictly true, it conveys insufficient consideration for the situation of immigrants in Greece. For a population that is treated as ‘surplus’, that is casually dehumanised, that is talked of as a ‘threat to hygiene’, and is very frequently physically abused by the police (see also Chapter V), there are probably few alternative ways of demanding things that Greek citizens take for granted. The degree of violence they face means that the hunger strike may actually be a safer form of struggle for them than exposing themselves to riot police in the street. The assumption that 300 people had an easier option of struggle, but that they gratuitously chose to risk their lives, in order to evoke sympathy, is, perhaps, itself the result of the already-identified paucity of meaningful social bonds between immigrants and Greek political groups of the left and anarchist scenes.

\textsuperscript{216} ‘Απο τη συνέντευξη τύπου’, 26 January 2012.
\textsuperscript{217} Κύκλος Φότιας, ‘Αλλλεγγία στον αγώνα των 300 μεταναστών-εργατών απεργών πεινας’ [Solidarity to the struggle of the 300 migrant workers hunger strikers], Μαύρι Σίμαλα, no. 59 (May 2011).
\textsuperscript{218} Συμεόν Βατάλος, ‘Για την απεργία πεινας των μεταναστών…’ [On the immigrants’ hunger strike], SKYA, 10 May 2011, http://skya.espiv.net/2011/05/10/.
\textsuperscript{219} Ibid.
It should not be surprising that the racist reduction of immigrants to the status of abject dirt has been, as we will see, repeatedly responded to with a form of struggle that tries to reaffirm the immigrants’ humanity. The hunger strike is a provocation to the witness’s sense of guilt and the state’s responsibility to keep protesters and prisoners alive. It is a way to disrupt the received exclusionary logic of citizens’ rights and citizens’ politics that the left and anarchist scenes themselves have only partially and occasionally questioned, because their members have practically never needed to do so. The location of the hunger strike in the Law School also questioned the integrity of the university asylum as the privilege of a national citizen. Here were non-citizens, persons whose land of birth is used as an excuse to devalue their lives and labour-power, demanding the right to be treated as ones, and to be provided with a space to continue their struggle. The state’s agreement to negotiate, however mediately, with persons that it previously treated as a ‘threat to public hygiene’—that is, as subjectless bodies—did question the imposition of invisibility and voicelessness on migrants without papers, despite the fact that the ministers’ promises later proved to have been false. Few of the texts written in the aftermath of this struggle partially recognised these achievements.220

A few months after the hunger strike of the 300, a greater division, that between the experience of immigrants and that of ‘indignant’ citizens would become more obvious. The squares movement began on 25 May 2011, only a few days after a four-day anti-immigrant pogrom was orchestrated by GD in the centre of Athens, to avenge the mugging and murder of a Greek man by, according to the police, three immigrants. The pogrom resulted in 25 hospitalisations and culminated in the murder of a young Bangladeshi man, Alim Abdul Manan.221 However, the incident was only mentioned by small minorities in the assemblies that took place at Syntagma square, which was filled with Greek flags. It seemed that the issue of immigration was controversial, and so the pogrom was not treated as a priority. It was perhaps, then, even less surprising that immigrant street sellers were driven out of the square by some members of the assemblies and some of the occupiers (see section on the squares movement).

After the electoral ascent of GD in 2012, which will be analysed in more detail in the next chapter, the nationalism of this period began to manifest more openly in racist attacks and murders, extreme exploitation of migrants with the use of GD to police any potential protest, heavier police repression, and increasingly long-term incarceration of immigrants in camps where they also suffered abuses (see Chapter V for more detail). To these abuses there was a response by immigrants sometimes through participation in riots, sometimes at the grassroots level, and sometimes at a more organised level, often led by political parties in collaboration with immigrant community organisations.

There is not a lot known about attempts at immigrant self-defence against GD attacks. Most took practical measures such as walking in larger groups, particularly at night. A second-generation immigrant from Kenya, Michael Chege, stated publicly that he was part of a self-defence group nicknamed the ‘black panthers’. Whether many such groups have been formed in Athens is not clear. If so, their activities would have been informal or otherwise not publicised. Certainly there was not a significant wave of such groups. More well-known have been the defensive attacks against GD by members of the Roma community in Athens suburbs—a community with deep roots in the country, whose members have always faced racism, but at least benefit from the partial safety of citizenship. In June 2012, GD abuse provoked riots by Roma residents in Ano Liosia—escalating in looting, a bus being set on fire, and even shots being fired against the police.

On a more organised scale, there have been demonstrations against the racist murder of Shehzad Luqman, and the police murder of Babacar Ndiaye, led by community leaders (Pakistani and Senegalese respectively) in collaboration with parties (mostly SEK, see below). These demonstrations, nevertheless, did not sustain a momentum despite the importance of the issue. Generally it appears that immigrants in the centre of Athens did not have the confidence to contest their marginalised and vulnerable status in public space. This contestation nevertheless did happen in two cases where segregation was extreme, and was combined with exploitative work relations.

There two cases became more widely known, even though there must be more struggles across Greece that do not get publicised. The first is the long-running protests by strawberry pickers in Nea Manolada (Ilia Prefecture, Peloponnese). The conflict between workers of various nationalities and bosses has gone on in Nea Manolada for over a decade. They have been publicised in the press every so often because of instances of extreme abuse and terror against workers. Despite frequent strikes through this period, the conditions in which workers have lived—in greenhouses without basic amenities, for which they pay a high proportion of their wages in rent—have not improved. Although it is unclear if the strikes have been successful in improving their wages, strikes and protests have continued, despite bosses going to extreme lengths to prevent them. In April 1999, a Bangladeshi worker was reported to have been shot in the hand. In June 2001, there was arson of the greenhouses where Bulgarian workers lived, which, by 2009, was revealed to have been a frequent occurrence. In March 2003, the press reported the creation of extensive and profitable ‘ghettos’ of greenhouse-type constructions that housed workers. In June 2006, the ghett-
tos were reported again because they risked getting burnt in a wildfire that affected the area.\textsuperscript{229} On 19–20 April 2008, thousands of strawberry pickers went again on strike; not only workers, but also their political supporters and even the journalists who turned up to investigate were assaulted by locals and the police.\textsuperscript{230} In June 2009, two local livestock breeders tied up two Bangladeshi workers to a motorcycle and dragged them through the street, because they suspected them of cattle theft.\textsuperscript{231} The catalogue of abuses is endless, and it became worse during the crisis, when wages started to be paid less and less frequently. In April 2013, strawberry farm workers collectively confronted their supervisors after having been unpaid for six months; in response, the latter shot at them and injured 30 Bangladeshi workers.\textsuperscript{232} Despite the repeated shock expressed by the media and the left over these incidents, immigrant workers have been left to deal with the situation on their own, beyond limited help by the human rights lawyers of the Council for Refugees, and clearly they are having a great difficulty in improving their situation. Their perpetual irregular/semi-legal status (most immigrants do not have work permits), and the low social value of their lives and well-being in a racist Greek society, leaves them absolutely vulnerable to their employers. It is indicative that, even after the broad publicising of the case, in court the supervisors only received suspended sentences for the shooting, the employer was acquitted, and it was not considered a case of systematic labour trafficking, after a series of procedural ‘errors’ in favour of the defendants.\textsuperscript{233} As a result, many of the workers were detained or deported as part of the government’s campaign against irregular immigration, while the rest have been ‘blacklisted’ by their ex-employer.\textsuperscript{234} Immigrant and anti-fascist protests against this did not have much of an effect.

The second, similar, case is the struggle of Pakistani agricultural workers in Skala (Lakonia Prefecture, Peloponnese—a region with a strong far-right tradition). In this case, workers appear to have been better able to organise, despite enduring weekly abusive police attacks in the crowded shacks where they are forced to live, as well as an apartheid status, imposed by the town’s mayor, which has prevented them from renting properties inside the town, and entering various spaces including cafés, barbers, and beaches.\textsuperscript{235} In response to the police attacks, and in demand of unpaid wages that for many exceeded €1000, the workers organised a five-day strike from 1 July 2014,

\textsuperscript{229} ‘Péftontas apó ta sýnnefa’, \textit{Autonome Antifa}.
\textsuperscript{230} Mákis Nodarou, ‘N. Manólada: Tipota den állaxe sta fraoulochórafa tís ntrópis’ [Nothing has changed at shameful strawberry fields], \textit{Eleutherotypía}, 23 March 2009.
\textsuperscript{233} Greek Council for Refugees, ‘Press Release. Manolada: The Chronicle of a Judicial Failure’, \textit{Greek Council for Refugees}, 7 August 2014, http://www.gcr.gr/. According to the Greek Council for Refugees, which brought the action to court, a case of labour trafficking should have been examined for all of the 119 or more employees who were protesting, and not only for those who had been injured by the shooting: ‘According to the legislation, a trafficker is a person who, while has every opportunity and obligation to provide some form of protection to his workers, never pays the agreed wages and enforces the continuation of the supply of labor with threats of violence and use of firearms, taking full advantage of the absence of the State for his own profit and at the expense of defenseless people – for all purposes - his slaves.’
\textsuperscript{234} ‘Apeláseis ergáton gis sta fraoulochórafa tis Manóladas’, \textit{T1-X5}, 17 March 2014.
accompanied by demonstrations had taken place—a two-day square occupation—which had temporarily stopped the police abuse. This was an extremely significant first step in a town without any left or workers’ movements history. However, the situation again worsened, and workers were continually threatened that they would be deported or that Golden Dawn would be brought in. On 8 July 2013, Golden Dawn demonstrated in Skala against ‘criminal illegal immigrants’ in a show of strength. The strike of July 2014 was significant in empowering the Pakistani workers, although it brought them face to face with the fierceness of racism they would have to face. According to them,

we did not expect so violent, so unprovoked and so rabid a reaction against us.

When the demonstration got near the Skala police station, the mayor ran towards us shouting that we should all get out of Skala, that he does not like any of us, and he yelled at the police asking them to arrest us all.

Despite their sense of empowerment, some of the workers felt that, because their demonstration provoked further abuses, they were not sure whether further mobilising would be a good idea. In a few weeks’ time, police invaded the Pakistani area, and arrested 35 persons, of whom 21 have been detained and are to be deported. The daily abuses and arrests were continuing well into 2015, at the time of writing, under the SYRIZA government. Indeed, in this case, the left has not appeared to show as much interest as in other immigrants’ struggles. The timing of the strike, which was after Golden Dawn members had been arrested, might be significant in this choice, as we will see below.

With the escalation of police sweep operations since mid-2012, which led greater numbers of immigrants to detention camps, and with the increase in detention periods from 3 months to a year or longer, there were also more mobilisations in detention camps by migrants. The hunger strike was used frequently as a tool—as is the case generally for prisoners in Greece—but not exclusively. There have also been a series riots and uprisings in prisons and detention camps, which are, perhaps, too many to mention here analytically. What could, perhaps, be discussed is the contrast between the hunger strike and the riot: is it as clear-cut a contrast as it seems? Hunger strikes

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237 Autonomi Proutovoulia Enantia sti Lithi, ‘I Syntomi Istoria Tis Pakistanikis Koinotitas Stin Lakonia’ [The Short History of the Pakistani Community in Lakonia], 0151, no. 3 (2014).
238 Ibid.
239 ‘Mia proti katagrafi’ [discussion with Pakistani immigrants], Autonomi Proutovoulia.
240 Ibid.
241 Ibid.
243 Autonomi Proutovoulia, ‘Syntomi istoria’.
appeal more passive, and have taken place usually with a list of demands. They are an appeal to compassion and a reminder of the strikers’ humanity. Yet these demands, which usually follow a series of abuses or detainees’ deaths, due to police violence or neglect of medical conditions, do not imply that detainees hold more faith in the system of negotiations. The hunger strike is already an extreme measure, a form of blackmail that puts one’s life at risk, in response to a continually degrading situation. Riots seem like a more active expression of anger, but, while they sometimes promise the possibility of escape, they can also carry the risk of heavy physical punishment and longer imprisonment if someone gets caught. The alternation between the two forms of struggle by the same prisoners in quick succession suggest that the choice of one or the other form is not ideological but may instead depend on the energies, capacities, and feelings of protesters in each instance. It should be clear to any political critic of migrants’ struggles that their ‘options’ range between forms of struggle that incur various degrees of harm, with the off-chance of escape carrying with it potentially worse consequences. If migrants appear passive in the face of cruelty, it is only because their actions are violently restricted, and their voices are systematically silenced, often even by their supposed supporters. On this point, it is worth noting the contrast between the heroism ascribed to hunger-striking anarchists by their supporters, and the corresponding criticisms by anarchists of the the supposed compassion-begging character of hunger-strikes by migrants. Perhaps this latter character is not then an objective characteristic of the hunger strike, but rather it is in the (racialising) eye of the beholder.

From 2012 and until the summer of 2013, when the the most significant uprising took place in the Amygdaleza detention camp, there was a high frequency of protests and riots. I will simply enumerate some of them for the sake of demonstration. In September 2012, 45 migrants went on hunger strike in the Xanthi detention camp. On 17 November 2012, migrants in the Korinthos camp went on hunger strike to protest the abuse of Navit Yaser and demand that he gets medical treatment. They also protested against beatings by guards during prayer. The next day, a riot broke out, which was repressed with 10 injured and 24 arrested. On 23 November 2012, immigrants detained in the Police School of Komotini started a riot in protest of the prison conditions. On 4 December, there was a riot in the Amygdaleza camp which ended after negotiations with authorities. From December 2012 to March 2013, there were repeated protests and riots in the Fylakio camp in Evros against the length of detention. Many rioters were paradigmatically punished. In February 2013, arrestees went on hunger strike in Nikaia Police Station (Pireaus),

245 ‘Se apergía peínas 35 metanástes sto Kéntro Fýlaxís tís Xάnthês’ [35 migrants on hunger strike in Xanthi detention centre], Xanthi Press, 27 September 2012.
which has been notorious for its links with GD. The strike was violently repressed.\(^{250}\) In April 2013, around 1,800 immigrants detained all over Greece participated in a hunger strike.\(^{251}\) In the same month, there was another riot in the Korinthos camp.\(^{252}\)

Amygdaleza was one of the new camps opened by the new ND/PASOK/DIMAR government in 2012. It was converted from an old army barracks with the simple addition of modified shipping containers, aiming to create more space for more detainees. The conditions in the camp were said to have been wretched, but of more concern for immigrants was the formal extension of detention period to 18 months.\(^{253}\) On 10 August 2013, to top it all, guards felt it necessary to trample into immigrants’ plates from which they were meant to eat. That day, a large-scale riot broke out, during which prisoners set the containers on fire, attacked the guards with stones, and managed to break through the gates and escape. Out of the escapees, fifty-six were recaptured and imprisoned, further extending the length of their incarceration.\(^{254}\) The uprising in Amygdaleza was the most violent action of resistance by immigrants in the country to date. Immigrant participation in rioting in demonstrations is not comparable, as it has typically been low key. This action powerfully rejected the unfreedom and debasement migrants were forced to endure, as well as its legal justification on the basis of national integrity. In a sign that this wave of protests was not going to end soon, a few days later, 400 immigrants in the Orestiada camp went on hunger strike.\(^{255}\)

A month later, in September 2013, the anti-fascist Pavlos Fyssas was killed by a member of Golden Dawn, Giorgos Roupakias, during one of Golden Dawn’s intimidation offensives in Nikaia.\(^{256}\) The murder of a Greek man was too much for the government to ignore, and processes began for the arrest of Golden Dawn members. The fact that he was an anti-fascist and a moderately popular hip-hop musician also gave the left the opportunity to mourn a dead hero. On the other hand, the government had the opportunity to now present itself as the upholder of rationality and legality in the chaos. This was a turning point that revealed a greater distance between anti-fascism and migrants’ struggles. But before discussing these developments, it is best to examine how the anti-fascist movement had evolved up to that point.

In response to the rise of GD in 2012, a significant proportion of left and anarchist/anti-authoritarian activism was diverted towards anti-fascism. Despite appearing as a diversion of aims, the fight against fascism was still a fight against the restructuring, because of the way in which racism was rather blatantly cultivated by this period’s governments as part of their strategy to control popular discontent against the restructuring. While GD presented itself as anti-restructuring, in practice its gangs were systematically used by employers to terrorise Greek and immigrant workers

\(^{250}\) ’Apergía peínas metanastōn gia xylodarmoš sto AT Nikaías’, \textit{TVX5}, 12 February 2013.

\(^{251}\) ’Apergía peínas 2.000 metanastōn gia tis synthikes krátisis’ [Hunger strike by 2,000 migrants about detention conditions], \textit{Eleftherotypía}, 8 April 2013.

\(^{252}\) ‘Exégeris sto stratópeðo metanastōn stín Kórintho’ [Uprising at migrants’ camp in Korinthos], \textit{Eleftherotypía}, 10 April 2013.

\(^{253}\) Omáda Dilégóroun, ‘Kéntra krátisis metanastōn’.

\(^{254}\) ‘Exégeris metanastōn, sovará epeísodia kai syllipseis stín Amygdaléza’, \textit{To Vima}, 10 August 2013.


who dared to protest. GD’s discourse diverted all discussion of the restructuring to forays against immigration and accusations of national betrayal. Its long-running feud with the left, as well as its history of strong connections with army and police leaderships and important sections of Greek capital (shipowners), left no doubt as to the strategic importance of GD for the continuation of the restructuring. All these aspects of GD’s role in this period will be discussed more analytically in the next chapter, although it should be noted already that the state’s crisis management strategy and the rise of nationalism and of GD in this period are not linked in any simple or straightforward way.

Anti-fascism was a change of attitude for the left in comparison to the movement of the squares, where nationalist and sometimes openly racist statements and actions were responded to with relative patience and respect for the ‘freedom of speech’. But although this turn to anti-fascism seemed finally to prioritise questions of racism and abuse against immigrants, the separation between anti-fascist and immigrants’ own struggles remained. Anti-fascism was, true to its name, primarily a political fight against GD, as opposed to a fight that was directly concerned with the immediate material interests and needs of immigrants. Anti-fascist actions were carried out exclusively by Greek activists, with the primary aim to obstruct GD actions, to ‘invade’ spaces dominated by the party, and to promote anti-fascist politics. Local actions encompassed: demonstrations (on foot or on motorbikes) through areas of Athens with large immigrant populations who were systematically intimidated by GD; organising anti-fascist festivals as well as open discussions on fascism and anti-fascism; distributing anti-fascist propaganda material like posters, leaflets, and graffiti in streets, schools, and other public spaces; pressurising landlords against letting to GD, who were aiming to open new political offices in every neighbourhood through the country; and, finally, creating ‘anti-fascist defence groups’, which attempted to drive GD gangs out of certain areas through street fights, attacks on GD offices and on shops and cafés that gave them space, and takeover of spaces where GD ran ‘black economy’ operations.

It is then clear that anti-fascist struggle did not prioritise the cultivation of direct links with immigrant communities. When anti-fascist demonstrations entered immigrant neighbourhoods, they were content by the fact that many immigrants cheered their actions. While the fight against GD may have contributed to the creation of spaces where immigrants felt a little safer, this was done without any collaboration or discussion with immigrants themselves. Immigrants did not gain more say or more control over conditions in their neighbourhoods, where they continued to be treated as visitors, as an alien body in a neighbourhood controlled by its ‘real’ (Greek) residents. The anti-fascist struggle was then mostly a fight among citizens over what to do with voiceless and nameless ‘foreign’ non-citizens.
In this, there were a few exceptions, out of which two stand out. First, the activities of SEK (Sosialistikó Ergatíkó Kómma, Socialist Workers’ Party), in organising actions in conjunction with immigrant community leaders, and, second, the assembly between immigrant street vendors and students at ASOEE. Although it is hard to assess the full scale of SEK’s collaboration with immigrant communities, there are a few elements of this collaboration that encapsulate the organisation’s relationship to those communities. Having witnessed a few migrant demonstrations organised by SEK, it is hard not to notice the fact that immigrants are not given a voice but instead they carry SEK banners and shout SEK slogans. An insight about what might be going on in that relationship is provided by immigrant street vendors who have experience from both SEK assemblies and the assembly at ASOEE. In SEK assemblies, according to a Senegalese interviewee, immigrant groups were separated by nationality, each of which had a representative. Only representatives spoke, while the other migrants did not get to know each other. He felt racialised and used for an electoral purpose.\footnote{I Sfika, ‘Synénteuxi me metanásti’.}

This is in great contrast to the relationships between students and migrants, and among migrants themselves, that appear to have been built around the ASOEE struggle. This was one of the few occasions where a meaningful and reciprocal relation of solidarity was developed between immigrants and Greek anti-fascists. In this case, the relationship grew out of the desire of students to keep the police out of campus, and the migrants’ need for a safe space to set shop and make a living. From 2012 onwards, the new government stepped up its campaign against migrant street vendors, who are accused of being unlicensed and not paying tax (although it is unlikely that they

Demonstration organised by the migrants and students’ assembly at ASOEE. Athens, 4 April 2015. (Source: http://immigrants-asoeespivblogs.net).
would be given a license even if they applied and paid for one). Golden Dawn’s vigilantism was also concerned with terrorising migrant street vendors. The relationship between street vendors and students had, by then, already begun to be built, with students providing a space for vendors to escape into when police turned up, followed by collective low-level rioting against the police to prevent them from entering the campus. This turned out to be successful, and an assembly evolved from it, in which participating students made a conscious effort not to dominate the discussion. Due to the many languages spoken and translation being needed, the pace was slow. The composition has not been stable, as many migrants have had to leave the country, while new vendors were attracted by the arrangement. Nevertheless, bonds started to form gradually between the participants. Together, participants in the assembly have also planned regular ‘mikrofônikêς’ (actions where political statements are amplified through a microphone), court support and solidarity, as well as demonstrations.

The contrast with SEK became most obvious when the assembly attempted to organise a demonstration in protest of the murder of Babacar Ndiaye. In the assembly, there was participation by community leaders of a Senegalese religious sub-community. Difficulties were caused when they objected to an immediate ‘mikrofônikê’ or a demonstration, because they wanted to arrange a different demonstration with SEK a few weeks later, which would be guaranteed to be ‘peaceful’. Beyond the ideological differences concerning tactics of struggle, and the, perhaps reasonable, caution against migrants being arrested for rioting, it is also clear here that both SEK and the community leaders played a role in controlling and dampening the resistance of migrant community members. While the ASOEE environment thrived on facilitating discussion of its members’ ideas, both SEK and the community leaders thought it safest to keep those voices under control. This is also evident in the multilingual polyphony of demonstrations organised by the ASOEE assembly.

The case of ASOEE, however, appeared to be an exception, and even more so after political anti-fascism faced its own limits when GD members began to be arrested. The same government and media that had been defending GD, considered potential coalitions with it, and accused anti-fascists of extremism, suddenly seemed to have made a U-turn, appropriating the anti-fascist discourse. But this could only seem as a paradox and as a form of ideological appropriation if one left out of the picture of ‘anti-fascism’ any change in the actual conditions for immigrants. Sadly, this appeared to be more and more the case as soon as the problem of GD appeared to be being dealt with. Once GD was out of the way, the problems of immigrants were no longer treated as urgent. Towards the end of 2014, a certain hierarchisation, or at least a parcellisation, of struggles, whereby each left and anar-

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259 ‘Synentexêes me metanâstes mikropólîfêς’ [Interviews with migrant street vendors], SKYA, 22 June 2013, http://skya.espiv.net/2013/06/22/.
260 Scar, ‘Apô tìn Nîkàs éôs to Nîkàr apênanti stous Nînângka eîmaste mazî [From Dhaka to Dakar against the Danga we are together], I Sîka, no. 5 (2013).
261 Immigrants-ASOEE, ‘Schetikà me tî dolofonia’.
chist group chose their favoured patch, seemed to result from this condition. This was evident in November 2014, when three important hunger strikes coincided.

First, there was the hunger strike of around 600 Syrian refugees, women, men, and children, who had occupied Syntagma Square for 27 days, in cold and rain, demanding the necessary papers to go elsewhere in Europe. Syrians said that they were penniless in Greece, unable to find work (without a work permit or knowing the language) or accommodation, and that they were prey to various mafias who were trying to exploit them. The papers granted to them by the Greek state were 6-month permits, after which they would have to leave the country. However, this was impossible: even if they tried to travel elsewhere via normal transport, or even on foot, they would be arrested. Instead of travel documents, the prefecture eventually promised that it would provide accommodation and asylum. The hunger strikers who refused and insisted on travel documents were evicted violently from the square by riot police at 3am on 15 December, and 51 of them were arrested. Some of the evictees were forced to leave behind their personal belongings, including their shoes and identification, and, barefoot and paperless, they were threatened with deportation.

Second, a new hunger strike began in Amygdaleza. Besides the detainees’ core demands for shorter detention and better conditions (healthcare, amenities, food quality), the strike also responded to the unjustifiable death of a detainee. Muhammad Ashfaq had been beaten heavily by guards during one of the uprisings in Korinthos detention centre, which caused him respiratory problems. The guards refused him access to treatment for over two weeks. When they eventually transferred him to a hospital, the police announced that he died during the transfer. After only four days of hunger strike, 30 detainees were released and another 150 were to be considered for release, which led most detainees to end the strike. This story received very brief mention in most left media.

Third, a hunger strike was started by Nikos Romanos, the friend of Alexis Grigoropoulos who witnessed his police murder in December 2008. Romanos had been imprisoned because he had taken part in a bank robbery as an anarchist political act. He had been successful in his exams for university entry while in prison, and he started a hunger strike to demand regular leave to attend classes. Romanos’ case was highly publicised by all media, and enjoyed extremely strong support and concern about his well-being from the anarchist scene as well as the left, including SYRIZA.

His hunger strike lasted for 31 days, until, eventually, with much pressure from SYRIZA in the parliament, he was permitted leave on the condition that he would wear a surveillance bracelet.266

It may not be surprising that the overwhelming majority of the anarchist and left scene were most moved and mobilised by the case of Romanos. His link to December 2008 sparked the imaginations of anarchists, who occupied the GSEE offices in memory of the uprising (although this time with the support of GSEE itself, and only for the duration of Romanos’ strike).267 There was also sympathy for his damaged life after what he had experienced. SYRIZA could deploy its discourse about the fundamental rights of prisoners, and pro-armed-struggle anarchists would add another insurrectionary comrade to their list of imprisoned heroes. This prioritisation, however, also had another meaning. It meant, unequivocally, that some people’s lives matter more than others’. As with Pavlos Fyssas, so with Nikos Romanos, the lives of Greek comrades—if immigrants in struggle are called ‘comrades’ at all—matter the most. There was neither a scandal nor a riot after the multiple murders of immigrants at the hands of the police and Golden Dawn. It is never said, but, in practice, it is Greek lives that mostly matter.

Migrants’ struggles were then the other side of this period’s dominant nationally unifying opposition to the restructuring. Immigrants demanded the most basic of things, most of which ‘citizens’ took for granted: freedom from detention; to walk in the street without the fear of a deadly assault; freedom of movement; or, even less audaciously, humane treatment by guards, healthcare, and meals that do not cause malnutrition when in detention. The very presence of immigrants in the country by itself criticises the naturalised birthrights of citizens. The extreme violence against immigrants has been a reaffirmation of the community of citizens as an ethnically-uniform community, and of the nation as a protector of its ‘natural’ subjects. It is when migrants’ struggles entered the street, the squares, and privileged university space (the 300; the Pakistani workers in Lakonia; Syrian refugees at Syntagma) that they appeared to most challenge the racism of the ‘Greek public’ who have been unused to seeing masses of dark faces in the streets. These struggles, left with very little room to move, have had to struggle against invisibility. The degree of invisibility of hundreds of Syrian migrants in Syntagma square, the inconsequentiality of the way in which the square was ‘swept’ for Christmas shopping by the government, while the great majority of ex-anti-fascists were passionately focused on a single Greek person’s hunger strike, revealed the depth of unwitting racism among the most politically ‘progressive’ sections of Greek society. The next chapter will examine this process of racialisation.

CONCLUSION
Having explored each aspect of the struggles of this period in detail, here I propose a broader narrative that will place each of these aspects in the context of one another, as well as that of the broader social dynamic produced by the crisis. This narrative will make clearer both the critical

266 Anta Psarrá, ‘Ο Nikos μόλις εδώσε ανάσες ελευθερίας’ [Nikos gave us a breath of freedom], Ι Εφημερίδα την Συντάκτην, 11 December 2014.
questioning of social relations that these struggles effected, and its limits, while analysing the emergence of these limits themselves. It should be asserted that these limits were not only externally imposed, but were also part of the forms of struggle that contested the restructuring.

Already from early 2011, a tendency had emerged towards an escalation of violence in social confrontations through ever more intense rioting, as was evident in the struggles of Keratea. The conflict, in many of those cases, was talked about by participants as one between ‘the people’ and the state, a state seen as betraying its citizens and giving up control to ‘external’ or ‘foreign’ agencies such as the IMF. Violence was legitimised on this basis: there was a crisis of representation, as well as a crisis of parliamentary politics, conveyed in the adoption of anarchist slogans that were reframed and made compatible with a confrontation between the ‘people’ and the state.

This framing and the intensification of violence it legitimised became more evident in the squares movement. The ‘people’ in the squares became ‘citizens’ whose nationality was rarely questioned. Despite internal criticism of patriotic speeches and racist practices, a nationalist framing of the conflict was not prevented. Migrants were excluded from the movement despite minority efforts to integrate them. Meanwhile, abuse against immigrants was legitimised as part of a broader rise of nationalism, since the subject to be affirmed was the Greek citizen. The unifying function of this identity of a ‘people’ hit by crisis and austerity also left little space for the questioning of gender. Gender power relations were relegated to a secondary issue within struggles, and where gender was highlighted, it was in line with traditional gender roles. In Skouries, despite the central role of women in the struggle, they did not question their feminine social role as carers, linking it instead to their concern about natural resources and generational reproduction.

As will be discussed in the next chapter, the nationalism expressed in the larger movements of the period had two branches: a left anti-imperialist (anti-German, anti-EU) branch, and a far-right anti-immigrant/anti-communist branch. The external threat to the nation united left- and right-wing opposition to the restructuring, while the questions of the wage and immigration sharply divided them, culminating in the clashes between neo-Nazis and anti-fascists and the murder of Pavlos Fyssas in September 2013. The more moderate sides of these two camps can be said to have been reunited under the 2015 coalition government of SYRIZA and ANEL.

Chapter III asserted that this nationalist tendency in the movement against the restructuring cannot be understood as based on a mere ideological falsity. The restructuring was really imposed through a matrix of international political and economic structures interrelated with the constraints of financial governmentality. This reality, is, however, fetishised; in other words, it is a reality that disguises its necessary mediation by the production of surplus-value. Further aspects of this fetishism will be analysed in Chapter V, by looking at how the position of Greece and its proletarian population in the international hierarchy of labour is related to the production of these particular types of nationalism, as well as how the reassertion of the rights and privileges of the Greek citizen as a European also reasserted the racialising and patriarchal constitution of civil society.

Despite, then, the fact that the restructuring was, above all, an attack on the direct and indirect wage, so that labour would now be treated, both materially and politically, as an inessential
appendage to the capitalist production of value, the subject of struggle against the restructuring in
the most prominent expressions of protest (the squares, mass demonstrations, the premises of
collectivity based on locality) was not ‘the proletariat’, but the Greek citizens, or the Greek ‘people’.
The mere economic and social existence of a proletarian population did not produce a proletarian
political subject, but a national one. The implication of this was that immigrants and their struggles
were constitutively, or, by definition, excluded by the movement against the restructuring. Even the
majority of anti-fascist actions failed to overcome this exclusion, constituting immigrants as a third,
voiceless contested object, over whose fate neo-Nazi and anti-fascist groups clashed with one
another.

This conflict, clearly, only partially questioned the unity of Greek citizens. It was primarily
immigrants’ own marginalised struggles that really questioned the naturalised foundations of this
unity and its territorial assumptions, by taking over public space in the most centrally symbolic
locations, rioting and breaking out of detention camps, and contesting the structures of their de-
humanisation through hunger strikes.

The subject of the citizen itself, however, was not united or internally cohesive, and its in-
ternal split was not only ideological, between left and right nationalist tendencies. In the squares
movement, in the demonstrations and in riots, an internal distance also emerged that was more
evident in the practices than in the language of their participants. On one hand, there was a tendency
towards an interruption of capitalist circulation, carried out mostly by those—both ‘natives’ and
immigrants—who are integrated into the wage relation as surplus, and can hardly meet subsistence
needs. In riots, private property was attacked, and commodities were expropriated by interrupting
the normality of exchange. On the other hand, there was a tendency that questioned only the fetish-
istic appearance of the causes of crisis (banks) or affirmed everything that a proletarianising section
of the population would have lost: the small property that formed a section of national ‘productive’
capital, and the social/national contract that protected it.

In the localised and uncoordinated labour struggles, a similar division continually emerged.
The fragmented multiplicity of labour struggles in this period revealed the common pattern of an
ambivalence. On one hand, an attachment to a workplace and one’s work, culminating in the cre-
tion of work through the formation of self-managed co-operatives. On the other hand, an attempt
to blockade or invade workplaces from the outside, in order to take what is owed, or to be reinte-
grated into them. This ambivalence questioned the boundaries of workplaces and workers’ attach-
ment to them, reflecting the depth of work fragmentation, and the fluidity between precarisation
and unemployment that was effected by the restructuring. This ambivalence—or contradiction—
emerged most convulsively in the conflict among residents over the mine in Skouries. On one side,
there was the ‘need’ of wage labour for the local unemployed, which promised to guarantee subsis-
tence for a period; on the other side, the industry that required this labour was likely to destroy the
very basics of subsistence and even life: the air and water of the region. Yet this contradiction
between the absolute dependence on capitalist reproduction for subsistence, and the impossibility
of capitalist reproduction to guarantee subsistence, did not lead labour struggles to a questioning of
the capital relation, or of the forms and structures that impose the proletarian condition. This questioning only took place, very partially and fleetingly, through the interruptions effected by riots.

The most creative aspect—in the sense of producing new social groupings or organising communities—of the struggles against the restructuring were the numerous and varied self-organising initiatives, from neighbourhood assemblies to ‘solidarity economy’ networks, to self-managed co-operatives. I have tried to show that, in these cases, the core ambivalence was one between a practice of exchange between equals/equivalents, and practices of unrestrained or un-quantified solidarity. Many of these projects prioritised the principle of exchange, and named that ‘solidarity’, simply on the basis that exchange was mediated by an alternative form of money, or because exchange took place at a local level among home-based producers. I have argued that an interaction based on the exchange of equivalents, and on a formal notion of equality that presumes an abstract property-owning subject, cannot be solidarity, because this perpetuates precisely the forms of exploitation and domination that formal bourgeois equality is blind to. At the same time, in the cases where forms of equivalence were surpassed, and uncalculated sharing and solidarity were practiced, as in some neighbourhood assemblies, solidarity health centres, or in collective kitchens, this practice was circumscribed by poverty, the dominant reimposition of the calculation of value and dependence upon the wage relation.

The next chapter will look at how the resistance to the restructuring resting on the unity of citizens—a unity founded on the abstract bourgeois subject—found its limit in the nation-state. The attempt to reinforce sovereignty and the relationship between citizen and the state in the crisis, given the changing dynamic of the class relation and the associated production of domestic and migrant surplus populations, came to reinforce the racialised and gendered constitution of civil society.
V. The Nation-State as a Limit of Struggles

INTRODUCTION

In discussing struggles as they developed in the crisis, and attempting to understand them as part of the conflictual dynamic of social relations, we cannot avoid the question of those relations’ mediation by the state. This is because, when we move from the abstract Marxian theory of the class relation to examine actual events, we notice that no struggles ever occur without reference to the state, and no ‘attack by capital’ is ever directly enacted by ‘capitalists’. The reconfiguration of the class relation in the crisis was organised via the state, which, in order to do so, attempted to manage social struggles and the ‘superfluous’ populations produced through this process. In the previous chapter, the increasingly heavy policing of mobilisations was described briefly. This chapter aims to examine a little further the repressive crisis management strategies of the Greek state, not as merely external to the social struggles, but as penetrating, or appealing to, tendencies that emerged within the opposition to the restructuring, particularly from 2012 onwards. The word ‘repressive’ here refers to the policing and social control functions of the state, the ‘repressive state apparatus’, to use the Althusserian term. However, the function of ‘repression’ is not limited to the state apparatus in this discussion, as I wish to explore the ways in which sections of the movements themselves permitted a kind of social policing, through failing to question the naturalised national and gendered elements in the identifications they produced.

The presence of nationalist tendencies within movements was described in the previous chapter as part of an internal distance within the squares movement and demonstrations before the elections. These tendencies soon greatly exceeded what was initially dismissed as mere ‘popular patriotism’, while, concurrently, right-wing nationalist politics also gained strength in the rest of Europe (see the victories of UKIP and Front National in the 2014 EU elections, as well as the questioning of ‘multiculturalism’ in light of the May 2013 riots in Sweden and the later empowerment of the Swedish Democrats). This fact places the Greek situation in the context—if not at the edge, given its geographical location—of anti-immigration discourse in the EU more broadly. After the elections of May and June 2012, the right wing of this tendency, which up to that point had mainly been visible through the presence of flags and nationalist slogans in demonstrations, was taken over, at least at the level of the spectacle, by a national-socialist party, Golden Dawn (GD), which entered the parliament for the first time with 18 seats (6.92%). The empowerment of GD and the formation of a three-party coalition government led by ND, alongside the impressive empowerment of SYRIZA, which came second with 27%, brought an end to the succession of mass demonstrations that had culminated in the riots of 12 February. This development was concurrent with the strengthening of a shift already underway in the dominant governmental discourse towards increasingly intolerant and even openly racist anti-immigration statements and policies.

This shift involved heavier policing and spectacular forms of (biopolitical) social control against immigrants and those pushed to the gendered social ‘margins’ such as sex workers and gay
and non-cisgendered persons, as well as people addicted to drugs and homeless persons. This was added to the heavy police repression of demonstrations, strikes, local grassroots campaigns, anti-fascists, anarchists, and the broader left. Police action was often accompanied, and sometimes even spearheaded, by vigilante GD action that physically attacked immigrants and political opponents. With electoral empowerment and sympathisers within the government (see the next section), GD got away with the murder of a Shehzad Luqman, an immigrant from Pakistan. However, the murder of a Greek anti-fascist, Pavlos Fyssas, would not be tolerated and a process towards the criminalisation of GD began.

Yet, clearly, GD’s propaganda was not the source of the rise of nationalism in this period. Nationalism did not even just come from the right. Left-wing anti-imperialist nationalism also became strengthened, particularly after the haircut of bank accounts in Cyprus in July 2013, which it attributed almost exclusively to German interests and hegemony. To make things even more complex, the ‘anti-fascist’ resistance to neo-Nazi violence and influence was contradictory, both in its references to historical anti-fascism, and, to the extent that it became part of an ‘alliance’ that (eventually) included the government itself. All too frequently, the ‘moderate’ liberal wing of this alliance extended its democratic discourse into a ‘theory of the extremes’ that criminalised protests and social struggles.

Paying little attention to left nationalism, most of the academic analysts of this period’s nationalism have focused on the rise of Golden Dawn. They have not linked this rise to the state’s crisis management strategies, but have attributed it to a rise in xenophobia in response to high levels of immigration, and to the delegitimation of PASOK, ND, and the moderate far right party, LAOS. Golden Dawn voters are said to have tended to be a ‘precarious’ section of the population who wanted to punish the major parties for their policies of austerity. This narrow focus on voting behaviour offers a limited perspective as to social processes and the basis for the political discourses that emerged in the crisis. Conversely, the analyses of the left have ranged between exposing GD as the ‘long arm’ of the repressive state apparatus, making historical analogies with the Greek civil

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2. One of the most moderate examples around that time was Alexis Tsipras’ statement that ‘Europe today is becoming autarchic, becoming anti-democratic, it is becoming the Europe of big capital and bankers, it is becoming—if you can allow the phrase—a German Europe.’ ‘Al. Tsipras sto Russia24: ‘Oραμας μας δεν είναι Γερμανική Ευρώπη αλλά η κοινή Ευρώπη, το κοινό δεν ζητά τον λαόν’ [Al. Tsipras to Russia24: Our vision is not a German Europe but a common Europe, the common home of all people], Left.gr, 6 August 2013, https://left.gr/news.
war and the Weimar republic, or explaining the subsequent arrest of GD leaders and the criminalisation of the party as proof that democracy is the ideal political form for capitalist reproduction. These perspectives have often sidelined an analysis of the broader rise of nationalism in the crisis, which also affected leftwing discourse. Looking for patterns in historical precedents has also often forestalled a more complex understanding of the particular social dynamics of the present period. While there are indeed many parallels with the great crisis in 1930s Germany (extremely high unemployment, weakness of labour struggles as a result of it, a large petite bourgeoisie, the rise of fascism, increased state repression), the differences are also enormous (a different global configuration of forces, in a Europe of ferociously competing nationalisms, with establishments facing the threat of organised working classes and an international communist movement). As for the ideal political forms for capitalist accumulation, as we have seen in Chapter II, Greek capitalism has seen very high levels of growth during authoritarian and dictatorial regimes, showing that there is no necessary link between liberal-democratic political forms and accumulation.

In contrast, the approach adopted here will discuss nationalism and its role within the movements as a powerful political discourse and practice poised in opposition to the restructuring, while at the same time being used to repress such opposition. The strengthening of nationalism poses the problem of ideology in the analysis of struggles, and reveals the limits of giving analytical priority to the abstract dynamic of the class relation. Such an approach may be attributed to TC’s formulation on the dynamic of class struggle in the present moment:

The proletariat recognises capital as its raison d’être, its own existence over against itself, and as the only necessity of its own existence. From this moment on, the proletariat sees its existence as a class objectify itself in the reproduction of capital as something which is alien to it and which it is led to call into question.

The proletariat ‘recognises’; it ‘sees’. The objective relation corresponds to the subjective recognition of it. Since the historical dynamic is identified with class struggle for TC, consciousness must correspond to the dynamic, and indeed a self-affirmative class identity has vanished as it no longer corresponds to it. But this alienation from class identity, the experience of being not only objectified but also treated as superfluous by capitalist reproduction, has not translated into calling into question capitalist reproduction, but has found a host of other targets instead. This was proven not to have been a temporary mis-targeting of discontent, but the most dominant ideological framing

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of struggle in the crisis. Yet the problem posed here is not that of ideological mediation standing in the way of the true dynamic of struggle. Instead, it must be posed in terms that break with the distinction between real material relations and social practice on one hand, and their ideal interpretation on the other.

The concept of fetishism (see definition in Chapters I and II) can help with such an analysis. The nationalist response against external control and intervention, the fear of migrants and their labour, are not based on mere ideological fiction, but they find validity in the way capitalist society is reproduced, as well as the way it produces crises. The existence of national separations is not the mere appearance of capitalism, the instantiation of a capitalist essence, but its historical reality, involving past and present power relations among nation-states and capitals, and racialised hierarchies of labour. Crisis calls for a reinforcement of these national hierarchies. In Chapter III, the emergence of this nationalism was discussed in terms of the fetishism of capital, drawing on Moishe Postone’s discussion of anti-Semitism as a form of concretisation or personification of the most abstract functions of capital.10 With debt at the core of the Greek crisis, international finance has appeared as the parasitical element that that sucks the life out of the ‘real’ local capitalist production and economy. A fetishistic anti-capitalism as fear of abstraction can be recognised in the ultranationalism grounded on the concreteness of ‘blood’ (or ‘DNA’), favoured by GD, standing against a range of ‘foreigners’ and ‘local collaborators’ who conspired against the nation. But the fetishistic criticism of finance also appeals to Left anti-imperialism, which has traditionally defended ‘concrete’ national industrial production and its workers. The existing hierarchy of European political and economic powers, which the crisis of globalised and financialised capitalism placed at the helm of European crisis management, similarly reinforced the narrative of Greece as an oppressed nation.

Looking at nationalism as presupposing a specific nexus of asymmetrical social power relations, which are part of the process of capitalist reproduction, entails examining not only the relation between labour and capital, but also the relations produced or shaped by the capitalist division of labour, the relation between the dominant subject of the citizen and its exclusions, as well as relations produced through processes of racialisation and the reproduction of gender. I try to examine how state repression and the social policing mentioned earlier tended, in this period, to police the balance of power in the social relations that were disturbed by the crisis.

One of the effects of the crisis that upset social relations was the production of surplus populations who could not be securely or formally integrated into the wage relation. I discuss how this provoked the state’s biopolitical concern to manage these populations, In the sense proposed by Michel Foucault: the concern ‘to rationalize the problems posed to governmental practice by phenomena characteristic of a set of living beings forming a population: health, hygiene, birthrate, life expectancy, race…’11 This concern was at the same time political, economic, and biological, to

10 Postone, ‘Anti-Semitism and National Socialism’.
do with controlling a precariously integrated population's potential for civil unrest, and ensuring at least the impression, if not the reality, of combating potential threats to the health of the nation's ‘body’.

Policing the surplus population also actively reproduces the impossibility of subsistence outside the wage relation. As TC eloquently put it, ‘[T]he police . . . tells us that we are nothing outside the wage relation. . . . The police is also how we are confronted by our own existence as a class as limit.’ Yet the limit does not presuppose its own overcoming as TC imply. On the contrary, this period has seen a ‘grassroots’ concern to reinforce the social status of a ‘surplus’ citizen in crisis, who is prototypically a Greek male head of household. In this tension, what appears to be at stake is precisely racialised and gendered hierarchies, as the crisis disturbs the social statuses that previously stabilised them. The unsettling of those hierarchies, which emanate from and are presupposed by the capitalist division of labour, provokes a reaction towards their reconsolidation, which is not merely imposed ‘top-down’ by the state. Repression, discipline, and policing in the crisis is then not the prerogative of the state, even though I will begin by examining the forms of repression that more or less directly emanate from it.

THE STATE’S MEDIATION OF CRISSES AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

To discuss the particular ways in which Greek governments managed and policed the crisis up to 2014, a theorisation of the state vis-a-vis the relevant Marxist literature, which is far from conclusive, would be in order. The problem presented by such a theorisation, in analysing this conjuncture of crisis, is the following: are there specific characteristics of the state that necessitate its adoption of specified responses during capitalist crises, and how do these impact on social power relations?

For the sake of staying on topic here I will forgo a broad literature review of Marxist state theory, but will focus on a debate that emerged within the ‘state derivation’ discussion in Germany and later in the UK. The participants in the ‘state derivation’ discussion sought to theorise the state through ‘form-analysis’, inspired by a problematic that had been raised by Pashukanis’s work on bourgeois law:

why does the dominance of a class not become that which it is, i.e. the actual subordination of one part of the population to another, but instead assumes the form of official state authority? Or, what is the same, why is the apparatus of state coercion created not as a private apparatus of the ruling class, but distinct from the latter in the form of an impersonal apparatus of public power distinct from society?

Pashukanis’s question implies that the state’s impersonality and seeming autonomy is an integral characteristic of the state in capitalism. This provided a basis for the logical approach of state-

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derivation to the form taken by the capitalist state. According to Joachim Hirsch, who worked within this problematic, the autonomisation of the state as a separate political instance is produced through the transition from pre-capitalist direct relations of force in the appropriation of the surplus product to capitalist abstract domination whereby these relations ‘should be abstracted from the immediate process of production and located in an instance standing apart from the direct producers’. Hirsch did not reduce the state to its legal, regulating functions and the enforcement of property relations, but instead he stressed that the state apparatus was itself a moment of the ‘movement of capital’ and of class struggle. With regard to the ‘movement of capital’, he analysed the development of state functions as a reaction to ‘the fundamentally crisis-ridden course of the economic and social process of reproduction’, that is, in terms of value theory and the law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall.

While Hirsch took pains to stress that concrete state activities develop out of class conflicts, his emphasis on giving analytical primacy to the state ‘form’ over its ‘content’ and functions still fell prey to the ontological problem which plagues many of the approaches based exclusively or primarily on capital’s ‘logic’: history becomes understood as a manifestation of the logic that encompasses the ‘totality of social relations’. Class struggle is presented as merely a mediation of the necessary results of the moving contradiction of capital (its ‘laws of motion’). But such ‘necessity’ is really based on a tautology: the ideal form of capitalist society is one whose reproduction is managed by the liberal bourgeois form of state. This state is formally separated from the bourgeois class; it is impersonal, in its social ideal. This particular configuration can only be said to be ‘necessary’ as a logical presupposition of the impersonality of social relations in capitalism. But this is a mere tautology, given that one cannot prove the impossibility of a capitalist state that uses direct compulsion, grants rights selectively to one class of citizens, and explicitly represents capitalist interests, as long as the freedom of labour is formally guaranteed in law. While, then, this tautological approach might provide certain insights on the particular relations that the bourgeois state reproduces and is part of, it cannot explain or ‘derive’ its emergence from the configuration of relations that this emergence establishes.

Any attempt to derive a specific type of state as a logical necessity of the capitalist mode of production would similarly imply the historical necessity of logic. The only answer to the question of why the rising power of the bourgeois class coincided with the emergence of a particular form of impersonal state characterised by its separation from civil society, a legal framework of individual citizens and rights, and the separation of the economic and the political can be one that analyses its historical emergence. This means that only a historical account of the struggles that preceded the emergence of the bourgeois state could be a sufficient explanation of how this particular form of social relations emerged together with its implicated form of social organisation. The ‘laws’ of capital, which essentially simply describe the mechanisms and tendencies of the relations of production and the movement of capital in their ahistorical abstraction are not explanatory but themselves

require a genealogical explanation. A historical genealogy of the state would consider both its emergence and its particular character as the product and dynamic of the transformation of specified pre-capitalist social relations of domination. In that respect, Heide Gerstenberger, who had also contributed to the ‘state derivation’ debate, has gone the furthest in answering this question, by providing an account of the emergence of the constitutional forms of bourgeois states as the historical product of struggles against those forms of domination that had become generalised as ‘estates’ in societies of the Ancien-Regime type.16 Extending a work like Gerstenberger’s would be a step away from the essentialism of a self-reproducing ‘logic of capital’ that is understood as external to the historically changing power relations that comprise the social (relations of exploitation, but also of gender and racialising domination, and perhaps other less visible relations).

Still, it is worth also considering whether Hirsch’s theorising of the development of state functions in response to crises and class struggle could provide theoretical tools to understand historical changes in forms of state. Hirsch has considered the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, understood as the crisis tendency of capitalism, and its counter-tendencies, as having an important explanatory power for state responses to crises. The most important counter-tendencies to the falling rate of profit are the increase in the productivity of labour, and, concomitantly, the cheapening in the elements of constant capital, the fall in the value of the commodity labour-power, and the increase in surplus labour-time. In Marx, these counter-tendencies are no more than potential tendencies and have no active subject that could ‘mobilise’ them. However, for Hirsch, given the state’s role in the maintenance of the process of accumulation, it becomes involved in strategically mobilising these counter-tendencies. The state develops techniques of intervening in connection with the economic cycles, particularly at times of crisis. Since the 1929 crisis, this has involved the proliferation of apparatuses to regulate circulation and to plan and direct production, as well as the development of supra-state forms for global economic management and corresponding apparatuses for economic analysis and forecasting. Most importantly, these instruments and techniques have been mobilised, during crises, towards the reduction of wages, aiming for the reduction of the value of labour power, thus becoming directly implicated in the class struggle. These mechanisms are then contradictory, not only because they are implicated in the contradictions of capital, but also because they ‘bear in themselves the moment of an intensification of social conflicts’.17

It is notable that Poulantzas, similarly, and from an Althusserian theoretical basis, also points out two counter-tendencies that the state can mobilise; that of the devaluation of a part of constant capital, and that of the increase in the rate of surplus value and exploitation.18 The latter

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16 Heide Gerstenberger, ‘The Bourgeois State Form Revisited’, in Open Marxism, ed. Werner Bonefeld, Richard Gunn, and Kosmas Psychopedis, vol. 1, Dialectics and History (Pluto Press, 1992). The only weakness of Gerstenberger’s work is that she limits her analysis to societies where capitalism emerged ‘indigenously’. In this category she includes almost exclusively the transition from feudal societies, thereby neglecting to consider the possibility of the indigenous emergence of capitalism from ‘Asiatic’ modes of production and taking for granted a theory of the imperialist ‘import’ of capitalist relations in all those cases. The problems with this perspective being applied to the case of Greece’s capitalism, which emerged from an ‘Asiatic’ form through trading with Western Europe, were discussed in Chapter II.


directly relates to the heart of class struggle, and brings to light the state’s involvement in the transformation of the relations of production. However, for Poulantzas as well, this is not a smooth process. Because the state is, for him, a ‘material condensation’ of the relationship among classes, the class struggle is internal to the state and provokes contradictions and conflicts within it and among its apparatuses. Capitalist crises are then an impetus for the state’s involvement in class struggle, but also, importantly, the state itself is transformed through this conflictual process, developing new instruments, techniques, apparatuses, and institutions that allow it to prevent the collapse of capitalist accumulation. Crises provoke economic restructurings that can also be restructurings of the state itself, reshaping both the class relation and the role of the state in it. The institutional transformations after the crisis of the late 1970s discussed by Hirsch and other writers influenced by the regulation school (see Chapter II) are a case in point.

In the case of the current crisis in Greece, we have seen in Chapter III how this explanation can be plausible. The supranational political and economic institutions of the IMF, the ECB, the EC and the EU, in line with the trans-national governmentality of finance, exerted pressures towards a particular kind of restructuring, which targeted, above all, the value of labour-power. Yet, as we have also seen, in the crisis of the 1970s, the level of class struggle meant that there was not an immediate but a delayed correspondence between the crisis and the state’s crisis management strategies. This suggests that there may be no necessary correspondence between the need to manage a crisis and specified institutional transformations, and that models of crisis management are not determined solely by the crisis itself but are mediated by class struggle and political-economic interpretations of the crisis. The notion that states mobilise counter-tendencies to the falling rate of profit questionably concretises an abstraction that, in its Marxian conception, does not necessarily correspond to the monetary profit rates that states might directly deal with or to the terms in which government economists make policies, because the falling rate of profit is defined on the basis of labour-time (see Chapter III). We have thus seen in Chapter III that the method of crisis management imposed by international institutions and implemented by the Greek state as part of the bailout agreement was not successful in securing accumulation, or, if we accept that it is ‘on the way of’ such a success as claimed by its defenders, it attempted to do so in a way that caused broad social disintegration and broad social opposition by producing extremely high rates of unemployment. While, then, the Greek state may not have exactly ‘mobilised counter-tendencies’ to the falling rate of profit in any direct way, this restructuring is consistent with one specific ‘counter-tendency’, that of deepening exploitation. Yet, this state practice does not guarantee success, and is subject to developments in the course of struggle. This imperative posed the governmental problem of policing the opposition and managing the surplus population produced by this crisis management strategy.
State Mediation as the Historical Limit of Struggles

According to Michel Foucault, the liberal bourgeois state emerged as the type of sovereign whose raison d’être was no longer itself, but the management of the economy and of a population within a given territory. We might say that it aimed for the ‘common’ (national) good, a universalist discourse, which, again, was only realised by social struggles for suffrage and equal rights, and, in reality, was constituted by exclusions (the foreign, the criminal, the insane, the non-human—previously the non-proprietary, the black, the female). While this ‘common good’ and the unification of the social is a near fiction, considering that it is ridden with power struggles, this is still the core discourse of state power and its practice. Hence, the bourgeois state has no ‘subjects’ that serve it, the nation does. The self-reproduction of the sovereign is not an end in itself, but is only important to the extent that the state unifies (freely or forcibly) social relations into a capitalist society (a nation-state) and manages (via varying degrees of intervention) its material reproduction. The modern liberal state may not have subjects, but it has citizens whose bodies it controls. Bodies are free as long as they do not deeply challenge the laws, social roles and power relations on which the reproduction of society is taken to depend.

While, then, the state is the political instance that concretises into law and impersonally enforces the processes of reproduction of social relations, this social reproduction, and the material productivity it implies, cannot be conceived as a universal ahistorical abstraction: it is capitalist reproduction.

The relations constituent of capitalist society, which have been historically reproduced in different forms through their concretisation by the state into law and its enforcement, are relations of exploitation, gender, and racialised domination. These relations have been both reshaped and reproduced through the struggles against them. Their reproduction is integrally linked with the reproduction of the state: the struggles of workers did not abolish exploitation (the production of value) but attempted to manage it themselves (as a transition to communism), which entailed a claim to state power for the workers, the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’. The struggles of women and later the LGBTQ movement have sought equal rights, representation in state institutions, and protection from male violence. Similarly, the struggles of racialised groups have sought equal treatment by the state and social respect and dignity. The struggles for equality (the equivalence of citizens before the state) also posited difference at the same time, both demanding and challenging the unqualified equivalence implied by bourgeois law, by demanding special rights, a form of substantive equality.

To the extent that these struggles achieved their aims, at least partially or temporarily, over the 20th century, they effected shifts in the character of the capitalist state. But it was also clear that the relations these struggles questioned, as well as the balance of power that defines them, continued to be reproduced precisely because the state, whose mediation they sought, is not merely a tool

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20 Cf. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998). His work on the state’s biopolitical control over the bodies of citizens and non-citizens will be discussed further below.
21 Again, see Pashukanis, ‘General Theory’, for his critique of liberal bourgeois law as founded on the equality of equivalence, that is, commodity exchange.
for emancipation. The raison d’être of the modern state is the management of the reproduction of society, which presupposes the continuation of capitalist accumulation: the imposition of labour time; the accounting of value produced as money; the management of population which imposes itself on female bodies and sexuality; the management of the reproduction of labour power in terms of the quality of its skills (education); the social boundaries of a (national) civil society defined by what is external (the foreign and the lawless); and the hierarchical division of labour which is most stable and effective when it is naturalised (hence the racialisation of the—often ‘foreign’—lower classes is used to enforce the rightfulness of their social position). Certainly, the reproduction of gender and race cannot be reduced to the aforementioned imperatives of the reproduction of capitalist national societies. However, these state imperatives reveal the internal limits of feminist and anti-racist struggles that have posed demands to the national state, similar to proletarian revolutions that used the state as tool. This is the sense in which the internal limit—in addition to the external limit of policing—posed to struggles by the nation-state will be considered here.

Policing and Nationalism: From the State to the Surplus (Non-)Worker

In investigating the relationship between governmental crisis management strategies, the rise of right and left nationalisms and the apparent confluence of such tendencies from ‘above’ and from ‘below’, I will begin by presenting the history of the far right in Greece and its links with the repressive state apparatus. This is to help the reader unfamiliar with Greek history and with the specificities of the country’s state apparatus understand that the police abuses and the relative free rein GD enjoyed up to 2013 was not the result of the Greek state’s incompetence. The authoritarian form of state was, as we have touched on in Chapter II, dominant in Greece up to the Metapoliteusi. Yet, after the Metapoliteusi, authoritarian far-right politics did not disappear from the state but were retrenched into the repressive state apparatus, while also participating in politics through formal parties. In the next section, I will discuss the gradual empowerment of these parties from the 1990s onwards, and GD’s genealogy.

It is important, once more, to clarify: while GD’s political and social role cannot be fully appreciated without considering its history, it must also not be understood as the mere result of government strategy and positive media coverage. The inconsistent strategy of ND towards GD, showing a friendly stance up to the murder of Pavlos Fyssas in September 2013, and then vigorously prosecuting its members, revealed the extent of the impact such official policy can have. GD still received 6.28% of the vote in the 2015 elections (third party, losing less than 1% of its vote since 2012, and well above PASOK, which has literally disappeared from the political map), despite highly publicised revelations about its deadly violence and criminal activities. The crisis conjuncture has seen a real radicalisation of nationalism, and this is reflected in the fact that SYRIZA also appealed to nationalist sentiments, and formed a government with a borderline far-right party, the Independent Greeks (ANEL).

The empowerment of GD then reflected a social situation that produced a militant ultranationalist, anti-immigrant authoritarian camp, alongside a left nationalist anti-imperialist camp,
which represented a great proportion of the left (not only SYRIZA, but also ANTARSYA, KKE, and tendencies within the anarchist/anti-authoritarian/autonomous scene). The encounter between these two nationalisms, which climaxed in mid-2013, reawakened debates surrounding the civil war and Greek history. Each side attempted to instrumentalise history for opposing purposes. This encounter will be discussed below.

Beyond the level of political contest, however, this war of war-narratives was also part of a crisis management strategy that aimed to manage the surplus populations produced in the crisis, by re-separating and reclassifying them through biopolitical processes of racialisation and abjection. The next section will then examine how these processes correspond to existing asymmetrical social relations that were unsettled by the crisis. GD activism and the state’s policing mediated already inflamed class and intra-class antagonisms, defending the threatened relative status of parts of Greek capital, the Greek petit-bourgeois ravaged by the crisis, and, crucially, un- or under-employed Greek surplus proletarians, against internal and external ‘threats’. This state offensive was a spectacular defence of the status of the Greek citizen, which underwent a crisis, in the dissolution of the prior social contract between civil society and the state.

The Greek Far Right and Its Growth after 1990

The Greek far right and its influence within state mechanisms has a history that runs back to the mid-war period, with the Metaxas dictatorship, through to the civil war and the Colonels’ dictatorship.22 The most recent part of this history interests us here. After the fall of the anti-communist Colonels’ regime in 1974 (a regime for which today’s GD is deeply nostalgic) and the reinstatement of a right-wing Karamanlis government, there was a trial of the main functionaries of the junta, who were convicted to life imprisonment. However, not all of them were prosecuted. Meanwhile, attacks on immigrants and left demonstrators by far-right gangs who supported the junta regime with the assistance of the police are reported as early as 1975,23 despite the fact that back then the number of immigrants in Greece was negligible. The situation was polarised, as the 17 November organisation was also then formed, and carried out assassinations of dictatorship functionaries that the Karamanlis government had failed to prosecute.24 Nikolaos Mihaloliakos, the founder and current leader of GD, was arrested in 1979 for deadly bombings in cinemas that screened Soviet Russian films.25 Soon after getting away with only a 13-month sentence, Mihaloliakos founded Golden Dawn as a political journal.

22 For a history of the Greek far right in the 1920s and ’30s see Spíros Markétos, Pós fílias tou Moussolíní! Ta prôhta tôn duo tòn ellinikóon fásismon, vol. 1 (Athens: Vivliórama, 2006).
With the rise of PASOK in 1981, the attempt for reconciliation, after the intense class struggle that preceded it, also involved the legitimisation of communist parties and their role in WWII ‘national liberation’, alongside the (brief) integration of workers’ unions and some of their demands within state policy and a series of nationalisations, as we saw in Chapter II. Politically, the opposition between communism and ultra-nationalist right-wing anti-communism was replaced by the opposition between the right and what has been termed the ‘anti-right’,\(^26\) on which the influential discourse of PASOK was based. Despite these changes, many junta functionaries were still not prosecuted and were allowed to re-enter parliamentary politics, while the depoliticisation of the state apparatus did not go far enough into parts of the army, the police forces and the security services.\(^27\) This apparent omission might be understood in the context of the Cold War that still influenced policy decisions across Europe,\(^28\) as well as in light of the legacy of the Greek civil war.

Through the ’80s, GD was a marginal organisation, reduced to printing its openly neo-Nazi magazine. The far-right parties of the time (EPEN,\(^29\) ENEK)\(^30\) also received tiny electoral support. Yet, by the ’90s, with the first influx of Albanian immigrants, GD and a number of neo-Nazi youth groups it supported became increasingly active. They engaged in organising offensives against immigrants and left and anarchist demonstrators, and organising small protests regarding Greece’s territorial disputes with Turkey and the issue of Macedonia.\(^31\) Some members of GD also participated in the Serbo-Kroatian war on the side of Serbia.\(^32\) This increased activity was timely, as the 1990s was a period of heightened nationalism in mainstream political and cultural discourse, which combined a sense of pride for Greece’s business expansion to the rest of the Balkans with a xenophobic stance towards impoverished, usually paperless, immigrants from Balkan countries, who were heavily exploited in construction and agriculture. The issue of the naming of the Former


\(^{27}\) A recent interview of Giorgos Bertsos, one of the two journalists who investigated the Laμbrakis assassination before the Colonels’ dictatorship is indicative. An insider of PASOK, Bertsos was placed in a top position within KYP, the Central Intelligence Agency, under the first PASOK government in 1981. He was very disappointed, however, when the prime minister, Andreas Papandreou personally attempted to stop him from dissolving the agency, which was still staffed by functionaries of the Colonels’ regime. Bertsos managed to dissolve it eventually, but the agency was very quickly reformed as EYP, the National Intelligence Agency. Giorgos Bertsos, Thessaloníki: To staurodrómi tón praktórón [Thessaloniki: The secret agents’ crossroads], interview by Stelios Koulologlou, National Greek Television (NET), ‘Reporters Without Borders’, 21 May 2013, http://tvxs.gr/node/129262.

\(^{28}\) It was not a rare occurrence in countries of the ‘western bloc’ for security services to hire members of the far right for their anti-communist strategy, as was revealed by the wave of investigations into the Gladio operation, after the revelations of the Italian prime minister, Giulio Andreotti, in 1990. In Greece, a similar ‘stay-behind’ operation codenamed ‘Red Sheepskin’ had been admitted by the then defence minister, Giannis Varvitsiotis, to have been active up until 1988, seven years into PASOK’s government. Clyde Haberman, ‘Evolution in Europe; Italy Discloses its Web of Cold War Guerrillas’, New York Times, 16 November 1990.

\(^{29}\) Ethniki Politiki Enosis (National Political Union): a party led by Georgios Papadopoulos, the imprisoned leader of the junta regime, who appointed Nikolaos Mihaloliakos as a leader of its youth branch. Makis Voridis, infrastructure minister in Papadimos government in 2011, and health minister in Samaras’ government in 2014, had been secretary of EPEN’s youth branch.

\(^{30}\) Enióio Ethnikistikó Kínima (Unified Nationalist Movement).


Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and sensational media attention to crimes involving Albanian immigrants, exacerbated that nationalism and xenophobia. In the cultural mainstream there was a renewed trend for a ‘return to the roots’, a glorification of ancient culture and an exaggerated reverence for the Greek language, together with a condemnatory stance towards any attempt to deconstruct simplistic nationalist narratives.

With the liberalisation of television frequencies in 1989, several new private television channels opened. One of these new television channels was Telecity, which openly promoted far-right ultranationalist, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic propaganda. Its owner, Georgios Karatzaferis, a ND MP who was later expelled by ND leader Kostas Karamanlis in an attempt to appeal to the centre, managed to build his political career and empower his new party, LAOS, through his television appearances. Telecity, true to its owner’s far right affiliations, increased the media coverage of Mihaloliakos, senior GD members, and other personalities of the far right, such as Kostantinos Plevris. This coverage served to legitimise, if not popularise, their xenophobic and anti-Semitic discourse. The growth of nationalism through the ’90s was initially capitalised on electorally by ND and later by LAOS, although GD retained close links to those parties and benefited as well.

Through the ’90s and ’00s, reports presenting evidence of GD’s collaboration with the police reappeared numerous times. Some members of GD even left the party in the late ’90s, disappointed about this collaboration, reporting that the police frequently asked them to stage riots against student demonstrations. The most significant of these reports was the leaking of internal police documents regarding the case of ‘Periandros’, a GD member who was sought by the police for the attempted murder of a leftist student, but had not been captured for 8 years because of the unwillingness of ‘half of the police force’.

The increase in GD’s police-assisted attacks could be said to have coincided with the gradual ending of the short-lived ‘social democracy’ in Greece, when the two main parties, PASOK and ND, began to pursue policies of privatisation, labour flexibilisation and the restructuring of higher education and social security, against which significant protest movements had been formed, as discussed in Chapter II. GD was then apparently sanctioned by the police to act as an additional vigilante force and assist the policing of the most defiant sections of those movements.

33 From 1993 to 2000, Karatzaferis was elected MP with ND. In 2000 he launched his own party, LAOS (Popular Orthodox Rally). In the 2007 elections his party entered the parliament for the first time, and in November 2011 LAOS participated in the technocratic Papadimos government obtaining two ministries. In the elections of May 2012, LAOS lost most of its voters to GD while several of its prior MPs had already joined ND.

34 Konstantinos Plevris was the founder of the 4th August far right organisation in 1960 (named in the memory of the Metaxas dictatorship) and a KYP agent during the Colonels’ dictatorship. He is also the author of numerous anti-Semitic and homophobic books.


36 A list of reported police assaults on immigrants and leftists are listed by Psarras, for many of which GD members supported police operations, and, if arrested, they were readily released. Psarrás, Ι μαίρι ευλοχ, 85.

37 Kousoumvrís, Gkrimizquntas ton myíbo, 26.

38 Athanasiou, ‘Αστυνομικοί κάλυπταν’.
GD’s visibility increased further in the ’00s with the influx of a new wave of immigrants from Asia and Africa.\textsuperscript{39} This wave was less fortunate than the first wave of Albanian and other Eastern European immigrants, who had managed, to some extent, to be integrated into the Greek economy in a period of economic growth. These immigrants were heavily exploited, employed informally in agriculture and construction, and were used as cheap labour for the 2004 Olympics construction projects.\textsuperscript{40} But soon, as the economy began to slow down, many became surplus to the requirements of Greece’s businesses. With Greece being one of the main entry routes to the EU, and the only entry route by land, the EU Dublin II regulation of 2003 made the situation even harder for those immigrants, effectively trapping them in Greece, by assigning responsibility for processing asylum applications to the first EU country of entry. This meant that Greece would have to become a major site of EU border policing. In response to these demands, the Greek state followed a policy of discouragement by intensifying the policing of existing immigrants and making it almost impossible for them to make asylum applications,\textsuperscript{41} with near-zero chances of success if they did make one.\textsuperscript{42} This created a marginalised class of people trapped within the country without papers, many of whom became trapped under slave-like conditions in agriculture, while others resorted to unlicensed street trading, as well as the drug trade and sex work, to survive, constantly persecuted by the police. Continual references to the ‘decline of the Athens city centre’ in the mainstream press implicitly or explicitly meant that marginalised immigrants had no place there and that it had to be ‘cleansed’.\textsuperscript{43}

As with the policing of social movements, also in this case, GD has had a special role to play as the vigilante branch of the police, whether in collaboration or pro-actively, since ‘cleansing Greece of illegal immigrants’ is one of its utmost aims. Its members and supporters began to appear alongside police operations, presenting themselves in the media as ‘indignant citizens’ (‘agonaktismenoi polites’, cf. the name of the squares movement) who helped the police’s sweep operations.\textsuperscript{44}

\textit{Crisis Policing and Golden Dawn’s Empowerment and Criminalisation}

As we have seen in Chapter II, by the onset of the debt crisis in 2009, a tendency towards the escalation of policing was already under way. The December riots of 2008 already indicated that all

\textsuperscript{39} See Dimitris Psarras, ‘To pogkr—m kat‡ t‡n metanast‡n schediaz—tan id‡ apó to 1997’ [The pogrom against immigrants was planned since 1997], Eleutherotyp’a, 22 May 2011.

\textsuperscript{40} Thousands of non-European immigrants were informally employed in the construction projects of the 2004 Athens Olympics, where there were more than 13 deadly work accidents. Daniel Howden, Nikolaos Zigranos and Nikolaos Leontopoulos, ‘Thirteen workers die as safety standards are ignored in race to build Olympic sites’, The Independent, 3 April 2004.


\textsuperscript{42} Greece’s first instance asylum recognition rate in 2012 was as low as 0.84%. Alexandros Bitoulas, ‘Asylum applicants and first instance decisions on asylum applications: 2012’, Eurostat: Data in Focus, May 2013.

\textsuperscript{43} Giorgos Kandylis, ‘O chorois kai o chr—nos t‡n metanast‡n sto k€ntro‡s Ath€nas’ [The time and space of immigrants’ rejection in the centre of Athens], in To k€ntro tis Ath€nas €s politik€ diakjveuma, ed. Thomàs Maloutas et al., Studies—Research Reports 12 (Athens: National Centre for Social Research, 2013), 257–79.

\textsuperscript{44} Athanasiou, ‘Astynomikoi kalyptan’.
was not well, not only for Greek youth, but also for immigrants, both recent and second generation, whose presence in the riots was significant. From the perspective of the state, the riots called for increased policing and a re-legitimation of police authority. Immigrants, however, felt the response much faster. The strengthening of policing in areas with high concentrations of immigrants was in order, with the assistance of GD, which had just formed its first ‘residents committee’ in Agios Panteleimonas, mostly composed by its own members, but also a number of local shopkeepers. While the police continued its operations in the area, the ‘residents committee’ had its own ‘demonstration’, which involved physically abusing any immigrants encountered in the street and ejecting their children from the local playground. GD’s ‘residents committee’ was successful in its task, so that the area of Agios Panteleimonas and nearby Attica square soon became no-go areas for immigrants. On the basis of this activity, GD was successful also in the municipal elections of 2010, with Nikolaos Mihaloliakos gaining a seat in Athens.

The entry of the far right in the Greek parliament was already a fact a year earlier when LAOS gained over 3% of the vote in both the European elections and the national elections of 2009 on an anti-immigration agenda. The pre-election period was favourable for LAOS, as it coincided with the first-ever combative demonstration by Muslim immigrants, in response to a police officer tearing into pieces an immigrant’s prayer book. This event, and the clashes with the police that followed, was presented in mainstream media as particularly alarming in terms of immigration policy. The punishment on Muslim immigrants for their defiance came immediately: the next day, a prayer room in Agios Panteleimonas was set on fire.

Police violence and its far-right politicalisation began to be increasingly overt as the crisis deepened and the economic restructuring that was imposed as a response to it gained pace. As we have seen, the large protests and frequent strikes that took place since May 2010, when the first bail-out ‘Memorandum’ of austerity and restructuring measures was voted, were increasingly heavily

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45 The deputy minister of public order, Christos Markogiannakis, declared that disorder would be combated with hiring military staff as special guards, creating the Delta team of motorcyclist police, and installing more surveillance cameras. Nikos Chasopoulos, ‘Chr. Markogiannakis: “Den kánó píšō. Me ópoio kóstos, den tha ginei mpáchalo i chóra”’ [I will not give in. At any cost, the country will not fall into chaos], To Vima, 4 April 2009.
46 Psarrás, I meûrí vivilos, 185–188.
48 Georgía Dáma, ‘Ménos MAT, akrodeixiôn’ [Fury by riot police, far-rightists], Eleutherotypia, 20 January 2009; ‘Entonótēri astynoméusi ston Agio Panteleímona yposchēthiíke o Chr. Markogiannákis’ [Chr. Markogiannakis promised stronger policing in Agios Panteleimonas], To Vima, 22 January 2009.
53 ‘Epidromí koukouloufórion ta ximeromáta se autoschédió tsámí stín plateía Attikís’ [Hood wearers raid makeshift mosque at dawn in Attica Square], To Vima, 23 May 2009.
policing. In each of these demonstrations, the police used large quantities of teargas and stun grenades, large numbers of undercover police officers carried out arrests, and demonstrators were physically assaulted. The worst of the latter involved motorcycle-mounted police (DIAS and DELTA teams) who rode into the crowds, hitting protesters. On several occasions in such protests, the police revealed their far-right affiliations, either through wearing ultra-nationalist symbols, or by offering special treatment to members of far right organisations.

At the same time, as discussed in Chapter IV, protests included important tendencies that attributed the crisis, austerity, and the impoverishment they experienced to corrupt unpatriotic politicians and to foreign intervention into Greece’s affairs, most evidently so in the squares movement of May–July 2011. Although the nationalist tendency of the squares movement is often associated with the rise of the GD, a distinction should be made. While, in the summer of 2011, the squares developed an anti-police stance in response to excessively violent policing, in that same period, GD focused exclusively on anti-immigrant attacks and retained friendly relations with the police. As mentioned already, only a few days before the start of the squares movement, on 10–14 May 2011, GD launched a deadly four-day pogrom against immigrants in central Athens, which resulted in 25 hospitalisations and one death by stabbing. Police ran casually behind the attackers, capturing 45 of them but releasing them all later on without any charges. Still, despite this separation between nationalism in protests, which, as discussed, was also very evident in the explosive demonstration on 12 February 2012, and GD’s actions as an organisation, there was definitely a congruence and ideological continuity between the conservative tendency in anti-austerity demonstrations and GD’s ‘anti-systemic’ oppositional discourse, which rejected ‘corrupt, traitor politicians’ and the ‘status quo’, while defending ‘the Greek people’.

The conditions were there for an electoral success of GD, then, but they were made even more favourable in the pre-election period, when racist anti-immigration discourses again became the main strategy of the incumbent parties (PASOK, New Democracy and LAOS) under the Papadimos technocratic government. Amid criticism of the government for disarray and lack of resources in the public health service, its anti-immigration discourse once more came to be about health. Immigrants living in overcrowded accommodation in the centre of Athens were called a


55 On the demonstration of 28 June 2011 this became particularly blatant, as police officers were captured on video giving access to the secured grounds of the parliament to a group of club-wielding men. The men were members of a far-right bus drivers’ union, whom the crowd had ejected from the demonstration. ‘Akredexioi prōn syndikalistés oi koukoulóforoi synomíliths tôn MAT’ [Public Order Unit’s hooded interlocutors were far-right ex-unionists], Ethína, 30 June 2011.

56 ‘Pogkróm katá metanástôn sto kéntrro tis Athínas’ [Pogrom against immigrants in the centre of Athens], TV/X3, 12 May 2011; Sunderland et al., Hate on the Streets, 45–48.
‘hazardous health bomb’, a threat to Greek citizens. The way to ‘contain’ this hazard was to order the arrest and forced medical examination of all immigrants who lived in overcrowded flats, and the evacuation of their buildings, through a ministerial order for the compulsory treatment of ‘at risk’ populations, including immigrants, injectable drug users and sex workers. Busloads of female drug users suspected of sex work were also arrested, subjected to HIV tests, and those found seropositive were charged with ‘intentional grievous bodily harm’ against ‘family-men’—without considering any responsibility among the said men for the transmission of the virus. Then, their photographs and personal details were exposed on prime time television, so that the ‘family men’ would also go for HIV testing if they recognised any of them. The women were detained for a year, and released when it became clear that there was no basis to the charges against them.

In the pre-election period, the issue of opening new detention camps for illegal immigrants was also presented as a matter of urgency, to the extent that several army barracks were turned overnight into detention camps that lacked even basic facilities, amid local protests against immigrants being brought into their region. Clearly, the strong emphasis on the policing of immigration and marginality, and the active cultivation of racism, in the pre-election context was a subject that privileged the incumbents, as policing was all that the semi-bankrupt state could offer its discontent citizens at that point, rather than any kind of appeasement through welfare. Their main opponents, the left parties, were at their weakest on this subject, as their discourse of human rights could not be heard amid an already cultivated popular xenophobia and the patriarchal ‘common sense’ of mainstream conservatism.

The electoral empowerment of GD was expected in 2012, being one of the few remaining vessels for disillusioned nationalist voters, after LAOS collaborated with austerity policies by joining the Papademos government. Yet the size of this empowerment, going from 0.3% to 7%, and gathering support from voters of other parties, even the Communist Party, had not been foreseen. At the same time, seen in perspective, this was only a relative empowerment, taking place in a politically unstable period. Most spectacular in those elections was the rise of SYRIZA, going from a mere 4.6% to 27% and becoming the main opposition party. The latter development to a great extent was due to the appeal of SYRIZA’s discourse of human rights and anti-austerity policies, which resonated with a broad range of voters, including many from the left. The rise of SYRIZA marked a significant shift in Greek political landscape, and set the stage for the subsequent political developments and struggles.

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57 Specifically, the minister of public order, Michalis Chrysochoidis, stated: ‘Athens will be cleansed in a few days. We must reoccupy the public space and not submit to those who want citizens surrendered to fear … In the same blocks reside families of Greeks and immigrants, who are literally in danger from this Health Bomb. There is no time for cancellations and delays. Social peace is endangered, public health is endangered.’ ‘I ELAS xekiná ti ekkenésis kítríon ópou zoun lathrometantés’ [Greek police begins the evacuation of buildings where illegal immigrants live], To Vima, 25 April 2012.


60 The conspicuous links, here, between biopolitical population control, racist immigration policing, and misogyny, will be discussed in the following sections.

61 ‘Athóoí oi orothetaikés katṓpin diapómpeousí’ [HIV-positive women acquitted after public shaming], Ethneteráptía, 17 January 2013.

62 ‘Oi próstoi 56 metanástes metaférrthikan sthn Amygdaléza’ [The first 56 immigrants transferred to Amygdaleza], To Vima, 29 April 2012. As we have see in Chapter IV, immigrants frequently rioted or went on hunger strike against their detention and the conditions under which they were held.
extent explains the almost anachronistically anti-communist discourse of the new ND-led government.

GD, according to exit polls, was most attractive for young unemployed men.\(^{63}\) The theory of petit bourgeois conservatism is then not sufficient to explain its rise,\(^{64}\) because its appeal to proletarians also seeks an explanation. In connection to the conjuncture of the crisis, it is indicative that an anti-political sentiment was the main reason for this voting choice, and immigration the second.\(^{65}\) It then appears that GD gained votes by selectively reproducing the nationalist anti-establishment discourse popular in the demonstrations that preceded the elections. Yet in practice GD redirected this anti-political sentiment into formal politics and into the armed policing operation they had been involved in for decades, financially supported by protection racketeering, vigilante services, sex trafficking and other similar activities.\(^{66}\) Much was made in the media at the time about GD’s ‘socially beneficial’ practices:\(^{67}\) there was positive publicity about how GD members’ supposedly helped terrified old-aged ladies walk through the mean streets of Athens;\(^{68}\) about how it offered free meals and collected ‘Greek’ blood donations ‘for Greeks only’;\(^{69}\) about how its vigilante abuse against unlicensed immigrant street vendors, amid accusations that the police failed to enforce the law;\(^{70}\) their interventions in hospitals, ordered by hospital managers, to remove immigrant carers who ‘took away Greek jobs’.\(^{71}\)

The electoral success of GD would not have been such a significant event had it not been followed by the steep increase, during and immediately after the May 2012 elections, of the numbers of racist assaults, stabbings, murders, and destruction of homes and shops of immigrants, which remained at a high level for the following year.\(^{72}\) The collaboration between police officers


\(^{64}\) See, for example, Miliós, ‘To zitíma tón mikroastón’.

\(^{65}\) Georgiadou, ‘I elékologi ánomos’, Table 3.


\(^{67}\) Most mainstream television and newspapers vastly increased their exposure of GD from 2012 to 2014, often favourably. They publicised ever more hateful racist language and violence, whilst taking a distance from any accusations of ‘racism’, and adding to anti-immigration panic with shows and articles about the ‘fear’ ‘caused’ by immigrants. Christína Pántzou, I cháméní nífulítita: Metanásteui kai ratištikíkos lógos sta MME [Lost composure: Immigration and racist discourse in the mass media] (UNHCR Greece, 2013).

\(^{68}\) This news coverage turned out, after GD’s arrests, to have been entirely manufactured by the newspaper that first ran the article, which systematically supported GD. Psarrás, I Maírí Vílos, 380.

\(^{69}\) O ýmnos tón nazi sto “sýsítio múno gia Ællínes” [Nazi anthem at ‘food rations for Greeks only’], Eleuthero-

\(^{70}\) Two GD members were convicted for their attack on immigrant street vendors at the Mesologgiou street market, and it was also revealed that the president of the street market had invited them to do this ‘job’. 1465/2012 Mon. Plim. Mesologgiou.

\(^{71}\) Elena Fyntanídou, ‘Apomomφí tís dioikítou tou Nosokomeiou Trípolíis gia tín éfodo chrýsaugíton’ [Tripoli hospital director ousted for Golden Dawn offensive], To Víma, 9 February 2013.

\(^{72}\) Over sixty racist assaults were reported by the Pakistani Community only within the first two weeks after the elections. They also assess 700 to have taken place up to 17 January 2013, when Shehzad Luqman was murdered. Newsroom DOL, ‘Auxítíma ta ratištikí epíseidía metá tís eklogés tís 6ís Maíou’ [Racist incidents up since 6 May elections], In.gr, 11 June 2012, http://news.in.gr/; Pakistani Community of Greece,
and GD in those attacks, as well as those that have taken place against gay men and left or anti-racist protesters or organisers, was, by early 2013, well-documented. The police have not only been inactive when witnessing racist assaults, but they have even joined in, while actively discouraging immigrants from filing complaints and even destroying their legal documents. Migrants often found it hard to distinguish between GD and plain clothed police officers. GD themselves have boasted about the support they enjoyed within the police and the armed forces. Yet no police officer was prosecuted, and evidence linking GD and police officers with racist attacks was ignored by government officials, until the murder of Pavlos Fyssas in September 2013, when a series of raids revealed evidence of systematic collaboration and participation in GD’s protection rackets, leading to prosecutions.

On the contrary, and not surprisingly, considering the electoral threat from SYRIZA, the government’s discourse and police repression consistently targeted ‘the left’, unionised workers and those opposed to environmentally damaging development projects (the case of Skouries, see Chapter IV). In October 2012, anti-racist protesters were detained and tortured by police officers who, according to the arrestees, boasted about their GD membership. In December and January 2013, three occupied social centres were evicted in the area near Agios Panteleimonas, the central GD stronghold, and 100 people, anarchists and anti-fascists, were arrested. In the same month, strikes


73 By September 2013, when GD was declared a ‘criminal organisation’ and its MPs were arrested, the ESRC-funded research project ‘The City at a Time of Crisis’ had created an interactive map of racist attacks, most by GD and police officers, containing 148 incidents since May 2011. ‘Map of Attacks on Immigrants in Athens’, The City at a Time of Crisis, accessed 28 September 2013. http://map.crisis-scape.net/main.


76 One police officer was even exempt from a court hearing on the basis that he had committed the acts ‘after his regular shift’. Vasilis G. Lamprópolous, ‘I EL.AS. vgázei ládi to dikí tîs “Ampou Gkrâimp”’ [Greek police whitewashes its own ‘Abu Ghrâib’], To Vima, 30 May 2013.

77 According to the Civil Action Memorandum, a large number of police officers who acted as security of GD MPs joined in GD vigilante actions. The deputy police commissioner at Agios Panteleimonas police station has also been charged with dealing drugs and weapons and running a protection racket in collaboration with GD, and the commander at Nikaia police station, known for the routine torture of immigrants, is accused of supplying information to and protecting GD.

78 The case of the torture of anti-fascists by police was publicised in the Guardian (9/12/2012). There were also several incidents of attacks and threats against lawyers supporting immigrants. The state also went as far as prosecuting human rights organisations for ‘slander’, after they sent a letter to the police authorities posing questions about the treatment of immigrants in Samos. Kiniôstî gia ta Anírhopîna Dikaíomata Alllêgívî stous Prosfígeis, ‘Enimerôritiko Delito - Samos’ [Information Bulletin - Samos], Group of Lawyers for the Rights of Migrants and Refugees, 30 May 2013, http://omadadikigorwn.blogspot.co.uk/2013/06/.

79 The occupiers at Villa Amalias were even charged under the provisions of the anti-terrorist law for collecting empty bottles at their bar, on the argument that these could be used to make Molotov cocktails. The police used rubber bullet weapons in all of the raids. Dionýssi Vyrhóullas, ‘Villa Amalias: Asfonomikî epichîrîsî metá apô kataggelia gia narkôtîkà’ [Villa Amalias: Police operation after drugs complaint], To Vima, 20 December 2012; Vasilis G. Lamprópolous, EL.AS.: “Emfânise” ópla pou richnouv sfairês kaotsoûk’ [Greek Police: Rubber bullet weapons introduced], To Vima, 10 January 2013.
by transport workers were strongly repressed and declared illegal. The same policy was followed towards strikes by secondary education teachers against school closures and staff reductions in May (see also Chapter IV). Through the spring, campaigning residents of Skouries were arrested in a series of dawn raids into their homes. In June, unpaid seafarers on strike were also arrested for blockading ships, and ERT was forcibly closed with all of its 2,700 workers summarily dismissed within a day (see Chapter IV), via a legislative act that by-passed the parliament. Meanwhile, small businesses, property owners and even the owner of Perama shipyard, have been known to enlist GD vigilantes against labour protests and unions, or to threaten immigrant tenants.

The government’s permissive stance towards GD and its heavy repression of left movements fit not only with its aim to implement the restructuring and manage the resistance to it, but also with the main governing party’s own political history and composition. A section of the members of ND have traditionally come from the far-right. Georgiadou discusses the strategies New Democracy has historically used in order to position itself favourably vis-a-vis the far right in different political conjunctures. Up to 2009, ND followed variously strategies of incorporating the far right or demarcating itself from it, as it did in 2000–2009 in order to appeal to the centre. Under the leadership of Antonis Samaras, from 2009 onwards, the far right was re-incorporated into the party and the same strategy was followed after GD’s ascent, by making friendly openings to GD, until the murder of Pavlos Fyssas. The latter allowed the government to criminalise GD and gain back a small section of their voters through a renewed strategy of demarcation. Under Samaras, ND welcomed some very vocal ex-members of LAOS (Adonis Georgiadis and Makis Voridis), while another far-right politician, Failos Kranidiotis, was the prime minister’s special advisor.

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80 Achillás Chekmoglu, ‘Paránomí i apergía se Metró, ÍSAP kai Tram’ [Strikes at Metro, ISAP and Tram illegal], To Vima, 21 January 2013.
81 ‘Epistráteusi tòn kathígíton apofásezi i kivérniá’ [Government decides epistrateusi for teachers], TVXS, 11 May 2013.
82 ‘Dyó naurtérgates synelíthísan gia to “mplóko” stí Rafína’ [Two seafarers arrested for blockade at Rafína], TVXS, 07 June 2013.
83 ‘YPOIK: To nomikó prósoipo ERT A.E. échei katagíthei’ [The legal entity ERT A.E. has been abolished], Nautemporiki, 11 June 2013.
84 After GD’s arrests, evidence also came up that GD had set up a union at Perama shipyard, in collaboration with employers, in order to break existing leftwing unions. They also launched an organised assault against KKE unionists at Perama, a few days before Fyssas was murdered. Theres is also anecdotal evidence from members of the Union of Waiters and Cooks in Thessaloniki, June 2013, who engaged in a street fight with GD members of Mr. Samaras’ older party, Political Spring. ‘Mákis Vorídis kai Fails Kranidíotis stín yperásipi tou
Most glaringly, only a week before the murder of Pavlos Fyssas, a ND MP stated that his party would consider a coalition with a more ‘serious’ GD.⁸⁹ ND’s government policy, accordingly, appealed to ultranationalist and racist concerns, alongside its support for austerity and the restructuring. Almost immediately after taking power, the ministry of public order unleashed an anti-immigration operation, called ‘Hospitable Zeus’, which involved indiscriminate arrests of foreign-looking persons to certify their documents. On several occasions this resulted in unlawful beatings and detentions of unsuspecting non-white tourists.⁹⁰ Once more, the vigilante participation of GD members proactively ‘assisted’ the police, by delivering immigrants into police stations. There were also government efforts to purge immigrant children from kindergartens,⁹¹ to take away the right to citizenship from second generation immigrants, and to limit recruitment in the police and the armed forces to those who are Greek ‘in genus’.⁹² Alongside GD’s rising homophobic assaults,⁹³ the police embarked on arresting and humiliating any transgender woman they encountered in the streets of Thessaloniki.⁹⁴

Alongside its crusade against immigrants and the left on the political front, the ND-led government also took a hard line in implementing the privatisations, austerity, and layoffs that were part of the restructuring by bypassing parliamentary procedure. They did this by issuing emergency legislative acts, as for example in the case of the ERT closure, or by banning strikes and threatening striking workers with ‘political conscription’. The executive bypassed the state’s own laws in the name of ‘national emergency’ repeatedly. This practice, combined with sanctioned police abuses and a friendly stance to GD, had the advantage of being nominally democratic, while in effect resembling authoritarian forms of rule.

In the next sections, this increased power of the executive will be discussed further in the context of the crisis of national sovereignty and the management of surplus populations. But it is worth noting already the systematic temporal and spatial expansion of a state of exception as part of the state’s crisis management strategy. Up until 18 September 2013, the date of Pavlos Fyssas’ murder by Golden Dawn, the Greek state appeared to be increasingly resorting to extra-legal (permissiveness to GD, police collaboration) as well as legally exceptional (emergency legislative acts)
means of imposing the restructuring. On one hand, the state covered up GD’s collaboration with
the police, allowing and politically legitimising its attacks on immigrants and left activists, which
were, to a very significant extent, strike-breaking and vigilante services to Greek employers, busi-
ess owners and landlords. On the other hand, the state intensified both legal police repression as
well as the use of emergency powers to ban strikes indefinitely (ship-building, transport workers)
and to impose mass layoffs (ERT). With GD’s presence in the political scene, a discourse around
the question of legality also gained ground, as GD claimed to be ‘enforcing the law’ that the state
was supposedly unable to impose against the ‘violence’ of immigrants and left activists. This al-
lowed the government to promote a ‘theory of the extremes’ that equated left and right ‘extrem-
ism’, attempting to place itself in the moderate, democratic, and law-respecting political centre.

The War Discourse of the Restructuring

The governments that managed the crisis and implemented the restructuring from 2010 to 2014
suffered, as we have seen, by a radical loss of legitimacy. Their electoral contraction was unprece-
dented. The 2012 government of ND/PASOK/DIMAR was fragile, but, in contrast to Papandre-
ou’s government, it followed an unapologetic strategy of counter-attack, by putting the issue of
immigration centre stage and targeting social movements and its major political opponent,
SYRIZA. This strategy was temporarily favourable. No more major demonstrations and social
movements were formed, despite the continuation of the restructuring. The question of immig-
ration redirected attention away from the burdens and social disintegration caused by austerity, and
projected these problems outwards to an ‘external’ element, one that does not ‘belong’ to the Greek
society, which, if eradicated, the problem would be solved. It also divided those movements along
the lines discussed in Chapter IV. The unresolved debates about immigration that had appeared in
the squares now broke out into a conflict between ‘fascism’ and ‘anti-fascism’. The most conserva-
tive part of the movements appeared to have been attracted by GD’s anti-immigration anti-
Memorandum discourse, so a lot was at stake for those who opposed it. The government itself
presented both of these sides, as well as SYRIZA, as ‘extremist’, while benefiting from the external-
isation of the problem offered by anti-immigration discourse. The discourse of ‘extremes’ was
apposite, since, as already discussed, the level of violence in social movements had escalated from
2008 onwards. Yet this accusation harked back to dated anti-communism.95

The reemergence of a renewed ‘right versus left’ polarity that had gradually become mar-
ginalised in the post-dictatorship era was then another function of this discourse. This ‘right versus
left’ discourse did not stop at the issue of immigration. The government utilised a typical trope of
the far right, in identifying the entire post-dictatorship period as one of left extremist disorder and
left ideological hegemony, in a way that exonerated the governments of the period, and favoured
the implementation of the restructuring. Unifying the multifarious forms of resistance to the re-
structuring in the ’80s, ’90s and 2000s as ‘the left’, the latter represented the ‘vested interests’ and

95 Aris Ravanós, ‘’I ideologikí ígemonía tís Aristerás, o néos echthrós tou Samarás’ [Ideological hegemony of
the left, Samaras’ new enemy], To Vima, 29 February 2012.
the ‘old corrupt status quo’ that led the Greek state into a semi-default status. This narrative not only vilified what remained of workers’ unions, but it also presented the government as bold leaders who brought the desired progress and development to the country. The more authoritarian the imposition of the measures, the more valiant their promoters were meant to appear.

This might seem like a familiar neoliberal motif, but in Greece this narrative gained an additional aspect of historical revisionism, which has multiple manifestations. It encompasses an academic revisionism that produces reconsiderations of contested moments of Greek history, such as the civil war, from a ‘corrective’ point of view that, despite its right-wing perspective, presents itself as a the long-awaited return of objectivity in Greek historical science, and a ‘lay’ revisionism that presents the dictatorships of the 20th century as the golden ages of Greek history. The history of the civil war and the colonels’ dictatorship carries an enormous weight in the definition of political identities in Greece, and the shift in the ‘official’ narrative revealed that a reconfiguration of ‘reality’ was part and parcel of the restructuring: such a crucial reconfiguration of the economy could not but come with a political reconfiguration of history and memory. These historical narratives, which are not really new, but are actually a repackaging of the state narratives of the civil-war period and the dictatorship periods, are to a great extent directed towards ‘reassessing’ and vindicating (a) the pre-war openly fascist dictatorship of Ioannis Metaxas of the 1930s which is credited with ‘introducing’ social security; (b) those who fought on the side of the Germans and the state against the communists in the civil war; (c) the anti-communist 1966 Colonels’ dictatorship, credited for the economic growth of the 1960s.

This ‘reassessment’ of the past was more than an apologetics for the historical predecessors of the right. These examples of ‘successful’ authoritarianism of the past served a present where the heavier repression of workers and social struggles ought to be legitimised. Erasing the history of the opponent—the labour movement and other social movements associated with the history of the left—was clearly a tactic of war. In combination with the use of extra-legal and legally exceptional means, heavy police repression, the theory of the extremes and racialising practices, this was part of the reconfiguration of reality necessitated by an economic, social, and political restructuring. In the

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96 For example consider Stathis Kalyvas’s work on the Greek civil war. Kalyvas, a member of the right-wing Konstantinos Karamanlis institute, has collected interviews on the civil war from the traditionally rightist Argolid region, suggesting that ‘red terror’ drove the people of the region to collaborate with German occupiers. Kalyvas’s has also insisted on counting war victims based exclusively on right-wing accounts. While these accounts are worth examining, the problem with Kalyvas’s work is that he generalises from them a new historical narrative, which he presents as a ‘fresh approach’ free from ‘ideological fixations’. Stathis Kalyvas, ‘Red Terror: Lefist Violence during the Occupation’, in After the War Was over, ed. Mark Mazower (Princeton: PUP, 2000), 142–83; Stathis Kalyvas, ‘Emfílios Pólemos (1943-1949): Το Τέλος Τόν Μυθόν Και Ι Στροφ Προς τη Μαζικό Επιπέδο’ [Civil War: The End of Myths and the Turn to the Mass Level], Epistimiai Kai Koinonía, no. 11 (Autumn 2003). For one of many critiques in the ongoing debate see: Hagen Fleischer, ‘Î kókkiní’ kai i ‘máurí’ via [‘Red’ and ‘black’ violence], To Vima, 10 January 2010.

97 To boost this revisionist trend, the newspaper Kathimerini published a biography of the dictator Ioannis Metaxas in its ‘leaders’ book series alongside personalities such as Aristotle, Alexander the Great, and Ioannis Kapodistrias. Marina Petrakí, O Ioannis piso apó to Metaxa: O príthetaugías tou ‘Ochi’ [Ioannis behind Metaxas: The prime minister of ‘No’], Iğetes [Leaders] (Athens: Kathimeriníns Ekdóseis, 2014).

new reality, labour ought to recognise that it is no longer an equal ‘social partner’ represented within the state, but a mere cost in the production process, which must be shed when superfluous. The re-emergence and re-definition of those histories of war signalled a state that openly now took a political position of war, by openly adopting a new, partisan stance in relation to the history of those wars. This contrasted the stance of the post-Metapoliteusi state which aimed for ‘democracy and reconciliation’ and condemned prior dictatorships while remaining neutral and silent towards the civil war.

Yet the discourse against the Metapoliteusi (seen as a period from 1974 onwards) was not initiated by ND or GD. It has been particularly influential since the late ‘00s and was manifest in the squares movement, interpreted in both libertarian-democratic perspective (the revolution against the dictators did not go far enough, expressed in the slogan ‘bread, education, freedom, the junta did not end in 1973’) and in reactionary ways that were nostalgic of the junta (a new junta was needed to punish traitor politicians and promote economic growth). Again, this criticism united radically opposed viewpoints under similar oppositional practices. After the 2012 elections, this split became more obvious and openly politicised.

Interestingly for this conjuncture, while the ‘enemy’ in the state’s war discourse was effectively a class enemy—those at the bottom of social stratification (illegal immigrants); the remaining labour unions that decided to act at all; the militant left; those who opposed development projects—it was rarely identified as such from either of the two political sides. Instead, both the right and the left side of the conflict identified themselves as representatives of ‘the Greek people’. The left narrative of the past wars—the civil war, the struggle against the junta—did not present its history from the perspective of the Greek labour or communist movement, but as a history of anti-imperialist national liberation. The anti-fascism that was reawakened in this conjuncture was an anti-German anti-Nazism, identifying GD as the descendants of German collaborators. In framing events in this way, for the left also, national sovereignty was at stake first, and class struggle was again understood through the anti-imperialist lens. Both sides of the conflict then produced narratives of national unity and of ‘collective national interests’. The left parties—as well as parts of the anarchist/antiauthoritarian scene—attempted to oppose the restructuring by putting forward an anti-imperialist discourse against ‘the Germans’ that was not that dissimilar in its externalising function to that of populist far-right discourse. Particularly after the bail-out of Cyprus in March 2013, they attributed the latter—and by extension the Greek bail-out—almost exclusively to ‘German interests and hegemony’.

While favouring a far-right or radical right discourse, the government also wanted to position itself beyond this conflict, by presenting itself as the agent of moderation, democracy, and legal-

99 Cf. Foucault’s discussion of historicico-political discourse and its use as a weapon of war in its claim to truth. ‘We have a historical and political discourse—and it is in that sense that it is historically anchored and politically decentered—that lays a claim to truth and legitimate right on the basis of a relationship of force, and in order to develop that very relationship of force by therefore excluding the speaking subject’. Michel Foucault, Society Must Be Defended (New York: Picador, 2003), 53.

100 Here note again the slogan ‘EAM, ELAS, Pyrines tis Fötías’, referring to the Cells of Fire Conspiracy as inheritors of the historic nationalist-communist revolt in WWII and the civil war.
ty amid violent and dangerous ‘extremes’. Up until the murder of Pavlos Fyssas, and while ND appeared to wish to incorporate the GD opposition, taking such a position was untenable, because it openly targeted the left only. GD’s racist violence was systematically downplayed and used to garner support for heavily policing the other ‘extreme’, demonstrators or strikers. In this discourse, riots in demonstrations were just as ‘extremist’ as murdering immigrants, and the case of the deaths at Marfin (see Chapter IV) was continually reminded. ‘Violence’ lost its context and became detached from the power relations of which it was part, except in the case of ‘legitimate’ state violence, where the context entirely wiped out the violence of the act. Framed in this way, GD’s own action was also presented as more legitimate, since it at least enforced immigration laws in a vigilantist way (pointing to police incompetence) instead of opposing the law. The political bank robberies carried out by a group of anarchists, including Nikos Romanos, and the escalation of the street conflict between GD and anti-fascist groups played into this argument, but not convincingly enough, since ND opposed an anti-racist bill that would criminalise hate speech. It was only when action was taken to arrest GD members after the murder of Pavlos Fyssas, that the government’s ‘anti-extremist’ position began to appear barely plausible.

After Fyssas’ murder, GD was suddenly named a criminal organisation and its main leader and several MPs were arrested. Implicated senior officers of the police and intelligence services were fired. The investigation even reached a head of ship-owning business, Anastasios Pallis, suspected to have funded and provided GD with weapons. This was an unprecedented move by a state that had tolerated GD’s activity for almost 30 years. Strangely, GD’s supposed popular base (up to 15% countrywide in some polls) hardly showed up to support its leaders who were being prosecuted, at a time when its very survival on the political scene was at stake. The government’s about-turn took the anti-fascist movement by surprise, and leftist analyses debated whether it was intended to neutralise a political enemy, to avoid new riots, or to submit to pressure from EU partners. Yet the spectacular legitimising effect of this reaction should not be underestimated. With GD’s extra-legal vigilante contribution to repressive crisis management expelled, the empowered discourse of legality could open the way for the formal legitimisation and normalisation also of the emergency restructuring measures taken by the government until then. The spectacular rejection of the extra-legal could be seen as part of a process of normalising the exceptional. At the level

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101 ‘Profylaktistóoi oi sullithéntes gia tí diplí listéia ston Velventó’ [Velvento double robbery arrestees remanded in custody], To Vima, 6 February 2013.
102 Aris Ravanós, ‘Styllonei ta pódia to Maximou gia to antirastištiko nomoschýedio’ [Maximou resists antiracist bill], To Vima, 23 May 2013.
103 A much weaker version of anti-racist legislation was reconsidered in 2014, as well as the possibility of extending civil partnership laws to same-sex couples. However, ND MPs continued to resist the legislations, making homophobic comments in parliament. Helena Smith, ‘Greek laws ‘fall short’ as racist and homophobic violence surges’, The Guardian, 7 September 2014.
105 Only around 200 people turned up to protest the highly publicised arrest of GD’s leader, Nikolaos Mihaloliakos. Later, on 26 October 2013, a larger protest managed 2,000 people at the most.
106 The arrest of GD members and MPs and the ‘exposure’ of their crimes was truly a spectacle. For two weeks, all the mainstream media had full and detailed coverage of all the police operations and their findings, taking over an enormous proportion of television time.
of political discourse, it also neutralised the political anti-fascism into which left parties and anti-authoritarian groups had invested so much of their energies.\textsuperscript{107}

We discussed the limits of this political anti-fascism in Chapter IV. The removal of GD from the political scene and its inability to form a movement did not mean the disappearance of racialising nationalist discourses, police abuse against immigrants in streets and in camps or racist employer bullying and violence. Yet these issues became politically secondary after the arrest of GD, reconfirming the political focus of this anti-fascism.

\textit{Anti-Fascism and Left Nationalism}

Having already discussed the struggles of immigrants and the anti-fascist movement in Chapter IV, here it will be important to consider a particular characteristic of the anti-fascism produced in this period, which belongs in this chapter. This is another corollary of the unsettling of the hierarchical global division of labour: left anti-imperialist nationalism, which, as already explained, also takes the contradictory (but with a historical precedent, if one looks at the history of WWII) form of nationalist anti-fascism. As already mentioned, after the 2012 elections, the prior fragile unity of anti-austerity protests was radically divided into right and left versions of anti-austerity. The polarisation between GD’s ‘national socialism’ and anti-fascism became extremely strong, precisely on the issues of solidarity with immigrants and labour struggles.

Away from any ‘theory of the extremes’, here it is not my aim to equate the left with the right-wing position in this polarisation by way of a critique of nationalism. It is important to point out that, for all its contradictions, the anti-fascist camp was formed to counter nazi vigilantism and police abuse, and is not merely a mirror of its own enemy. What was at stake, for the left anti-fascist camp, was an end to the restructuring and the defeat of far right ideology. As we have seen in Chapter IV and the previous section, although much of the conflict took place in the street, its focus was primarily ideological. The anti-fascist camp was diverse, consisting of the entire spectrum of the Greek left, from social democratic and socialist parties (even including DIMAR, which was part of the government coalition until June 2013) to insurrectionist anarchists. Yet, in frequently deploying the history and historical political discourse of the classic division between left and right in Greece (the civil war), it tended to produce a left unity around this tradition. Despite long-running divisions within this left spectrum on the issues of nationalism, statism, and democratism, the dominant anti-fascist discourse tended to favour anti-imperialist theories of ‘people’s oppression’, drawing analogies between the German occupation and German hegemony in the EU, and reawakening a mythical image of WWII communist anti-fascist national resistance.

While initially this anti-imperialism was characteristic mainly of the parties left of SYRIZA (and the left wing within it), in the crisis it tended to expand to extra-parliamentary factions and even to anarchist-anti-authoritarian groups. Slogans reminiscent of the civil war became more com-

\textsuperscript{107} See the discussion on the limits of this political anti-fascism in Chapter IV.
mon in anti-fascist demonstrations led by anarchists,\textsuperscript{108} despite their traditional enmity towards the Communist Party. The anti-nationalist left opposition has been small, mostly composed by pre-existing anti-fascist groups.\textsuperscript{109} For SYRIZA, which had already grown into second party and a serious election contestant, this reunification around the problems of fascism and what many called the ‘state of exception’—referring to the new government’s tendency to bypass the parliament—provided ideal conditions.

This ideological trend can be understood in the context of the worsening position of Greek labour in the international labour market, as the restructuring, imposed by European institutions and Germany as Greece’s major creditor, compressed the value of local labour power. This bottoming of the value of labour power in Greece as opposed to other EU countries, and particularly Germany, could appear on the surface as if there is a transfer of value from ‘Greece’ to ‘Germany’. The quotation marks have been used here to indicate the absurdity of conceiving of national economies and their diverse populations as unitary entities or even as personified subjects between whom acts of exchange take place. The lack of distinction between different classes and business interest groups, state property and finances, common and private land, national economies and nationalist narratives, produces the personification of the suffering looted motherland, which is not only the sum total of its people, but something even more noble.

Leftwing anti-imperialism, to be sure, is frequently more sophisticated than this.\textsuperscript{110} We have seen in Chapter III that many Greek economists have developed theories of this kind of value transfer via trade imbalances in the Eurozone.\textsuperscript{111} These theories acknowledge that domestic capital is always the first to benefit when the local price of labour power goes down. They do not equate a country’s working class with its capitalist class and its (collaborating) government. Yet they easily fall prey to the the productivist and moralist accusation of lack of patriotism against the upper classes and power-holders of a country whose labour power is cheapened and its productive forces ate left ‘undeveloped’ (see also Chapter II for a discussion of this classic left criticism of the Greek capitalist class). The living tradition of left civil war discourse concerning bourgeois collaborationism also matches this narrative perfectly, while the repeat appearance of Germany as the enemy is

\textsuperscript{108} The most common slogan representing this is ‘EAM, ELAS, Meligalas: this is the way for people’s victory’, a direct reference to a well shaft in the town of Meligalas, where, in September 1944, the corpses of defeated Security Battalion soldiers of the collaborationist Ioannis Rallis government were thrown, after their defeat by the communist forces of EAM-ELAS. Golden Dawn organises a pilgrimage to the location each anniversary of the event to commemorate the victims.

\textsuperscript{109} A backlash against left nationalism, and its common anti-Semitism, was the relative empowerment of an ‘anti-Hellenic’ theoretical current that is influenced by German ‘anti-Germanism’. The journal \textit{Terminal} \textsuperscript{119} has represented this anti-fascist tendency, whose prime target is anti-Semitism. \textit{Terminal’s} anti-German / anti-Hellenic stance however is not anti-nationalist, because its anti-fascism insists on a principled defence of Israel, failing to criticise the nation-state as such.

\textsuperscript{110} Although it is not always, despite the sophistication of its authors on broader philosophical issues. One example is Agamben’s suggestion for a Southern-European ‘Latin Empire’ against the North, which, he argues, is trying to impose its protestant work ethic on freedom-loving southerners. Giorgio Agamben, ‘The “Latin Empire” should strike back’, \textit{Libération}, 26 March 2013.

\textsuperscript{111} Mavroudeas and Paitaridis, ‘The Greek crisis’; Lapavitsas, \textit{Crisis in the Eurozone}. 
uncannily fitting. In this narrative, the working class is the genuine representative of ‘the Greek people’; it represents the nation itself. From this point on, the discourse on ‘treason’ can easily cross the boundaries of ‘left’ and ‘right’ political discourse: leading politicians can be ‘traitors’ both because they ‘collaborated’ with the Troika and because they allowed the ‘invasion of illegal immigrants’, both of which affect negatively the relative price of the domestic labour power.

The popular sway this discourse holds cannot be understood if it is merely dismissed as a false ideological construction. In addition to the fetishism of finance, which appears as expropriation (see Chapter III), the ideology of nationalism, of a people with a common origin, destiny, and belonging, is founded, at the most banal level, on the historical production of nation-states as organised political and economic communities, which have real validity in the daily activities and experience of individuals. Besides, it has really been German politicians who have repeatedly insisted on austerity in Greece from the position of creditors. The very existence of nations and their hierarchical relationships depending on their economic power, of national citizens and their rights, of the differential values of labour in the global labour market, all this reproduces the validity of nationalist ideology. If today’s struggles become entrenched in defending the interests of a national citizen, and, for the left, a national working class, it is also not because they are just swayed by

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112 Consider the demonstration in protest of Angela Merkel’s visit to Athens on 9 October 2012, where swastika flags were set on fire. Graeme Wearden, ‘Merkel visits Greece as 50,000 people protest’, The Guardian, 9 October 2012.

113 G. Linardis, ‘Ἅσυμμετρη ἀπελεύθερη έρωμα εἰς λαθρομεταναστήν σῆμα Πατρίδας μας’ [The asymmetric threat of mass illegal immigrant invasion into our Fatherland], Chrysi Angi, 5 June 2015.
ideology, but because labour interests and demands cannot but be experienced as local and national. Labour power only exists as internationally differentiated, and the labour struggles of each country can only respectively fight for their own position in the labour market.

Yet we should also point out that this de-facto nationalism of labour demands was not evident in the labour struggles of this period, but in GD interventions against them, as well as in the discourse of parties and left intellectuals. Labour struggles did not voice nationalist demands, but they also did not question their national and ethnic limits by forming effective ties of solidarity with immigrant workers. Left anti-fascism then remained, to a great extent, circumscribed by its focus on a political struggle, which, despite its questioning of GD’s racism and proclaiming proletarian internationalism, did not go far enough in challenging the tradition of left anti-fascist patriotism and practically confronting the social divisions between Greek and immigrant proletarians. As we have also seen, struggles in the crisis in Greece did not produce a radical questioning of proletarian conditions of existence, which might perhaps also have permitted a deeper questioning of the nation, even as the wage relation treated proletarians as surplus or failed to satisfy their subsistence needs. Instead, the empowerment of anti-imperialist nationalist discourse showed that the labour demand in the crisis is premised upon the affirmation of capital, that is, the affirmation of a (successful) restructuring, even if it should be an ‘alternative’ restructuring led by the left, which purports to reinstate growth and employment.

The Crisis of the Nation-State and the Differential Management of Surplus Populations

We have seen how, in 2012–14, the emergence of nationalist ‘war’ discourses both on the left and on the right was integrated into a kind of political power game. Yet the government’s stance cannot be simply understood in terms of political manoeuvring. As already discussed, the role of government, particularly in a conjuncture of crisis, is not only concerned to maintain its own political legitimacy, but also to facilitate social reproduction. The latter concerns the management of the population and the facilitation of capitalist accumulation in its territory.

Yet, in financialised capitalism, states face restrictions in how they carry out this management, because, apart from being political entities, they are also economic entities the ‘market value’ of whose sovereign bonds fluctuates depending on the health of their finances. This, in turn, affects their ability to borrow and fund their expenses. Particularly after the 2008 financial crisis, it became particularly evident that national states are subject to a financial type of governmentality (see Chapter III), which radically limits their autonomy in governing a territory and ensuring capitalist accumulation within it. In the EU, the interdependence among states effected by the common currency has also meant that states in the eurozone cannot make independent decisions on managing and stabilising the local economy. As discussed in Chapter III, the role of the IMF and the EU, as supranational institutions whose role is to oversee and regulate the European and global economy, is pivotal here, in prescribing policies that can guarantee the continued accumulation and minimise the devaluation of financial capital. This can draw the national state, particularly a deeply indebted
state, into a severe political crisis, in the sense that it can no longer avert social struggles and problems of legitimation, because it no longer has the flexibility to manipulate state policy in order to achieve a balance between ensuring the servicing of debt, continuing accumulation, as well as guaranteeing the subsistence of working and non-working populations.

As we have seen, social movements identified this as a problem of sovereignty and national independence, giving rise to a strengthening of nationalist ideologies. At the same time, Greek governments until the end of 2014 responded to this problem by resorting to heavier policing, inventing new political discourses of legitimising this repression, and allowing the operation of extra-legal vigilante forces of repression. This discourse of legitimisation attempted to reconstruct a national narrative, with preference to a parochial, inward-looking and xenophobic anti-immigrant discourse, at the same time as the national state appeared to collaborate willingly with a wider regional crisis management project that is overseen by supranational institutions. We could call this a kind of compensatory practice that reaffirmed the nation-state in its interior at the same moment of its inability to do so at the level of international relations.

These nationalisms’ most distinctive characteristic is then that they emerge as part of the crisis of the nation-state. Yet this recourse to nationalism is not an anachronism but is also actively reproduced in today’s international capitalism and its crisis. As discussed in Chapter III, ‘globalisation’, financial governmentality and supranational institutions may have challenged the integrity of national economies, but they also reinforce national boundaries through the creation of a stratified global labour market, already marked by a history of colonial racialisation. (Re)racialising immigration controls reinforce this stratification by preventing the global mobility of populations who are integrated as surplus into the wage relation. Controls intensify as the crisis deepens and expands these populations. In many so-called ‘periphery’ regions that were rapidly industrialised over the past decades, this surplus population was produced through the privatisation and/or concentration of land that proletarianised former peasants, forcing them either to work in factories or to end up in vast urban slums. The turning of those regions (particularly South and South East Asia) into a global productive powerhouse also produced populations that could not be formally integrated and at the same time were separated from the land which may have previously provided them with basic means of subsistence. Struggles around this process are still ongoing in places like China and India. A section of these populations has constituted the waves of African and Asian immigration towards Europe in recent decades, amid the war refugees from Afghanistan and Iraq, and more recently the wars in Libya and Syria following the ‘Arab Spring’. In the recent period, and even more intensively in the crisis, immigration has been addressed as a ‘problem’ by discouraging immigration in every possible way through militarised border regimes, mass internment into camps,
racialising discourses, and keeping immigrants at a status of illegality, or a legal low status, for as long as possible. This population management strategy is more intense at the borders of the EU, and it has been further escalated as the crisis and the austerity imposed on Southern Europe produced European surplus populations in these border areas.

The mobility of proletarian migrants towards the EU is not a mere matter of law enforcement, but is managed both legally and extra-legally by the states that receive this population. This is because, while it allows local capitals to benefit from cheap labour, this cheapness is premised upon migrants’ irregularity, that is, their lack of citizens’ rights or any kind of entitlement. In the case of Greece’s immigration policies, this has played out in the preference for ‘fencing’ as opposed to ‘gatekeeping’ external and internal controls. In the policing of its eastern border with Turkey, Greece strengthened its fencing practices with increased EU funding from 2011 onwards, and with the contribution of Frontex forces. Yet a great many immigrants still make it into the country, who are again managed exclusively through spectacular ‘fencing’ measures such as mass arrests in public spaces and placement into detention centres (the Hospitable Zeus operation is characteristic). On the contrary, no ‘gatekeeping’ measures have been in place or actively enforced that would control immigrants’ informal employment or to prosecute their employers. The case of agricultural workers in Nea Manolada and elsewhere in the Peloponnese (see also Chapter IV) is emblematic of the effects of this policy. Immigrant workers are helpless prey to employers who have alternately mobilised GD or the police to terrorise their workforce into tolerating unpaid work and deplorable living conditions. Yet not all of this population is in dependent employment. Another section are unlicensed street vendors mostly of Chinese imported goods. This section has been similarly heavily policed and was the target of highly publicised GD vigilante operations, applauded by many Greek small business owners who viewed street vendors as competitors. Greek immigration policy has then created the conditions for a hyper-exploitable, racialised, and continually persecuted proletarian segment in the Greek labour market, in a way that has benefited the interests of the Greek businesses who exploit them. These policies did not change but were intensified over the crisis period examined. Moreover, as we have seen, the discourses accompanying these operations appealed to the causes of health and hygiene for Greeks.

These policies signal the radical stratification of surplus populations and their differential management by national states. The domestic surplus population, which exploded in the crisis with

118 See Matthew Carr’s extensive journalistic fieldwork along the borders of Europe. Matthew Carr, Fortress Europe: Dispatches from a Gated Continent (London: Hurst, 2012).

119 Greece’s immigrant population as a proportion of its native population was 8.9% in 2013. It increased from 1990 to 2013 by 119%. In this latter statistic, Greece is exceeded by Finland, Spain, Serbia, Italy, Norway, Iceland and Ireland. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2013 Revision - Migrants by Age and Sex (United Nations, 2013).

120 Anna Triandafyllidou and Maurizio Ambrosini, ‘Irregular Immigration Control in Italy and Greece: Strong Fencing and Weak Gate-Keeping Serving the Labour Market’, European Journal of Migration and Law 13, no. 3 (1 January 2011): 251–73.

121 According to Eurostat data, 72,420 were found to be illegally resident in Greece in 2012, all of whom were ordered to leave, while only around 15,746 of those were deported. A very small proportion, 9,575 were able to make asylum applications through Greece’s impenetrable system. It is clear that an enormous proportion of migrants remain in the country clandestinely, constantly at risk of abusive encounters with police.

122 Triandafyllidou and Ambrosini, ‘Irregular Immigration Control’.
extremely high rates of unemployment, is managed differently, through workfare and other attempts to integrate it economically by reducing the price of its labour-power. The exception is if it becomes socially ‘marginal’: employed in the sex industry, having an anti-normative gender identity, becoming homeless or addicted to drugs. Then, in addition to being surplus, its very body becomes a dangerous and abject health hazard for the presumably healthy body of the economically and socially integratable population.

To understand this differentiation it is important to keep in view the constitution of citizenship in the modern Greek nation-state. The war of independence, taking place in a multi-ethnic region and attempting to establish an ethnically pure nation, instituted citizenship mainly by *jus sanguinis* and religion (with few exceptions, for example the ethnically Turkish population in Western Thrace who were not included in the 1922 population exchange, and Slavic populations who were banned from speaking their native languages), an institution that defines racially the Greek nation and national identity. Even today, granting citizenship to long-term immigrants is scandalous: it corrupts the entire narrative that constitutes Greekness, because its identity is not one of empire (incorporation) but one of liberation (separation) in its relation to other ethnicities. To protect a national identity and a concept of citizenship based on ‘blood’ it follows that the biological body of the nation and its health is of foremost concern.

Agamben’s observations on the biopolitics of citizenship and sovereignty are useful here, particularly if historicised. The nation-state’s historical emergence established the rights of the citizen, who has been defined ethnically and racially. National sovereignty produces the citizen, its foundation, as life defined positively as ‘bios’, as political life founded upon political rights, and negatively by the state of exception.\(^\text{123}\) The exception is constitutive of citizenship and of sovereignty itself, and is not only external to citizenship as the outsider, the non-citizen, but also internal to it. The ‘sovereign ban’ under a state of exception has the capacity to render any citizen as no longer a political being, as ‘bare’ life, a mere body, that can be killed within the realm of law. This definitional distinction could explain how exceptional state violence and extra-legal forms of social control and population management, which reduce citizens to their bodily characteristics, as in the case of the women with HIV, are implicit in the very possibility of sovereignty and citizenship. But it can also explain why the immigrant, particularly the paperless illegal immigrant, can so readily be brutalised and killed.

Yet, in capitalism, it is not just the form but also the very content of rights that renders the distinction between bare life and political life problematic. Despite his attention to the increase in the powers of the executive in liberal democracies over at least the past half a century,\(^\text{124}\) Agamben’s critique misses some of the historically specific content of national sovereignty and citizenship in capitalism. It cannot tell us why certain citizens are targeted and not others. At the limit, under the terms of contract, freedom, and equality before the law, the biological life of proletarian citizens (as subsistence) is indifferent. Nobody has expressed this better than Evgeny Pashukanis:

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Man as an end in himself is only another aspect of the egoistic economic subject. … The personality of the proletarian is ‘in principle equal’ to the personality of a capitalist; this finds its expression in the fact of the ‘free’ contract of employment. But for the proletarian this very ‘material freedom’ means the possibility of quietly dying of starvation.125

This becomes most evident when Malthusian ideologies meet the meritocratic principle to deal with surplus populations: ‘we are too many’, and so it must be the weak and incompetent that the laws of the market have expelled from the labour contract. The market has separated the healthy social body from the diseased. The life of the diseased body is either indifferent or it can become undesirable, and falls into the realm of the exception, so that it does not threaten the ‘health’ of the body of the nation by its existence in metropolitan city centres.

In this sense, the repeated objections by the left that the 2012–14 government was becoming authoritarian by imposing a ‘state of exception’ and giving too much power to the executive,126 fails to recognise that this is not an aberration but essential to the constitution of state power and capitalist reproduction. At a moment of crisis, which, as discussed, is a crisis also of the nation-state’s sovereignty, the latter is re-established through the exercise of the exception, whereby certain citizens can suddenly lose some of their rights (strike bans, the sudden layoffs and closure of ERT, physical abuse in police stations), while others can be treated as miasmatic bodies (the arrests and public shaming of HIV-positive women). That the miasmatic bodies tend to be gendered is also not coincidental, given that the prototypical citizen, in whose name the state imposes the exception, is the male head of household. We cannot understand citizenship in pure abstraction beyond its historical forms, and in these, the patriarchal ‘family unit’ has also been central.

But while it is not only the migrant, but also the surplus marginalised citizen who is reduced to bare life, the difference between the two in the constitution of civil society is fundamental. The biopolitical foundation of the relation between civil society and the state indicates its racialising constitution, and how this racialisation is not merely ideological narrative but a practice that reduces those excluded from civil society to their bodily characteristics. This has historically enabled the colonial production of the racialised figures of the savage and the slave, which, as Wilderson II argues, are different but overlap. The savage ‘shuttles between death and civil society’, while the black slave is the definition of social death, as fungible and accumulable body.127 Historically racialised as ‘savage’, the Asian or African migrant is not commodity, but labour. However, this labour is voiceless and exploited under the status of exception. The surplus immigrant faces a more brutal regime of policing than the surplus citizen; ‘blood’ matters, and so does the existing racialising Euro-suprematist ranking of populations, reproduced through the meritocratic and supposedly

126 For example, Christos Simos, ‘Έχει τηθεί σε ισχύ ένα διακρίσιμο κράτος εξαιρέσεις’ [A sustained state of exception has come into action], Ι Αυγούστου, 19 November 2013.
racially-blind laws of the market. Accordingly, the life of proletarians forced to emigrate from regions where the value of labour power is low is indifferent to states, whether as citizens in ‘their own’ country or as illegal immigrants in Europe. The constitutive exclusion of the non-citizen is then confounded by the inclusive exclusion of the surplus proletarian, which also depends on the existing racialised ranking of populations worldwide.

In the current crisis, economic non-integration increasingly means a political non-integration and heavy policing that reproduces the surplus population as non-integrated: how can one be a political individual if they do not enter legal relations of exchange, if they do not enter into relations of production, if they do not perform their ‘social duty’ by working and paying taxes? At the same time as the crisis produces a surplus population, the restructuring has been accompanied by a discourse that transforms labour from a social activity to the social and political duty of the individual (the ‘common good’). In Greece, this discourse has been used against every labour struggle that took place against layoffs and wage cuts, culminating into a valorisation of unpaid and voluntary work: the good citizen demands no wage and does not politicise issues concerning their biological life and subsistence. This is the sense in which proletarians are integrated into the wage relation as surplus.

While a comparison would probably be far fetched, it is worth considering the non-parallelism with the most extreme practical expression of such a discourse of labour as duty, Nazi Germany, to highlight the contradictions of this form of social management. The Nazi regime, similar to contemporary neoliberal regimes, was a backlash to a social democracy in crisis. Unlike the Nazi regime, however, states under the present crisis, and Greece is paradigmatic in this case, while having achieved the political exclusion of workers organisations, they cannot fathom eliminating the surplus population through a war effort, mass labour camps, or mass extermination. The discourse of labour as political duty, then, only functions as a blame game against any remaining labour struggles, and as an allocation of responsibility on unemployed persons to keep looking for work and to accept work offers that devalue their labour power. Even though, with 30% unemployment, it is not practicable for everyone to fulfil this duty, this discourse has a truth in practice: to fulfil this utmost ‘duty’, bearers of surplus labour power are forced to enter into exceptional, that is, either unsupervised or temporarily exempt by the law, relations of production and exchange (informal labour). This is the case not only for immigrants, but also for the increasing number of Greek workers who have been employed in the informal economy, and for workers who can remain unpaid for several months and sometimes never receive their wages. Although the right to enter into the legal contract of selling one’s labour power was always a privilege in Greece, as the informal sector has always been large, the restructuring tended to normalise this condition as new

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129 According to OECD estimates, Greece’s informal sector was about 28% of GDP in 2001. While there are no reliable measures for the size of the informal economy, in many of those measures Greece comes first or very high in the ranking among OECD countries, particularly in those of ‘hours worked’, ‘working without a contract’ (37.3% in 2008) and ‘illegal employed immigrants as a share of total employment’ (4.4%, 2009).
labour legislation removed or weakened previous protections such as collective sectoral contracts and supervisory agencies. The radically destabilised social contract that guaranteed the Greek citizen a relatively protected status as a worker has then also effected a crisis of the citizen’s relation to the state, as older social contracts were dismantled and an increasing number of citizens has been rendered surplus to the requirements of capitalist reproduction.

But while the realm of legal exclusion broadens for the domestic surplus population, citizenship has been also reaffirmed through an even deeper and more violent constitutive exclusion of migrant proletarians. Their position in the racialised division of labour has been reproduced by its criminalisation and the concurrent informal permission of its exploitation. The bearers of this ‘illegal’ labour power are posited as deprived of any qualities that are valued in capitalist society, are dehumanised and naturalised as racial others, which is the very condition of the maximisation of their surplus labour power through forms of extra-legal direct violence by employers, vigilantes, and police. The shootings in Nea Manolada, and GD’s hired vigilantism against immigrant workers are cases in point. Importantly, this is still a wage relation and not slavery: immigrant workers are not owned. This is not the coexistence of a parallel mode of production but a constitutive exclusion of a sphere though which the stratification of ‘double freedom’ and the value of labour power is reproduced by naturalised direct violence. It is then unsurprising that the state did not react to any of GD’s racist murders until it murdered a Greek man, and that it continued its ‘immigrant-cleansing’ operation in central Athens as it was prosecuting GD leaders.

We see then how national boundaries are reinforced at the level of proletarian populations at the same time as they are eroded at the level of capital and economic sovereignty. The nationalism of the restructuring is not anachronistic but is related to the necessities of capitalist social reproduction as the restructuring produces surplus populations: its racist discourse is part of the attempt to manage these populations differentially and contain forms of resistance. The production of a differentiated surplus population in Greece means that to the extent the Greek surplus population begins to bear a certain similarity with the immigrant, its separation from it is reinforced. But, as we will examine further in the next section, this was also a demand that came ‘from below’. After a series of struggles that failed to halt the restructuring, xenophobic racialisation signalled no longer an attempt to retain the older status, but to retain the Greek worker’s relative status as opposed to the ‘foreign’. The fear of a potential ‘nativisation’ of the immigrant surplus population rendered the marginalisation of immigrant populations most urgent, and might explain the relatively high levels of support for GD among unemployed men. This specific mode of immigration control is then not merely a matter of avoiding the costs of the immigrant population’s reproduction, but also a matter of retaining the differential between the prices of the local population’s labour power and that of the immigrant, while devaluing them both, producing cheap and readily exploitable labour markets.


for the remaining businesses that were not wiped out in the crisis. The racism of this period is then, from the perspective of the state, a matter of managing the immigrant surplus population and reaffirming a nation state in crisis; from the perspective of the crisis-hit small capitals, a matter of guaranteeing the immigrants’ hyper-exploitation; and from the perspective of a section of the Greek superfluous proletariat, a matter of guaranteeing the internal proletarian hierarchy between values of labour power. This intra-class conflict is part of the complex dynamic of social conflicts emerging in the crisis.

Racism, Misogyny, Homophobia: Affirming Capital in Fear of the Abject

It was mentioned in the previous sections that support for GD was revealed to have been less significant than it was thought to have been before the murder of Fyssas, considering that very few party supporters made it to the streets when the party leaders were arrested. Yet racism and its propagation in the crisis cannot be reduced to GD voting patterns, which despite everything did not change from 2012 to 2015. A trip to any Greek city and one cannot fail to hear the usual: ‘they are too many’, ‘they take our jobs’, ‘they use the hospitals and the kindergartens’, ‘they send money abroad’, ‘they are criminal’, ‘they are dirty’. For better integrated immigrants, there is outrage that ‘Albanians were elected councillors’. The people who say this will not necessarily be GD or ND voters—they may not vote, or even vote left-wing parties. These attitudes have entered into the ‘common sense’, what politicians love to call ‘the popular sentiment’. This is not always a racism of colour, but it definitely is a racism of ‘blood’ and religion, the definitional aspects of Greek national identity.

The Greek national identity is also a patriarchal one, and, as ‘blood’ concerns reproduction, it is also concerned with the control of women’s bodies and hetero-normative sexuality, in defence of the patriarchal family. During GD’s free rein in 2012-13, the number of homophobic and transphobic assaults and policing increased greatly,131 in line with GD’s misogynistic, homophobic (and ableist) politics,132 and ND’s vehement rejection of EU directives to legislate on homosexual civil partnership. Yet after GD’s arrest, homophobic and transphobic attacks increased even more, with many of these assaults carried out by police officers.133 This coincided with an increase in domestic violence against women, particularly by their unemployed partners, who reported feeling emasculated.134 To make things worse, there was no significant organised or politicised movement akin to the anti-fascist movement to speak out about gendered violence in this period. The coincidence of both kinds of hate violence in the crisis does not appear to be accidental and it ought to be explored.

131 Eleutherotypia, 21/1/2013; Marína Galanoú, ‘Ótan ta trans átoma’.
132 Dimitris Galanís, ‘Anápiroi kai omoofilófloi sto stóchastró tís Chrysi Augís’ [Disabled and homosexuals, targets for GD], To Vima, 24 August 2012.
133 Ioanna Fótiadí, ‘Pithánonoi oio omoofíkés epítheis sto kéntro tís Athínas’ [Soaring homophobic assaults in Athens centre], Kathimerini, 30 August 2014; Newsroom DOL, ‘Antinazi Zone: Meióthikan oi ratsistikés epítheis, aüithikan oio omoofíkés’ [Racist attacks decreased, homophobic increased], In.gr, 31 October 2014, http://news.in.gr.
134 Konstantinidis, ‘Impact of Memorandum’.
Racism in Greece, as suggested already, did not just emerge suddenly in the crisis. White Albanian and other East European immigrants were the first to be the targets of racism as they constituted the first major immigration wave in the 90s. Their ethnic closeness and the ability of the economy to integrate them (under the condition that they were excluded from any labour protections), gave many of them the opportunity to mix into the Greek population: the second-generation are often only distinguishable by their names. Yet racism against East Europeans still persists, and its gendered aspects became most evident in the case of the cyber-bullying rape of a Bulgarian teenager in Amarynthos in 2006, for which the local community blamed the girl, and local courts exonerated the perpetrators. This was an extreme case, reflecting the deeper misogyny that targets migrant women. In the case of the arrests of HIV-positive women, it is indicative that television presenters expected to receive a list of East European sex workers, and their surprise was palpable when they discovered that all the women but one were Greek (and, eventually, a year later, that they were not even sex workers).

Still, the xenophobia against East Europeans cannot be compared to the racism against non-European immigrants, who are not only more ethnically different, but some of them also espouse different religions. It is then not surprising that immigrants from Pakistan and Bangladesh are the targets of the most hatred: it can be remotely tolerable to be dark, but to also be Muslim, as well as constitute the majority of illegal immigrants in the country, is intolerable, as evidenced by repeat attacks at makeshift mosques and racist propaganda in blogs and far-right papers. The prime racist—and unfounded—accusation against ‘Pakistani’ immigrants propagated by far right blogs is that they ‘rape our women’, conveying the visceral fear of miscegenation. From 2008 onwards, when the ability of the economy to integrate the newer immigrants began to stall, the discourse that they are surplus and take the jobs of Greeks was strengthened. While, then, racist discourse was used by the state as part of its restructuring strategy and the policing of surplus populations, it cannot be merely understood as the result of state strategy. The question again emerges of how this racist and misogynistic nationalism is produced and why it has become so popular in this crisis.

While irrationalism and mysticism have historically been used as concepts with explanatory power in analyses of fascism, racism also contains a strong element of rationalism. In consonance with Marcuse’s argument that in ‘advanced industrial society … it is the rational rather than the irrational that becomes the most effective locus of mystification’, perhaps capitalist rationality reproduces and re-mobilises the persisting mystifications of race that also implicate sex and reproductive bodies (blood, genes, essentialised culture, the common history and fate of a ‘people’). This much is evident in Balibar and Wallerstein’s work on nationalism and racism specifically in relation to immigration and crisis, written in the 1980s: racism is the result of, and contributes to, the trans-

135 The local community even organised a violent offensive against feminist and anti-racist demonstrations in their area, which were successful in driving the demonstrators away. For a discussion of the incident see Penelope Papailias, ‘The Screen Of The Migrant Body: Technologies Of Abjection And The “So-Called” Rape Of Amarynthos’, The Greek Review of Social Research, no. 140–141 (2013): 261–73.
137 Herbert Marcuse, One Dimensional Man (London: Abacus, 1972), 194.
formation of rights into ‘privileges that have to be protected or reserved for certain “natural” beneficiaries’. The insecurity of subsistence in the classes affected by crisis fuels panic and a clutching onto those taken-for-granted rights, now reconstituted as privileges, which favours precisely this reconstitution promoted by the restructuring.\(^{138}\) We might call this the ‘rational’ aspect of crisis racism.

In the case of Greece, there are four perspectives from which the control, policing, and violence towards a population of non-citizens, and its ideological and ethical justification on the basis of racialisation can be conceived as based on the rationality of social administration, the calculation of profit, and labour market competition, all of which are consistent with everything discussed so far.

First, as explained at length already, there is the racist rationality of social administration and population management, with which any citizen might identify on the basis that it represents the ‘common good’ or the ‘national interests’. The very posing of immigration as a problem of rational social administration, usually in terms of their usefulness or burden to the domestic economy, instrumentalises the bodies of non-citizens who enter a country’s territory.

Second, this type of management of the migrant population, the ‘fencing’ or ‘cleansing’ of public spaces from migrants through sweep operations, or GD vigilantism, also benefit the employers, landlords, and the petit-bourgeois competitors of migrants (as workers, tenants, street vendors, or small shopkeepers). Indeed, typically, Greece’s small business owners have tended to support the policing of migrants, for exploitative or competitive advantage, especially in the crisis. Beyond the pragmatic reasons, the identification of this class politically and culturally with its integration into the nation state in the social contract that was unilaterally voided with the restructuring explains the zealosity of such support. (See also Chapter II on the political role of Greece’s petit-bourgeois class and the distribution of small ownership and Chapter III on the impact of the restructuring on this class.)

Third, and in favour of a heavier policing of migrant employment, for unemployed proletarian citizens, the control or eradication of illegal immigration is assumed to raise the number of available jobs as well as wage rates, through decreasing competition in the labour market. While, in the period before the crisis, the petit-bourgeois class was widely seen as the dominant voice of racist discourse, as expressed by ‘residents committees’ concerned with property prices and the ‘cleanliness’ of their neighbourhoods,\(^{139}\) in the crisis, working and unemployed proletarians increasingly joined in, as is evident through voting patterns for GD, whose electoral results, beyond the traditionally far-right region of Lakonia, were highest in traditionally working class urban neighbourhoods. As mentioned, the scale of racism in Greece goes far beyond voting patterns, and SYRIZA’s victory in the 2015 elections should not be considered as reflecting the smaller scale of the problem. In the crisis, the pressure of unemployment heightened the perceived threat of a

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\(^{139}\) Kandylis and Kavoulakos, ‘Framing Urban Inequalities’. 
migrant surplus population through its labour market pressure. It would then be wrong to reduce the rise of racist nationalism to a middle class or petit-bourgeois phenomenon. It is important to not only understand racism in the terms of struggle between classes but also recognise the element of intra-class competition when immigrants *specifically* (and not every other unemployed proletarian) are treated as a threat to status, jobs, and wages. The mutation of social struggles in 2012–14 into a conflict between neo-Nazism and anti-fascism may then become clearer. The weakness of labour struggles, and the strengthening of nationalist opposition to the restructuring encouraging a logic of supporting the interests of a national ‘people’, can perhaps be seen as not the result of the complete disappearance of class identity and its replacement by racism, but rather as the continued validity of a class identity, however fragmented and contradictory, that identifies with the interests of the nation and its capital.

Both of these latter two perspectives also extend to the first perspective above. The standpoint of ‘our economy’ is adopted, that is, that of capitalist reproduction, which requires investment, jobs, a solvent public sector, infinitely increasing property values, law and order, and citizens performing their duties and being loyal to the state (the nation). Of course, it does not quite work this way. Eliminating migrants is unlikely to increase wage levels, improve hospitals and kindergartens or increase property values that have bottomed out in the middle of the crisis. Yet the culprit for this failure is not sought in the very premises of capitalist reproduction but, instead, in leaders’ mistakes, corruption, laziness, and other moral failings that can only be overcome with better law enforcement or their replacement by new leaders. While this perspective is not satisfied with the realities of the present state of things, is opposed to the restructuring and might join struggles against it, it also entirely identifies with its principles of rational social administration, experiencing them as necessary for the very functioning of society and individual subsistence.

Ultranationalist racism among proletarians can be seen as a desperate attempt at self-affirmation of the domestic proletariat, not as an independent working class subject, but as a mere appendage to capital, variable capital. The weakness of the labour movement and the failure of combative and persistent mass protests to stop the restructuring appears to have strengthened a last-ditch position that affirms a *national* proletarian identity (and citizenship), and which, unlike that of the traditional labour movement, and in a directly hostile stance against it,140 entirely identifies with capital in its demand to re-enter the wage relation as the only way out of the horrible proletarian predicament of being surplus. This is an apparently rational, but essentially self-defeating, answer to the broader dilemma facing proletarians in the crisis, as discussed in Chapter IV: a wage relation that presents itself as the only option for subsistence, but which fails to integrate proletarians, to meet their subsistence needs, or provide any kind of security. In the absence of a horizon of a workers’ society, and because life in capitalism outside the wage relation is hard to sustain, it all makes apparent sense: it is the understanding of one’s own condition from the perspective of state

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140 According to a poll in July 2013, 60% of respondents supported public sector layoffs. Vasilis Chiotsis, “’Ναι’ από 60% για απολύσεις στο δημόσιο’ [‘Yes’ by 60% to public sector layoffs], *To Vima tis Kyriakis*, 21 July 2013.
management, of capitalist reproduction, which is, in the end, the reproduction of society and of the proletariat as a class with all its internal separations. The naturalised identification of work and the wage with subsistence then is the core content of this nationalism, which appears like a recognition that since ‘we are nothing outside the wage relation’,\textsuperscript{141} we desperately need to strengthen capitalist accumulation in order to become something.

But this fruitless re-affirmation of the national worker is also a gendered attempt to reaffirm the male ‘breadwinner’ who has been ‘feminised’ by precarity.\textsuperscript{142} It is not an accident that the great majority of GD supporters have been male, in great numbers unemployed, projecting an ultra-masculine profile. GD’s politics drew attention to the male victims of the crisis. The crisis may have hit women the hardest, but the distance closed between male and female unemployment, placing a great many men in secondary economic roles in households, and unsettling existing hierarchies.\textsuperscript{143} This was compounded by the closures of a great number of family businesses which functioned under a patriarchal division of labour. Not only GD’s revival of violent masculinity in the mediatised public sphere, but also the independent increase in domestic violence against women, and homophobic and transphobic violence, compensated for the 
emasculat\ion experienced by male ex-‘breadwinners’. The rise of male suicides in the crisis attests to the deeply rooted male fear of losing property and (hence) patriarchal control.\textsuperscript{144}

Racist anti-immigration discourse and sexist violence have then risen in the crisis, partly because of the calculating rationalism of defending particular interests of specified groups of national citizens, who are constitutively racialised and gendered, and partly because gendered and racialised hierarchies were disturbed, threatening the status and identity of the male Greek citizen. Racism and misogyny defend the fetish of the unified society contained within the nation-state, the imaginary ‘national community’ of households headed by men. The reproduction of this ‘community’ is the reproduction of the relation of exploitation between the small business owner and his abused immigrant employee or his unpaid wife; the reproduction of the racialised and heavily policed separation between the local and the migrant (surplus) proletariat; the hierarchy between the male and female worker; the elimination of all threats to the ‘healthy’ patriarchal family.\textsuperscript{145} The racialisation of those who are violently policed is consistent with their instrumentalising management as populations whose lives are not ends in themselves and hence indifferent or even undesirable. The content of this racism, too complex to analyse here fully, is the essentialisation and naturalisation of this instrumentalisation, that is, its mystification.

This apparently rationalist instrumentalisation is itself founded on mystifications, on the myths and concepts of the essential (white) European or Greek supremacy; of the migrant as an invading savage, the uncivilised carrier of disease, pollution, crime, and disorder; of the integrity of

\textsuperscript{141} R.S. ‘Present Moment’, 113.
\textsuperscript{142} See Morley, ‘Misogyny Posing as Measurement’.
\textsuperscript{143} Karamesini, ‘Krissi, gynaikes, andrikta tautitia’.
\textsuperscript{144} Madianos et al., ‘Suicide, Unemployment’, 42.
\textsuperscript{145} The link between citizens’ movements in the squares, racism and the hetero-normative reaffirmation of the patriarchal family is also made emphatically by Queericulum Vitae, Krissi mi orti kai allokati [Crisis non visible and queer] (Athens: QVZine, 2012).
the (male) national body whose autonomy, health, and virility are under threat. Among the many psychoanalytic approaches to racism, Julia Kristeva’s concept of the ‘abject’, that which provokes a visceral sense of fear and disgust, may be able to explain the intensity of the psychic and affective aspect of these mystifications. Racist and sexist violence reacts on the fear of penetration of ego boundaries by the other: the homosexual as perceived to be eliciting homosexuality in the ‘straight’ male; the destitute migrant as penetrating national space, petit-bourgeois neighbourhoods, and the national body, by ‘raping Greek women’; the ‘diseased’ body of the sex worker engulfs the male and transmits its illness, weakening and feminising it. Aversion towards the body of the migrant is produced circularly. Its destitution and its reduction to a mere body, through policing and a racialising international labour market that ranks proletarian populations, symbolises the feared and unthinkable—but, at a time of crisis, likely—position in which the Greek citizen may find oneself. Discourses about diseased and unhygienic bodies convey precisely that; an abjection towards the bare, mortal body of the other, to which the other has been reduced, and which must be denied as a possibility for the self.

CONCLUSION
In this chapter we have seen how, in the period since the 2012 elections, forms of social policing posed limits to social struggles, either directly emanating from the state and its strategies of exception, or produced in the racialised and gendered inter- and intra-class domination, which was reasserted in the crisis. The nationalism prevalent in a proportion of social struggles morphed into a political conflict between right and left nationalisms and between fascism and anti-fascism. The most actively racist manifestation of the right-wing nationalism joined in the repression of struggles and the policing of populations, finding validity in the way capitalist society is reproduced in the crisis: an unstable reproduction that, on one hand, deepens the racialised and gendered hierarchy of the labour market, producing populations integrated into the wage relation as surplus, and, on the other hand, presupposes a rational population management, a social administration and policing whose criteria are the facilitation of accumulation. The crisis of the nation-state’s sovereignty and the political crisis in the relation between the state and civil society provokes a retrenchment, along with the racism that is contained in the nation-state’s very definition.

The inability of resistance to austerity to move decisively beyond nationalist discourse limited its ability to question the imperatives of government: economic management, labour productivity, the management of populations and their reduction to mere bodies. This is the point

146 We may mention here the works of Franz Fanon, Wilhelm Reich, as well as recent analyses of nationalism, racism and sexism, as in Lene Auestad, ed., Nationalism and the Body Politic: Psychoanalysis and the Rise of Ethnocentrism and Xenophobia (London: Karnac, 2014).
where, at a moment of crisis, the preservation of the national community against external or internal ‘threats’—which are threats to the ego insofar as it identifies with this national community—can weaken the struggles’ critique of racist violence, the misogynistic criminalisation of female bodies, and the hatred towards non-normative genders and sexualities. The persistence of nationalist anti-imperialist discourse within the left and the anti-fascist movement betray the extent of this inability to separate the nation and the reproduction of capitalist society from the struggle for subsistence, despite the fact that the wage relation no longer guarantees subsistence. On one hand, conservative-authoritarian nationalism identifies with the state and its function of law enforcement in a desperate attempt to maintain one’s social position (with all the affective implications of the perceived threat to the boundaries of identity represented by the immigrant, the marginal, the female, and the homosexual). On the other hand, left nationalism attempts to represent a class automatically defined as national, with declarations of solidarity to immigrants presupposing, and failing to question effectively, their separation. The left imaginary of international and inter-ethnic solidarity is then faced as a contradiction.

Returning to TC’s statement mentioned in the introduction that, in the present period, ‘[t]he proletariat recognises capital … as the only necessity of its own existence’ some additional comments are due. TC lucidly saw that, in the period since the ’70s restructuring, labour has been turned into nothing more than a cost, variable capital. However, they have not foreseen the possibility that a significant section of the proletariat, in facing its own reduction to variable capital, or to a population integrated as surplus into the wage relation, could still see a positivity in its relation to capital, and consume their energies and struggles on formal reintegration into the wage relation. Although TC incisively speak of policing as the main form of social reproduction in this period, they pay less attention to the proletariat’s own self-policing in the name of the nation. TC hurriedly look towards the moment of revolution, where ‘class belonging’ is produced as an ‘external constraint’ and the proletariat faces itself as a limit to be overcome, opening up the possibility of it abolishing itself and all classes and genders. Attempting to theorise the situation in Greece, however, we see another possibility, a middle position, a contradictory one, but still sustainable for some time, it seems, where the proletariat, or at least a section of it, as a population of isolated individuals selling their labour power and not as an organised class, hopelessly defends its proletarian condition as variable capital: since labour power only exists for capital, and subsistence depends on the wage relation, only capital can make subsistence possible. Subsistence without capitalism becomes literally inconceivable. The wage relation presents itself as the only remaining hope, flourishished with ideals of national unity and regained pride, with all its gendered and racialising implications.

This nostalgic authoritarian subjectivity above all values hard work; traditional class, racial, and gender roles; individual responsibility; meritocratic rewards for ‘ability’ and the marginalisation of those unable to ‘compete’, those who are ‘supernumerary’ and represent a net cost to society;

150 Ibid., 114.
151 Ibid. 116–118.
severe punishment for not abiding to laws. The same subject that finds positivity in being mere variable capital reproduces its relation to capital as a citizen facing the state. The identification is internalised: civil society = the nation-state = capital, in response to the crisis of the nation-state and the unsettling of class and gender hierarchies.

Yet, despite its free rein in this conjuncture, the last-ditch authoritarianism which dominated public discourse until the end of 2014 was ridden with tensions created by the fact that a high level of employment, even with bottoming wages, did not appear anywhere in the horizon. In a context like this, SYRIZA’s electoral victory in January 2015 showed that while capital was never in question, loyalty to the nation was not necessarily identified with endless self-sacrifice for the sake of national solvency. These tensions can, so long as the crisis is not overcome, destabilise any remaining positivity in the condition of labour as variable capital. Whether this destabilisation could sooner or later produce the proletarian condition as a limit, in struggles that could reject precisely the condition of being an appendage in the process of capital’s self-valorisation, and further, whether such questioning could coincide with questioning racialised and gendered oppressions, are both open questions.
VI. Conclusion

The struggles in Greece over the recent years exemplify a new wave of struggles in the crisis triggered by the 2008 financial collapse, whose characteristics are unlike those of previous waves of struggles and crises. From the perspective of the Marxist theoretical tradition, the weakness of the labour movement, the absence of a political class subject, and the production of national forms of unity in the course of the struggles in the current crisis has raised important problems. These new characteristics have demanded also novel theoretical approaches that are alert to the specific international and local conditions of the crisis of financialised capitalism in which these struggles take place, and the ways in which they are affected, shaped, and limited by those conditions. Such a novel theoretical approach to struggles is the contribution this project has striven to make to social theory and particularly to Marxist thought. Over the preceding chapters, the thesis offered detailed analyses of social struggles and associated political events in Greece, in the crisis period between 2010 and 2014, aiming to develop existing theoretical tools for analysing these struggles, as well as to highlight these struggles’ immanent limits. Throughout, it strove to criticise and extend relevant Marxist theoretical schemas in light of the problems presented by the struggles themselves, and to go beyond a transhistorical notion of class struggle by identifying the historical and local specificities of these struggles.

Specifically, the struggles of this period in Greece, as analysed in this thesis, highlight the limits of a number of approaches to contemporary struggles. First, they show that the contemporary weakness of labour struggles and class identity is not a contingent outcome of the crisis but is part of a long-running development in the dynamic of the class relation. This means that practices of struggle ought to be looked at in their contemporary historical specificity and not in terms of an antagonism between capital and labour that has remained the same through the past century. Instead of seeking in contemporary struggles elements that are reminiscent of high points in past struggles, we ought to question how struggles position themselves in practice vis-à-vis a the contemporary class relation. This is a relation that ever more violently enforces the conditionality of subsistence upon waged labour, when at the same time it disassociates capitalist reproduction from the reproduction of labour-power. We then ought to ask whether labour struggles today can surpass the dilemma between ever heavier exploitation and complete marginalisation; whether self-management today questions waged labour or reimposes it; and whether self-organised communities can be said to create an alternative anti-capitalist ‘commons’ that transcends its context, or if the relations they foster among themselves reproduce relations of equivalence and economic rationality.

Second, the limits have become clear of approaches that are comfortable with the ‘people’ or ‘citizens’ as the subjects of struggle, as for example those of Badiou and Douzinas. These approaches remain uncritical towards the invisibility and naturalisation of social separations and rela-
Tions of domination reproduced within these generic groupings, as well as through their exclusions. The subjects of ‘people’ or ‘citizens’ in the current context cannot but be racialising figures of unification and separation.

Third, the thesis has shown the limits of those analyses that prioritise either the historical dynamic of the capital relation, or the practices of struggle as social critique, as TC did at earlier stages of their work, underestimating their ideological and political aspects. At the same time, it also highlights the limits of ideological criticisms of nationalism that emphasise the falsity of appearances—as in anti-fascist discourses that attempt to win the ideological debate by emphasising the social construction of nation and race—failing to ask how contemporary nationalisms and racisms gain validity in existing social conditions and forms of fetishism.

Against such approaches, I have attempted a nuanced analysis whose aim is to identify the limits of contemporary struggles’ critique of the forms of exploitation and domination they encounter, but also to identify those forms that remain invisible to them. In doing so, I identified two main elements that have characterised struggles in Greece in this period. The first element is the production of a surplus population in the crisis through the restructuring imposed to supposedly overcome it, associated with the second stage of a shift in the dynamic of the class relation in the crisis. This shift has intensified a core capitalist contradiction faced by struggles: on the one hand, proletarians are entirely dependent on a wage relation that fails to fully integrate them and throws out an ever greater number as superfluous; on the other hand, integration into the wage relation also fails to guarantee subsistence or any kind of security. Struggles have dealt with this situation ambivalently, without radically questioning the terms of the dilemma they have faced. The second element is that the subject of the citizen was the dominant or unquestioned-given subject of struggles in this period, which entailed the often unthought and naturalised exclusion of immigrants from these struggles and the invisibility of gendered domination. These two elements have been related through the production of the citizen as surplus, which signals a crisis of state sovereignty, and a crisis of the relation of the state to civil society. The state can no longer guarantee for citizens a basic standard of living, thus citizen struggles have faced the state as a limit in their demand for democracy, attempting to reaffirm the figure of the citizen that is in crisis. In doing so, they have also reaffirmed the citizen’s boundaries of ethnicity and have imposed the exclusionary unity of the nation-state.

The argument of the thesis has been developed, over the previous chapters, as follows.

First, aiming to move beyond transhistorical accounts of struggle in Greek society, the thesis critically used methodological insights from TC’s periodising schema, and assessed the relevance to the Greek case of TC’s claims on the delegitimation of labour demands in the period after the restructuring in the 1970s and ’80s, the inability of the working class to affirm itself in the face of capital, and the possibilities opened up by struggles facing such a limit. I argue against views that characterise Greek capitalism as in various ways underdeveloped, dependent, lagging behind, or containing pre-capitalist elements. Instead, I analyse the forms of integration of Greece’s ‘semi-peripheral’ capitalism into a capitalist periodisation of ‘social democracy/Fordism’ and ‘neoliberal-
ism’, through an approach that also seeks to move beyond an economistic or determinist account of capitalist development, by looking at the emergence and transformation of Greece’s class structure through historical politico-economic conjunctures and social struggles. The class analysis and periodisation put forward in Chapter II showed that the weakening of the labour movement from the 1990s onwards was not due to a perennial weakness of the labour movement due to the dominance of a large petit-bourgeois population associated with pre-capitalist modes of production. Instead, there is a sharp contrast between the strength of labour struggles prior to the neoliberal-style restructuring, and their weakening through deindustrialisation, segmentation, and precarisation in the post 1990s period.

Critically using insights from TC’s regulationist periodising model, while also arguing against post-colonial critiques of contemporaneity that emphasise local difference without analysing the forms of local integration into an internationalised capitalism, I demonstrate that ‘peripheral’ economies which do not follow the ‘core’ model are still contemporaneous to it by adapting to it and shaping it in local ways, through local and international dynamics and histories of class struggle. Contemporaneity is not defended as a philosophy of time and history, but as a condition produced by the internationalisation of capitalism, which brings into relation and mutual influence and constitution different world regions. But contemporaneity means heterogeneity and non-correspondence between economic and political forms. The case of Greece shows that there was no necessary correspondence between the rapid industrial development of the 1950s and ’60s and a wages-productivity deal or a social democratic social contract. The authoritarian political forms dominant in Greece were the result of a prior history of class struggle (civil war) and international cold war strategy, which meant that, after the communist defeat, workers’ struggles had to be violently repressed. Nonetheless, demand for labour during rapid industrial development did enable the self-organisation of labour, outside its state-controlled formal institutions, something which became obvious after the fall of the dictatorship. Consequently, the ‘social democratic’ deal only lasted in Greece for about 5–10 years, and its ending began when, in the mid-80s, Greece was forced to solve the crisis by following a ‘neoliberal’ model of restructuring like elsewhere in Europe. Yet this restructuring had a specific impact on the Greek economy and was responded to, was shaped by, and later shaped, specific forms of social struggle. I trace this restructuring as the first stage of a shift in the dynamic of the class relation, and examine the forms of struggle in this later period (1990–2008), as a precursor of the struggles in the crisis.

The reshaping of the class relation in Greece could be said to have occurred in two stages. The first stage of this shift was through the restructuring that gained pace since 1990, with which labour demands began to be delegitimised, rendering unviable a positive self-identity of labour in its relation to capital. PASOK successfully transformed the ideal of self-management into the imposition of a neoliberal restructuring. This gradually moved the locus of struggles outside the sphere of production. A deepening segmentation of labour into secure, older, better paid workers on the one side, and younger, lower paid, insecure workers on the other produced a broadening precarious section of the labour force that was barred from official unionism, while unionism itself, and with
that, labour struggles, faced a decline. Struggles, mostly by ‘youth’, then tended to occur increasingly outside workplaces and to focus on indirect wages and state provisions, culminating in the riots of December 2008, which remained in the sphere of circulation.

Demonstrating the second and deepest stage of the shift in the dynamic of the class relation was the second step of this thesis’ argument. Discussing this shift could not be separated from the analysis of the crisis itself, and the political implications of contemporary Marxist analyses of crisis. The aim of doing this was to elucidate the context of the local and international class dynamic that contemporary social struggles had to face, but also to show that Marxist theories themselves have constituted political and ideological interventions that influence contemporary struggles. Apart from establishing, using relevant literature, that the crisis in Greece is part of the global financial crisis and not merely a local problem caused by corruption and ‘profligate spending’, the thesis has also problematised analyses of the current crisis that overestimate the ‘fictitious’ aspect of financial capital and overemphasise the long-run ‘decline’ of the world economy since the 1970s. Following the contributions of Michael Heinrich and Sotiropoulos et al. on the fetishism of capital and the analysis of Marx’s theory of the value form, I argue that the critique of the political economy aims not to liberate the ‘concrete’ reality of capitalist production from the supposedly illusory forms of finance, but rather to develop a critique of value as a social relation, whose concrete forms are inseparable from the abstract ones. The emphasis placed by contemporary analyses on the destructive role of finance has political implications, often beyond the authors’ intentions, inasmuch as the return of industrial capitalism and the reining in of finance are promoted as solutions to the crisis. Such suggestions can inadvertently reinforce fetishistic forms of anti-capitalism like anti-Semitism and neo-Nazism, following Postone’s analysis of anti-Semitism as a selective targeting and personification of the abstract forms of capital.

Critically assessing theories of crisis that associate capitalist development and the theory of the falling rate of profit with a secular decline of capitalism and the production of a surplus population, the view taken here agrees that a surplus population has been produced, but with some caveats. The production of a surplus population is a core characteristic of the changing dynamic of the class relation: it enables the delinking of proletarian reproduction from the reproduction of capital. However, this does not entail a linear increase, on a global scale, of a surplus population that is absolutely excluded from the wage relation. Instead, the wage relation integrates this population as surplus. We can observe the expansion of a population which subsists in a high-labour-intensive informal labour market, and is excluded from the formal wage relation and the most developed, high-capital-intensive branches of capitalism. In the case of Greece, an unemployed population expanded enormously in the crisis alongside the expansion of the informal labour market, while the formal labour market itself became more similar to the informal in contract terms (insecurity, low wages). This is not taken here to be a deterministic trend. Nevertheless, this is the current trend, which began long before the crisis, and is thus associated with the existing phase of accumulation, which has entered a crisis.
The changing dynamic of the class relation was not, however, a direct result of crisis but it was effected through the restructuring that was imposed on Greece via the institutions of IMF, ECB, and EC. I then analyse the policies of the restructuring, and explain how, even though they can appear economically irrational, because they have prolonged the crisis, they still follow the ordo-liberal logic that was foundational in the formation of the EMU, as analysed by Werner Bonefeld. This logic has aimed at the automatic imposition of fiscal discipline on national economies through the removal of monetary control from states and hence the removal of the risks to market freedom posed by mass democracy and ‘class struggle’. But EMU is not the only extra-national control mechanism involved here, since the restructuring can also be said to have been imposed via a form of financial governmentality, which, through the assessment of risk, shapes and reinforces the forms of the exploitation of labour. The restructuring was then imposed through a matrix of national and international political and monetary structures interrelated with the imperatives of financial governmentality. This analysis sets the basis for a critique of some of the misdirected, fetishised targets of contemporary struggles—banks, politicians, financiers, the EU, and foreign imperialist domination—while recognising that they nevertheless appear as the agents of the restructuring.

The dynamic of the class relation then changed through the deep restructuring that responded to the present sovereign debt crisis, imposed by financial and institutional mechanisms of social control. Through it, capital came to treat labour as a mere cost, by integrating a great proportion of labour into the wage relation as surplus, while the wage itself stopped being able to guarantee subsistence. Labour power was now treated as superfluous and its reproduction as radically disconnected from, or even as antithetical to, valorisation. In TC’s words, capitalist reproduction was ‘decoupled’ from the reproduction of labour-power. This constituted the problem faced by proletarians in contemporary struggles: on one hand, being absolutely dependent on a wage relation that treats them as surplus; on the other, the wage no longer guaranteeing subsistence or security (diminution of wages, precarity, missing salaries etc.). The removal of trade protections through the restructuring also destroyed a great number of smaller capitals, adding to the creation of a large unemployed population prepared to work for very low wages, or even unpaid.

Emphasising this shift has been an important part of the argument put forward here, in order to show that the contemporary condition of the labour movement and social struggles is not the eternal condition of labour in capitalism, but a historically specific condition, in which the reconstitution of a well-armed labour movement and a ‘working class’ has not been possible in response to the offensive on labour by the restructuring. This new condition makes it hard to speak, today, of the reconstitution of workers’ power vis-à-vis capital.

With these conceptual tools in place, the thesis proceeded, in Chapter IV, to explore in detail each aspect of the struggles in this period, clarifying both the critical questioning of social rela-

1 Bonefeld, ‘European Integration’.
2 Müller-Armack, Staatsidea, 41.
3 Sotiropoulos et al., Demystifying Finance.
tions that these struggles effected, and its limits. It also showed that these struggles were profoundly affected by the altered dynamic of the class relation, the production of a surplus population, and, as was expanded upon in Chapter V, by the crisis of national sovereignty and the relationship between the state and civil society. The fragmented multiplicity of labour struggles in this period revealed the common pattern of an ambivalence related to the current dynamic of the class relation and the creation of a surplus population. On one hand, the formation of self-managed cooperatives created work and new wage relations, conveying an attachment to a workplace and one’s work, in a context of mass bankruptcies. On the other hand, grassroots unions manifested their relative externality to workplaces and the wage relation, in attempts to blockade or invade workplaces from the outside, in order to take what is owed, or to be reintegrated. This ambivalence questioned the boundaries of workplaces and workers’ attachment to them, but did not question the terms of the dilemma posed to these struggles, manifested also in the conflict between local residents and workers over the mine in Skouries: the dilemma between the absolute dependence of proletarians on capitalist reproduction for their subsistence, and the impossibility of capitalist reproduction to guarantee it or even destroying the most basic resources of life (air, water). Only a very partial and fleeting questioning of this dilemma took place through the interruptions effected by riots, whose practices gained increasing legitimization within struggles.

Yet even these riots were part of larger demonstrations and movements such as that of the squares, whose dominant subject was not ‘the proletariat’ or ‘workers’, but the ‘Greek citizens’, or the Greek ‘people’. While some parts of the riots interrupted circulation and exchange, others questioned only the fetishistic appearance of the causes of crisis (banks) or defended the small property and the social contract that a proletarianising section of the population would have lost, associated with the crisis of their status as propertied citizens. Despite, then, the fact that the restructuring was, above all, an attack on the direct and indirect wage, reconfiguring the dynamic of the class relation, the economic and social existence of a surplus proletarian population did not produce a proletarian political subject, but a national one. These struggles then excluded immigrants through their constitution of an unquestioned and naturalised national subject, so much so that even important parts of the anti-fascist movement failed to overcome this exclusion, constituting immigrants as a third, voiceless contested object, over whose fate they clashed with neo-Nazi gangs.

The question of the citizen subject also emerged, I argue, in the most celebrated aspect of the struggles of this period, the numerous self-organising initiatives, neighbourhood assemblies and ‘solidarity economy’ networks. In these cases, the core ambivalence between a practice of exchange between equals, and practices of unquantified solidarity runs parallel to the problem posed by the figure of the citizen. The citizen posits a unity and equality that renders invisible, and thus reproduces, material forms of inequality and forms of exclusion. I have argued that an interaction based on the exchange of equivalents, and thus on a formal notion of equality that presumes an abstract bourgeois subject, cannot be solidarity, because this perpetuates precisely the forms of exploitation and domination that formal bourgeois equality is blind to. In the fewer cases where forms of equiv-
alence were surpassed, as in solidarity health centres, or in collective kitchens, these practices could not expand, because of their dependence upon the ‘real’ economy, which has placed them under conditions of poverty.

The naturalised foundations of the national unity of citizens and its territorial assumptions were only significantly questioned by immigrants’ own marginalised struggles. Defying their constitution by dominant Greek discourse as a voiceless object, immigrants took over public space in centrally symbolic locations, rioted and broke out of detention camps, and contested the structures of their dehumanisation through hunger strikes.

This analysis, therefore, shows the weakness of approaches that take for granted the national and ethnic homogeneity of struggles in Greece, in which nationalism has been naturalised to the extent that it goes undetected. Similarly, it shows the weakness of the typical left-wing imperative for unity and alliances, when it is precisely these forms of unity that disguise the social separations and relations of domination within generic forms of unification, as well as their racialising exclusions. A case in point, which is, sadly, relatively undeveloped in the thesis, is the almost complete invisibilisation and naturalisation of gender in this period’s movements. The problem of gender only emerged openly through the homophobic and misogynistic reactions to the emasculation of the male citizen-household provider characteristic of Golden Dawn.

Finally, the thesis has carried out a deeper analysis of the developments after the high point of struggles in early 2012, in an attempt to explain the rise of right and left nationalisms, the intensification of state repression, and their interrelation with the rise of racism, misogyny, and homophobia. Against historical analogies with Weimar Germany that have risked oversimplifying a relationship between crisis and the rise of fascism, as well as against a simple criticism of nationalism via ideology critique, the analysis was framed in the terms of understanding the nation-state as internal and external limit of struggles.

The internal limit was produced by the dominance of the citizen as the subject of struggle, a citizen in crisis. The kinds of guarantees provided by citizenship came into both political and economic crisis. The crisis is political, because demands, struggles and, as we know by Autumn 2015, even elections have failed to alter restructuring policies. It is also economic, as the citizen worker became superfluous and is no longer guaranteed a basic standard of living, while a great proportion of the middle class has been similarly proletarianised. Citizen struggles then faced the state as a limit in their demand for democracy and in their attempt to reaffirm the figure of the national citizen that had come into crisis. In doing so, they also reaffirmed the citizen’s boundaries of ethnicity and imposed the exclusionary unity of the nation. This characteristic of struggles gave rise to left-wing anti-imperialist and right-wing anti-immigration nationalisms (as well as various combinations of the two), which brought on a clash between anti-fascists and Golden Dawn, but whose moderate versions also did collaborate, as in the SYRIZA-Independent Greeks government coalition.

The nation-state as external limit of struggles has been its violent imposition of the restructuring. It must not be forgotten that the changing dynamic of the class relation was mediated and
legitimised by the state and its force, through changing and enforcing the written laws by which the class relation is circumscribed. Further, however, the governments of the period up to the end of 2014 also imposed the restructuring through a creative inversion into crisis management of the crisis of sovereignty and the relation between the state and civil society. They did this by reaffirming the boundaries of citizenship through the biopolitical control of surplus populations, populations which are not a homogeneous mass, but are characterised by a racialised and gendered internal hierarchy. The state came to bolster this unsettled hierarchy by proclaiming its conservation of the qualities of the citizen’s body: health, national blood, patriarchal family and hetero-normativity. Migrants and ‘marginals’ that were said to threaten the patriarchal family such as female sex workers, gay men and transgender women were cast as health threats to the civic body that the state is supposed to protect. The continuity between the state’s biopolitical practice and discourse and GD’s racist and homophobic vigilantism then becomes clear.

This final point exposes the deep problems with the uncritical acceptance of ‘people’ or ‘citizens’ as subjects of social struggles in much of the public discourse on the left. Through these years, the anti-imperialist left within Greece, as well as international left intellectuals and solidarity campaigns, have spoken about and supported the undifferentiated subject of ‘Greeks’, as if all ‘Greeks’ are equally oppressed, and the very identity of a ‘Greek’ cannot also be exclusionary and oppressive, or as if one’s birthplace alone determines their role in what are struggles that concern forms of exploitation and social domination within a country. The misery caused in Greece through these years of crisis and restructuring was clearly not imposed equally on an entire country, but it was imposed most heavily on proletarians, and particularly on migrant populations that have suffered dehumanisation, torture, and murder.

This thesis has attempted to go beyond these limitations, as well as the limitations of a conception of class that is blind to racialisation and gender domination. Where an analysis based exclusively on class has appeared limiting, it tried to move beyond it, to also discuss forms of exploitation and domination in their interrelation, without reducing them to manifestations or appearances of a class essence. However, it has not gone far enough in that direction. Despite my theoretical engagement with feminist theory over this period, I struggled to channel these concerns into the thesis. The reason for this may be the methodology followed, which paid attention primarily to the dominant events of struggle in the public sphere, and, in this way, has colluded with the invisibility of gender domination. Indeed, despite the emergence of forms of misogyny and homophobia, in the period examined there have not been any significant struggles specifically around gender. This has meant that this thesis has not discussed sufficiently the gendered dimensions of the crisis, which were buried, again, under the general, or, perhaps more accurately, male, subject of the citizen. Further reflection is required on how a critical approach to social struggles ought to reveal hidden dimensions of domination that struggles themselves do not bring to the surface in an obvious way.

What further conclusions could be drawn from the above observations? Does the vanishing of class, exploitation, gender domination and racialisation under the unified subject of the
national citizen in the most prominent struggles of this period entail the eclipse of these struggles and the unlimited strengthening of nationalism as the most appealing form of self-identification today? While the present thesis only examines the period up to the end of 2014, some speculative assessments can still be made concerning the recent months and the near future. The current conflict within the European Union seems to be pointing towards the strengthening of nationalisms, considering the discourse that has surrounded the negotiation of the bailout agreement by SYRIZA. SYRIZA’s conceding to demands for further austerity under threat of an injurious ‘Grexit’ highlighted incontestably the impossibility of democracy, not only by the spectacular impotence of the 5 July referendum, but also by the contents of the agreement: all Greek government legislations are now to require the pre-approval of the ‘institutions’ before they can even be brought to parliament. Such conditions make the conflict appear with significant validity as one between Greece and German hegemony in the Eurozone. At the level of popular discourse, it has even become one between the Greek unemployed and pensioners on one side, and Northern European ‘taxpayers’ on the other.

Yet, at the same time, within Greece, the referendum campaign has made clearer than ever the class-based character of the imposed austerity. Powerful oligarch-owned media engaged in a monolithic, and eventually unconvincing, campaign for a ‘Yes’. Still, ‘Yes’ was only able to win in the wealthy northern suburbs of Athens. At a time when the legitimacy of the entire political and media apparatus of the Greek establishment has collapsed, a left government has also been forced to impose austerity. Under such conditions, future mobilisations might demand an exit from the Eurozone. But as we have seen, supra-national control is not only located in the Eurozone, but in complex forms of financial governmentality, associated with international capitalist competition to which all states are subject regardless of their currency. The demand for democracy and national independence will then not come to fruition after a potential Grexit, but it will, perhaps, become clearer than ever that democracy can only be realised when the forms of exploitation and domination it disguises, in its bourgeois form, under the figure of the citizen, are abolished. For the moment, with it being clear that there are no longer any democratic avenues or political and legal mediation that can end austerity, it could be that ‘No’ will be expressed in forms of struggle that interrupt the legal restrictions to subsistence, i.e. the normality of commodity exchange, such as the non-payment campaigns and explosions of looting that took place in 2011–12.

At the same time, the above insights make it difficult to predict the re-emergence of a political class subject with an emancipatory programme. The distance of a sizeable surplus population from the means of production, as well as its lack of leverage, make it difficult to envisage a resurgence of workers’ power. Most worryingly, the relative delegitimation of class-based discourse has coincided with the invisibility also of the interrelated forms of gendered and racialised domination.

This condition poses problems for Marxism as a critical theory that is founded on a dynamic of capitalist contradiction and its overcoming, in a revolution carried out by the proletariat. Although fragmentary practices of struggle can still be said today to hint towards a future communist practice, whose definition has been re-opened to debate, immanent critique in the form of
praxis has become more difficult, because the decline of the labour movement and of its political
organisations produces a distance between theory and critical practice.

If communism, taken as the abolition of all oppressive and exploitative social relations, is
not a state of things in the future, but its potentiality is implicit in struggles every time social sub-
jects are formed through their fight against these relations, the struggles of this period in Greece
show that these relations cannot be fought against in their pure ‘essence’. The fight against these
relations is always ideological, and its discourse almost always betrays the fetishism in which these
relations present themselves. Nationalism, attacks on police officers, on politicians, on various
symbols of finance, is part of this fetishism. On the other hand, racist, misogynist, and homophobic
reactions ‘from below’ in the crisis, called forth both by fetishistic forms of resistance, and cultivat-
ed by the state, are actually the rawest expression of the violence that reinforces unsettled relations
of domination and social hierarchies, validated and whitewashed by the figure of the national citi-
zen.

The wreckage of this crisis engenders a dismal situation. But, perhaps, from this wreckage,
a novel synthesis of emancipatory theory and practice can also emerge, which will be able to articu-
late the contemporary condition of the surplus proletariat and the intersectional forms of oppres-
sion it experiences.


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