Infuriated with the Infuriated? Blaming Tactics and Discontent about the Greek Financial Crisis

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Blaming Tactics and Discontent about the Greek Financial Crisis

by Dimitrios Theodossopoulos

The austerity measures introduced as a response to the recent financial crisis in Greece have inspired a wave of discontent among local Greek actors. The latter declared themselves as "indignant" or "infuriated" with the austerity measures. Their indignation, as I demonstrate in this article, has been expressed in terms of diverse arguments that have either encouraged public protest or served as a critique of the protest in culturally intimate contexts. Here, I argue that the critical local discourse about the austerity measures does not merely represent an attempt to evade responsibility but a serious concern with accountability and the unsettling of moral community, which leads local actors to pursue their own interpretative trajectories. The resulting interpretations, in all their diversity, and despite the fact that they do not directly affect political decisions, provide local actors with a sense of discursive empowerment against their perceived peripheralization.

It has been over a year since the world's media "discovered" the Greek debt crisis. During that time we have seen many citizens in Greece disapproving of the financial restrictions imposed "on their lives" by others: their government, European Union (EU) officials, or the world's financial establishment (to mention only some recipients of local blame). A particular Greek adjective—*aganaktisménos* (indignant)—has been put into use to describe the infuriation of many ordinary citizens with those seen as responsible. The adjective has grown to become a noun: the "indignants" (*oi aganaktisménoi*) in Greece are those who challenge the proposition that the nation's citizens have to pay the cost of financial mismanagement and corruption. The particular use of the term "indignants" (plural) was inspired by protesters in Spain, *los indignados*, who took the streets in 2011—often occupying major squares—protesting against the measures taken by politicians, and more generally, challenging the "representational" authority of politicians.

In mid-May 2011, the Spanish *indignados* in the square of Puerta del Sol, Madrid, voiced a public invitation that many in Greece could not resist: "Don't make so much noise, you'll wake up the Greeks," cried out the Spanish protesters, repeating in a hushed tone, "Shh! Don't wake up the Greeks!" In previous work, and following Appadurai (1996, 2001), I have highlighted how local peripheral actors imagine themselves as part of a larger, international community of

discontent (Theodossopoulos 2010), an "imagined community"—in Anderson's (1983) terms—of the disenfranchised with politics, politicians, and "capitalism in its neoliberal, global manifestation" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001). This type of discontent, despite its critical predisposition toward globalization, is often communicated through—and enabled by—the very media of globalization (Theodossopoulos 2010), which sometimes inspire unexpected or antihegemonic political orientations (Gledhill 2010). The Spanish message to the Greeks was circulated through television channels and Internet blogs, and the first mobilization of the Greek "movement of the indignants" (or Indignant Citizens Movement[1]) was organized through Facebook.[2] Its followers protested in major Greek squares but primarily in Syntagma Square (Constitution Square), in front of the Greek Parliament in Athens.

Many protesters in Greece chose to camp in Constitution Square itself (from the end of May to the end of July 2011), thus creating a physical manifestation of their "imagined" community of discontent—one that the members of Parliament convening next door could not easily ignore: their campsite was the starting point of dynamic protest but also worked as a communication station, a forum of debate, and space for socialization more generally (frequented by citizens who did not necessarily participate in the protest). As with the Spanish *indignados*, the Greek indignants espoused a pattern of peaceful protest, unaffiliated with party politics and critical toward the authority of politicians or their ability to deal with the crisis. However, "the indignants in (or, of) the

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1. Kínima Aganaktisménon Politón.
2. Journalists reported that this was the first major movement of political protest to be organized through Facebook.

square,"[3] as they became known in everyday conversation, were not alone in expressing discontent: an overwhelming majority of Greek citizens, during the same period, claimed that they were angry, outraged, infuriated—"exasperated" (see Herzfeld 2011)—focusing (mostly) on the way the crisis was handled by those in power, and (in some cases) with their protesting fellow citizens, and the overall consequences of austerity.[4] "Indignation" soon developed to become a master trope of protest in everyday conversation in Greece.

In this generalized context of discontent I discovered that some Greeks citizens were critically predisposed toward—or even infuriated—with their infuriated compatriots. Some of them referred to themselves, with self-inflicted irony, as "indignant with the indignants" (*aganaktisménoi me tous aganaktisménous*) and clarified that they were equally outraged with the crisis and its effects on their lives but upheld serious reservations about the expressive infuriation (or lack of systematic political orientation) of their more vocal—"self-pronounced infuriated"—fellow citizens. The resulting critique of indignation at the local level included questions such as "who had the right to appropriate the title of 'the indignant'?" or "who was justified to be more indignant than others?" Reflections of this type led to the persistent reinterpretation and reassessment of indignation in local conversation—a practice reminiscent of Clifford Geertz's observation that anthropological data are really "constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to" (1973:9).

In this article I capture ethnographically the local interpretations of indignation (or infuriation) with the austerity policy in Greece, including—to paraphrase Geertz above—narratives of indignation with other people's indignation, interpretative accounts of the "etiology" of blame (Herzfeld 1992). My focus is not on the public manifestation of the protest in and around Constitution Square but on the perceptions of local actors, who talked—approvingly or disparaging—about the role of Others (nation states, politicians, protesters) in the particular crisis (and, in particular, during May–September 2011). My aim is to shed some light on the interpretative trajectories of ordinary citizens and their views about accountability as these emerge in "culturally intimate contexts," where local actors do not hesitate to recognize mutual embarrassments (Herzfeld 1997).

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3. *Oi aganaktismenoi stin (or, tis) platias.*
4. *Aganaktisi* is generally translated in English as "indignation"; this is the direct translation favored by most dictionaries. Herzfeld prefers the term "exasperated" for its capacity to convey a sense of "being pushed beyond the limits of one's patience" (2011:26)—in Greek "*eimai se apognosi*," Panourgia (2011) stresses the term "rage" in her description of the Greek protest (May-July 2011). The terms "outraged," "exasperated," and "infuriated" can all translate in Greek as *exorgismenos, exagriomenos, ekneyrismenos*, each term carrying its own subtle connotations. I have prioritized in this article the term "infuriated," as it better translates the position of those Greeks who declared (in May–September 2011) to be "infuriated with the infuriated" (*aganaktismenoi me tous aganaktismenous*).

Unlike the simplified images of angry, protesting Greeks promoted by the international media, local narratives of discontent in Greece reflect nuanced views, some of which engage with a critique of the protest. Anthropology can make an important contribution in making such views (and their culturally embedded meaningfulness) visible (see also Hirschon 2012). As I will argue in the conclusion, local rhetorical and interpretative tactics—in Greece and elsewhere—do not merely represent an attempt to evade responsibility (which they often do) but also a desire to reinterpret and renegotiate responsibility and blame and assume in this process a small degree of control over a deeply felt sense of political peripheralization.

Methodological and Theoretical Considerations

Fifteen years ago Ortner (1995) observed an apparent lack of ethnographic perspective in the anthropological treatment of resistance. To a great extent her observation is still valid today: anthropologists tend to prioritize their own explanations over those of resisting subjects, analyzing resistance from above or framing their discussions of resistance in terms of overexhaustive historical or sociological contextualizations. As a result, publications about resistance, especially those in article form, have very little space for describing the actual voices and points of view of protesting local actors. This tendency often results in the relative neglect of the local meanings of resistance and the relegation of those meanings as folklore or ethnography subordinate to theory (see Reed-Danahay 1993). This article makes a small contribution toward remedying this problem. My decision to focus on local interpretations of indignation and protest in Greece—privileging local voices of discontent—goes against this general trend of "interpretive refusal" (Ortner 1995:188).

In the ethnographic presentation that follows, instead of discussing the economic background of the debt crisis in Greece—a symptom of a global-cum-European financial crisis overanalyzed by economists, journalists, and political commentators (adopting top-down perspectives)—I prioritize (and provide space) for describing local interpretations of discontent. I contextualize the latter by reference to ethnographically informed accounts from the anthropology of Greece, which pay attention, as I describe below, to localized conversations about timely, wider (national or international) events, highlighting the interconnectedness of local (peripheral) political discourse. My conclusion—which underlines the empowering potential of local rhetoric and its complexity—is once more interpretative in its orientation, and partial. It represents an attempt to shed some light on the Greek protest and invites—through this particular publication medium—further anthropological commentary and debate.

The anthropology of Greece—the field of knowledge that I use to contextualize the ethnography that follows—expe-

rienced considerable growth and diversity in the 1990s (Papataxiarchis 2007) and provided us with detailed insights into the constitution of modern-Greek national consciousness, history, and identity (see, e.g., Brown and Hamilakis 2003; Faubion 1993; Herzfeld 1987; Hirschon 2000, 2003; Just 1989, 1995; Stewart 1994; Theodossopoulos 2007a). It has also explained how the predominant Greek model of nationalism has affected interethnic conflict, such as in Cyprus, for example (Bryant 2004; Loizos 1981; Papadakis 2005; Sant Cassia 2005), or in the context of debates about Greece's northern borders (see, e.g., Angelopoulos 2006; Cowan and Brown 2000; Danforth 1995; Hart 1999; Karakasidou 1997). A result of these studies, and many similar ones that followed, was the deconstruction of identities previously taken for granted and the acknowledgment of cultural diversity within the alleged homogeneity of the Greek-speaking world (Papataxiarchis 2006).

As the number of researchers working on the anthropology of Greece increased in the late 1990s and during the first decade of the new millennium, attention was also paid to how local actors evaluate international politics, perceive their neighbors in the southeast European periphery, and appraise the role of the Great Powers in general (see, e.g., Brown and Theodossopoulos 2000, 2003; Kirtsoglou 2006; Kirtsoglou and Theodossopoulos 2010a, 2010b; Papadakis 2004; Sutton 1998). In this respect, the ethnographers of Greece gradually started engaging with local rhetoric, with how individual actors in particular contexts talk about politics, history, and ethnicity. This attention to local discourse brought anthropology closer to the concerns of its respondents and provided examples of analysis that diverge from the usual academic proclivity to explain social phenomena in a top-down manner. Everyday conversation in peripheral settings, such as the coffeehouse or the kitchen backyard, provided anthropologists with a gateway for accessing local views about wide-ranging events (see, in particular, Sutton 1998). As a result, the spontaneous, off the record, local political commentary, which is exuberantly plentiful in Greece, received the deserved attention in anthropological analyses.

These interventions within the field rest upon the foundations set by the work of Michael Herzfeld, who has meticulously explored the interpretative threads of Greek political rhetoric, often looking at arguments that address ordinary and uneventful processes, the *imponderabilia* of political discourse in Greece. In *The Social Production of Indifference* (1992), Herzfeld looks at the informality of bureaucracy, the frustration of its victims, and the work of everyday stereotyping. He also discusses the excuses of Greek local actors and their responsibility-evading tactics. These involve blaming others for the shortcomings of the self, metaphorically or literally. In the context of discussions about politics and history, for example, blaming other nations and, in particular, the Great Powers, is a rhetorically persuasive tactic for exonerating the failures of one's own nation (Herzfeld 1982). This etymology of blame, Herzfeld explains (1992), plays an

important role in the political theodicy of the Greeks—their theorizing in search of explanations and meaning against the injustice of bureaucracy, state affairs, and politics.

Herzfeld's attention to the frustrations and explanatory tactics of ordinary, everyday Greek actors represents a committed anthropological attempt to acknowledge, and simultaneously demystify, local political discourse in Greece. The strategic attribution of blame, as this is rhetorically reenacted in conversation about politics, is a very good example of defensive nationalism, an attempt by peripheral actors to justify—within their own informal arguments—the official version of history and portray Greece as the victim of other nations (Herzfeld 1982, 1992). With irony, humor, and an astute political awareness, Greek local actors caricature national and international leaders, draw attention to the irresponsibility of the powerful, and often explain world politics in a manner that vindicates others and exonerates themselves. Taking advantage of their own ambivalent position in respect to the West, they are able to employ stereotypes held by Europe about the Orient but also stereotypes used by non-Europeans about the Occident (Herzfeld 1997).

From the point of view of many local Greek actors, stereotyping Others is a successful and well-established blame-evading tactic. In everyday political discourse stereotypes constitute parts of arguments (Brown and Theodossopoulos 2004), used by the authors of those arguments to enhance their self-representation (Herzfeld 1992), establish meaningful categories, explain inequalities, and negotiate power (Theodossopoulos 2003a). Seen from a context-oriented perspective, stereotyping—and faultfinding in the Other—can be seen as a discourse that responds to fear, insecurity, and peripheralization; it is not surprising, therefore, that it is such a popular tactic among less privileged actors in the margins of Europe (Theodossopoulos 2003a:178).

My use of the term "tactic" here alludes to de Certeau's distinction between strategies (of powerful institutions) and tactics (of powerless local actors) but does not espouse de Certeau's individualized (or desocialized) view of resistance as "rooted in a much more fundamental human nature" (see Mitchell 2007:91). I rather see the tactic of blaming Others in Greece as a culturally established discursive weapon, which as Herzfeld (1992) argues, provides a culturally meaningful narrative about what is unexplainable (and not transparent) in the citizen's relationship with the state. The relevance of this tactic becomes apparent in the context of anti-austerity protest, not only in the self-justification of the protesters in the square but also in the discontent of those who are indignant with other indignants.

Therefore, an approach that concentrates on local interpretations and reinterpretations of the protest, and the rhetorical tactics these entail, provides a bottom-up perspective to the complexity of local protest and has two additional advantages: first, the focus on local views, rather than on resistance itself, minimizes the danger of romanticizing local resistance—a common drawback of resistance studies (Gled-

hill 1994; Ortner 1995). The analyst, instead of producing an apology for resistance, is forced to deal with (and appreciate) its local complexity. Second, the focus on local interpretative accounts discourages the pathologization of resistance. Instead of dismissing local protest as local anomalies—"problems of an irrational periphery" (see Gledhill 1999:201)—the ethnographer is encouraged to treat local explanations as repositories of meaning.

As I stressed before, interpretative ethnography is modest and inherently partial in its orientation. Without any doubt, the ethnography that follows does not represent all available views and all Greek "indignants": such a generalization would refute my emphasis on the complexity of indignation. Most of the Greek "indignants" (or those "indignant with the indignants") with whom I spoke are working-class and middle-class citizens in the town Patras, Greece, the site of previous fieldwork carried out between 1999 and 2007.[5] It was some of them who insisted—aware of my interest in the poetics of local discontent—that I should write about the recent "indignation" of the Greeks. As in the past, they invited me once more into their conversations (from June to September 2011) and debated with me and other interlocutors, who were, like me, born in Greece and Patras. Additional points of views were collected from protesters in Constitution Square in Athens (during June and July 2011) but also through discussions with friends in Athens and members of the Greek diaspora in Panama (during April and May 2011), with whom I have established close rapport since 2007. The provocatively indignant views of the latter inspired my decision to write about this topic, so they represent my departure point in this investigation.

The View from Afar: Greeks Not Working Enough

You know very well, as I do, how life is in Greece. One works for every ten who laze around. This is not the Greece of our fathers. This is the Greece of plenty, the Greece of Euro and privilege. But it couldn't last forever. What do you think? Someone has to pay for all this. It is payment time! (62-year-old Greek migrant in Panama City)

For many Greek migrants in Panama the austerity measures introduced recently in Greece represent a sense of poetic justice. The Greeks of Greece, their argument goes, have lived in a state of affluence for the last 20 or 30 years, working less, having more leisure, relying on subsidies—and bureaucratic machinations—to eat/swallow (*na tron*) European or government money.[6] This is a familiar rhetoric that proliferates in more or less self-critical discussions in "culturally

intimate" contexts in Greece or abroad, where Greek actors feel safe enough to expose the embarrassments of their own nation (Herzfeld 1997). I have heard a version of this rhetoric in Panama City, Panama. In the culturally intimate company of other Greeks, and while recuperating from fieldwork in the rainforest, I shared with Greek migrants food—and nostalgia (see Sutton 2001)—but, more importantly, passionate discussions about the latest news from Greece.

There was a surprising harsh tone in the critical views of my Greek friends in Panama. The familiar rhetoric about laziness and corruption in Greece was more unforgiving toward laziness in particular, as it reflected the point of view of men who sweat to earn a living, working hard away from their country, deprived of comfort, but succeeding in acquiring financial opportunities that Greece had previously denied them. From their point of view, the Greeks living in Greece do not work as much, and many do not work at all, living on their parents' money or government benefits. The opinion of Greek-Panamanian friends is fueled by yearly visits "back home" to a Greece that looks different: where a cup of coffee costs 5 euros (or US$8), young men are rude and "sit" in the cafeteria all day, civil servants are inefficient and lazy, and so many people seem to be—in comparison to the work ethic of the migrants in Panama—unaccustomed to hard work.

When I protested that not everybody in Greece is lazy, that maybe the young who "sit" in the cafeteria are unemployed (and cannot find work), that those who run their own businesses (or work in the private sector) have to deal with an increasingly competitive environment, I was dismissed: "Yes, maybe some (people) work more than others, but you know what we mean: you also work abroad." "The young in Greece are spoiled, have (university) degrees, and don't deign to work in the jobs taken by Albanians."[7] Then my migrant friends continued: "Yes, the owners of private business work, but the civil servants *don't* . . . everybody is a civil servant in Greece, almost everybody"; "and everybody has a degree and an attitude, but not the mood for work." "This is why they protest now," "they only know how to spend money and complain."

I would have argued that these harsh views reflect an implicit orientalism toward Balkans countries (Todorova 1997), a dismissive attitude toward non-Western civilizational mentalities—see, for example, Huntington (1996)—that represents a "culturalist," ethnocentric perspective of the type I have objected to in previous work (see Brown and Theodossopoulos 2000, 2003). Yet, the views described above did not intend to argue that laziness is an inherently quality of being Greek. The authors of these views were Greek themselves, migrants in a developing country poorer than Greece, where they evidently work hard everyday. Their stained shirts, sunburned arms, and posture—relaxing after everyday work—embodied a measure of comparison: "the Greeks in Greece do not work that much! Not as much as we do!"

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5. This was fieldwork focusing on local views of, and discontent with, wider political processes; see Brown and Theodossopoulos 2000, 2003; Kirtsoglou and Theodossopoulos 2010a; Theodossopoulos 2004, 2007b.

6. The metaphor of eating is often used to indicate stealing, especially by politicians or civil servants who steal from public coffers.

7. The Albanians here stand for all non-Greek migrants in Greece who are prepared to undertake low-paid manual jobs.

"Much of a rural Greek assessment of character centers on how hard a person works," argues Herzfeld, explaining that a hard-working orientation toward life is not "the exclusive preserve of Weber's ideal-type protestant ethic" but is common in rural Greece (1997:134)—and I would add, in urban working- and middle-class Greek contexts as well. This hard-work ethic permeated the lives of an older generation of Greeks who experienced poverty in the post-WWII years in Greece and has captured the attention of the anthropologists of Greece. The latter described this hard-working orientation toward life as "agonistic" (Herzfeld 1985), a perspective identified elsewhere in south Europe (see Campbell 1964; Gilmore 1987; Peristiany 1965; Pitt-Rivers 1963).[8] It resonates with a perception of life as a continuous struggle (*agonas*) with the land and the moral limits of oneself (du Boulay 1974; Dubisch 1995; Friedl 1962; Hart 1992; Kenna 1990; Theodossopoulos 2003b). In this rendering, work as struggle has cathartic qualities and can be seen as a remedy to misfortune, a justification for a morally good life;[9] to many Greeks, Herzfeld explains, "the attitudes that outsiders would call fatalism is really just laziness" (Herzfeld 1992:134).

Seen from such an anthropological point of view, those Greeks who criticize other Greeks as "lazy"—far from reproducing a Western capitalist ethic or an orientalizing discourse—spearhead their arguments from the same agonistic perspective that inspires the defiant stance of their protesting compatriots. From the point of view of many migrant Greeks in Panama, the Greeks in Greece protest in an orchestrated attempt to maintain a wasteful lifestyle of consumption: the word "waste" (*spatali*) was repeated several times through these discussions in Panama. Instead of working hard to repair the damage—as their grandparents had done in the 1950s—the Greeks in Greece were accused for lacking moral character. As I will describe in the following section, I recorded similar arguments by mainland Greeks of conservative, but also leftish, inclinations. In what follows, I will complicate this view further.

Infuriated with the Infuriated

You think that what we see today with the crisis is all bad. I have seen much worse. I was a young man in the postwar period. I remember the civil war and the poverty in the 1950s. Greece has seen much worse. The young do not know this. They protest because they are spoiled. (85-year-old man in Patras, Greece, July 2011)

I have already discussed how a particular working ethos informs a critical perspective toward protest in Greece. The "myth" that the Greeks (in Greece) do not work (enough) is paradoxically maintained by many Greeks in Greece who work (or have worked throughout their lives) very hard. These can be pensioners (such as the man in the opening quotation above), established small-businessmen, employees in the private sector, but also civil servants in "demanding" services who compare themselves with colleagues in less demanding services. In all these respects, evaluations about how much one works (or should work) are always comparative: the elderly tend to measure prosperity through reference to the decades following the war,[10] the small-businessmen by weighing their investments in personal labor, and the private sector employees by comparing their job insecurity with the security and relaxed working ethos of (many) civil servants.

These comparisons often fuel resentment, which culminates—and is articulated more explicitly—in times of crisis. Many Greeks in Patras, for example, maintain that their fellow citizens who complain passionately in public about the austerity measures are serving their personal or trade-union interests (*prosopika* or *syntehniaka symferonta*). The public and often dramatic tone of the protesters is negatively criticized by equally dissatisfied citizens from the backstage. The latter see the most vocal protesters as self-serving, their rhetoric intended to provoke excitement, a type of rhetorical sensationalism (*entiposiasmos*). They express, therefore, a more conservative dimension of discontent, which diverges from "the rhetoric of the square" in tone and perspective.

Who are these "indignant" critics of "the indignants"? Are they simply those who are politically conservative or more directly affiliated with the political right? It is true that several among the Greeks who are agitated with their most vocal (protesting) compatriots tend to be middle-aged or older, wealthier, and affiliated with the conservative or (the center wing of) the Socialist Party. In Patras, however, I met several leftists, even supporters of the Communist Party, who were critical toward "the protesters in the square" and the direction of their protest. One of them, a communist, focused in the perceived lack of organized political strategy in the movement of the indignants: "I see only confusion. . . . I don't see a vision of resistance; I don't see a program and political arguments." A supporter of one of the smaller leftist parties[11] argued that the indignants who are in the streets "monopolize" the issue of indignation: "I am infuriated too," he said with pointed irony (and without specifying about what, as he

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8. Here I am not attempting to defend the category of the Mediterranean as a unit for analysis, which represents, as Goddard, Llobera, and Shore (1994) have suggested, an invented analytical construct. Nevertheless, the similarities between the Spanish and Greek versions of indignation, and the ease with which the Spanish idiom of protest was translated into Greek, deserve further analysis.

9. Which, in turn, is subjected to vigilant social control through gossip, which encourages a constant underplay of individual success (see du Boulay 1974; Just 2000).

10. Here reference to an idealized past sustains the moral authority of those who can nostalgically evoke it. This is a good example of Herzfeld's (1997) notion of "structural nostalgia": a static past of balanced sociality sets the standards of legitimate arguments in a less perfect (or sociable) present.

11. DIMAR (Democratic Left), is a party that grew substantially—both in support and numbers—prior to the elections of May 2012, the results of which became known after completing the final revisions of this article.

was infuriated with the general circumstances and the pro-testers), "they are not more infuriated than me!"

The voices I have presented so far highlight the complexity of discontent in Greece. Subtle or more serious disagreements have inspired a few individuals with leftist inclinations to differentiate their position from the public expression of the protest or, in some cases, dissociate themselves from it. In this respect, their critical arguments meet in everyday conversation the arguments of (relatively more) conservative interlocutors, who criticize the form and direction of the protest. When the protest culminates in violence and civil unrest, older or more conservative citizens challenge the need for the protest itself—although, I should stress once more, they also declare themselves "indignant" with the overall situation—arguing that the protesters are protesting for the sake of protest, "without an awareness of the seriousness of the situation."

When the protesters in Constitution Square passionately rejected the austerity measures proposed by the government, there were several men and women in Patras who—despite their unhappiness with the measures themselves—expressed the view that there was "no other way": "if those measures do not pass, those in the square will not have salaries or benefits to 'eat' next month." Arguments of this type were voiced by those supporters of the then-ruling Socialist Party and the Conservative Party that initially rejected the austerity measures (only later to support them as inevitable). A committed conservative supporter, a retired woman in her sixties, admitted that her party rejected the austerity measures as an "opposition tactic," but if her party was indeed in power, they would have implemented very similar procedures; she further explained:

> The people do not believe the numbers presented by the government. Why should we believe them? The politicians have been telling us lies for so many years. But now the situation is bad, and there is no other solution. We will have austerity, in this or another way[: whichever political party is in power].

On June 29, 2011, when these particular measures were voted in by the Parliament, and the protesters in Constitution Square exploded in outrage, some critics in Patras commented negatively about the public demonstration of insubordination:

> But the Greeks do not understand the seriousness of the (financial) situation. They think that they can blackmail Europe to donate us the borrowed money! They say: If you do not erase our loan you will drown with us! But is this serious?

Here the agitation of those who are unhappy with the Indignant Citizens Movement is related to the rhetoric of defiance espoused by the protesters. The politics of "we won't pay," I was told, is based on the argument that a potential Greek bankruptcy will make the euro economy unviable, and the European Union has no other option than to bail Greece out

or, ideally, to erase a portion of the Greek debt. A few respondents in Patras, mostly conservative in their affiliation, referred to this expectation as unrealistic, while a left-leaning friend pointed out that it is based on the principles of "blackmail." A supporter of the governing (Socialist) party exclaimed after elaborating on a similar theme: "Who will take us seriously with the policy of the rebel? They will throw us out of Europe!"

For many among the critics of the indignants, who are indignant themselves with the austerity measures, an additional problem is the "public exhibition of inappropriate (for a European nation) behavior in Constitution Square." As Herzfeld (1997) has theoretically clarified, in Greece there is a profound ambivalence—a *disemia*—between public self-presentation (which is expected to be in line with Greece's classic and European heritage) and private introspection (which relates to less Western, intimate identities). In the context of the protest in and around Constitution Square, many Greeks felt offended by what they interpreted as a violation of the nation's representation. A 53-year-old high school teacher, supporter of the Socialist Party, and mother of a daughter (who had joined the protest in the square), encapsulated this as follows:

> I am embarrassed by the image of the square. The day before yesterday I went to Athens and I saw them . . . early in the morning. It was like a gypsy encampment, and there were many low cost plastic and metal objects (*tzitzalomatzala*), Tupperware and young men wearing swimming trunks and underwear. All this in front of the hotels, the tourists, the parliament. This is not indignation, this is embarrassment. What image should we show to the world?

Reflecting on the theme of embarrassment, a left-leaning doctor in his early forties confided to me in dismay:

> What hurts me is that they break the marble [of the pavements] and make the city naked. Marble is associated with Hellenism, with the admiration of the Europeans[: for Greece]! Now there is nothing left to admire. Only rage.

As I have shown so far, dissatisfaction with the protest has been expressed by many Greek citizens in the backstage of social life, behind closed doors, within homes, and in the context of private conversations. In Patras, at least half of my respondents expressed critical remarks about one or another dimension of protest itself. Although all citizens where concerned about—and mostly agitated with—the austerity measures, there were several men and women over the age of thirty-five and affiliated with either of the two majority political parties, who admitted that a certain level of austerity was unavoidable, almost necessary. Many conversations in which I participated ended with contained, implicit, and critical remarks about financial mismanagement in the civil sector, laziness by some fellow citizens, and concern about who appropriates the title of the "indignant" or "infuriated." Here

is one more opinion of representing this not-very-public position of discontent:

> We are not talking about the indignants of the (Constitution) square. Don't be bothered with them! They took (credit) cards and loans, and are infuriated because they lost their "extras." They are the infuriated of the civil sector. The *real* indignants are not in the square.

The Perspective of the Protesters

We don't owe, we won't pay (*den hrostame, den plironoume*). (protesters' call, Constitution Square, Greece, July 2011)

We are not indignant, we are infuriated (*den eimaste aganaktismenoi, eimaste orgismenoi*). (protesters' call, Constitution Square, Greece, July 2011)

In May, June, and July 2011 the protesters in Constitution Square voiced their defiance toward the austerity measures imposed by the Greek government and requested by the European Union. For many this was also an expression of discontent with the economic system that led Greece and other European countries into debt. The protesters with whom I talked highlighted that they were paying the consequences of the mismanagement of others: Greek and foreign politicians, bankers, speculators, multinational banks, and corrupted civil servants. Their infuriation was grounded in a profound sense of injustice that they felt: they—the people of Greece, and the young people of Greece, in particular—are not responsible for the country's enormous debt. The motto "we don't owe, we won't pay" becomes meaningful in the context of this perceived sense of injustice.

On the whole, the issues of justice and accountability were central to the rhetoric and emotional outburst of the protesters; they were also expressed in the concerns voiced by the critics of the protesters, some of which I presented in the previous section. However, the most striking difference between the discourse of the protesters and that of their critics was the stance of open and categorical defiance adopted by the former. They did so with spontaneity, irony, and dynamism, refusing to calculate the consequences of noncompliance to EU regulations and the austerity measures. From their point of view, the economic rationality of the government and the EU leadership was part of the problem: it perpetuates social injustice. So they refused to think in term of consequences such as, for example, what will happen to their country or to themselves if Greece does not comply to the logic of austerity. The rationality of consequences was perceived by many of the protesters as a rhetoric of threats and was dismissed as government or EU propaganda.

The protesters' defiant stance—as in many other cases of resistance (Ortner 1995)—earned the immediate sympathy of this ethnographer and many other citizens in the capital and the rest of the country. Approximately half of my respondents

in Patras commented favorably about the protesters in the square, sharing a strong identification with them. A couple of university students from Patras who study in Athens—and spent lots of time in the square—shared with me details of their participation, the sense of *communitas*—in Turner's (1969) terms—that they experienced during the protest. For them, participating in this public demonstration of discontent was more important than the so-called (*dithen*) rational arguments of those who were more critically predisposed toward the protest. As one of the two students stressed repeatedly (about six times in the same conversation): "I would like us to go bankrupt! To see how it will be . . . to see what will happen then! Yes! Let's go bankrupt!"[12]

This provocative statement highlights the disbelief of the protesters in the announcements of the government that the austerity measures were necessary and unavoidable. It also relies on the belief of many in Greece that the economically powerful of Europe, despite their strict recommendations and formalist (almost punitive discourse), will not let Greece go bankrupt, because they will suffer, in turn, from the chain reaction of a likely Euro catastrophe. As I mentioned in the previous section, some in Patras argue that this argument represents an attitude of bravado and blackmailing. Many among their fellow citizens, however, derive from this logic of European interdependency a sense of empowerment: they see in resistance the possibility of negotiating better terms.

In previous work, focusing on the anti-American discourse in Greece and Panama, I have argued that local actors in the periphery of power derive a sense of empowerment from the practice of discussing in critical terms the policies of the "powerful" (Kirtsoglou and Theodossopoulos 2010b; Theodossopoulos 2010). In the context of the Greek anti-austerity protest, this tactic permeated almost every other conversation. "They are afraid of us!" a protester repeated several times in Constitution Square (referring to the leaders of the European Union), "if we fall, they will perish as well!" Ideas like these inspired many similar arguments of empowerment and fueled the protesters with confidence in defying the "rational" and "technocratic" logic of the austerity measures. It was on these grounds that a 40-year-old civil engineer back in Patras rejected the borrowing of additional foreign money: "They hold us in the intensive care unit, like we are in a coma. If we go bankrupt, this will be a situation. We will come out of the coma, we will become alive again!"

I overcame my initial bewilderment with the self-destructive dimension inherent in this type of argument after several conversations with friends and respondents in Patras, during which the idea that bankruptcy will signal a "resurrection" of the nation reappeared several times: "It is as though they push a drowning person deeper underwater, letting him take a breath every other minute. This is not a life worth living. If we reach the bottom (of the sea), only then will we be able

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12. *Ego goustaro na ginei hreokopia . . . goustaro na do pos einai! Na do ti tha ginei! Nai! As hreokopisoume!*

to burst free and break the bonds."[13] Such radical views, which sound explicitly Marxist, were expressed in discussions about the anti-austerity measures by citizens from diverse political orientations, even supporters of the then ruling (moderately socialist) party. They had been partly inspired by journalistic reviews of the crisis in Argentina and other Latin American countries, which highlighted economic recovery after periods of crisis. The view that economic bankruptcy is not the end of the world was developed through conversations or public protest to a stance of audacity, signaling resistance to the government and the expectations of the powerful of the European Union.

The issue of foreign guardianship (*kidemonia*) similarly fuelled strong reactions, especially among left-leaning indignants, who possessed a very articulate vocabulary to highlight inequalities in the capitalist system. In a similar line, citizens from all political affiliations condemned the "powerful of the world" for Greece's predicament, with refined irony and rhetorical confidence, drawing upon a well-established rhetorical practice in the Greek context (Herzfeld 1982, 1992; Kirtsoglou and Theodossopoulos 2010b; Loizos 1981). Other familiar rhetorical practices, such as "analogic thinking" (Sutton 1998)—the use of lessons from the past to explain the present—were prominent in the many discussions in which I participated in Patras. Here arguments—expressed as lessons from history—focused on the self-interested policies of Western nations, their alleged ungratefulness toward Greece (which has offered so much to Western civilization), and the harsh economic rationality of German politicians:[14]

> The foreigners are worried that we will not return the borrowed money. They don't really care about Greece. They never did. History has proven that, again and again: the nations of the West use Greece for their own interests.

> Ha! The Germans! They say we owe them money! They forget how much they owe to us: the destruction they caused in the war, the war-compensations that we did not claim after the war. History is re-written again. The people of the West were always ungrateful for all that Greece has offered them.

The selective recirculation of conclusions reached in the past, and in the context of other crises, is often used in local political discourse in Greece to strengthen the validity of new arguments (cf. Theodossopoulos 2004, 2007b). Here the latest position of defiance—representing the "we don't owe, we won't pay" argument—was consolidated by analogic thinking and older preexisting anti-Western narratives. On the whole, the discourse of discontent that has emerged in the past year

in Greece is developing—as I am writing these lines—in familiar, and at the same time unexplored, directions, incorporating—every day—new arguments, metaphors, conspiracy theories, and rhetorical twists. In Patras, where I am familiar with the personal histories of my respondents, I documented the expression of indignation as a complex discourse that crosscuts political affiliations and socioeconomic boundaries.

In Constitution Square in Athens, the lack of coherence in political orientation among the protesters, and also the complexity of their social profiles, led some commentators to talk about "tribes of the indignant" (see Georgiadou 2011:101). Political activists of different persuasions, homeless individuals, immigrants, a priest [who set up his own indignant-orthodoxy kiosk], pensioners, dog walkers, and tourists shared hours or fleeting moments in the square. Those protesters who camped on the site, a heterogeneous tribe in discontent, participated in the most dramatic moments of the protest but also relaxed in their tents, used their laptops to connect with other protesters in Spain and Portugal, bought food from the nearby kiosks, talked to the elderly pensioners who frequent the square's benches, entertained themselves with music late at night, and devoted lots of energy and enthusiasm to explaining their positions to passersby.

"From May to July, we felt that the square, was another place to visit. Not only to protest, but (also) to socialize . . . to stop by and talk with the protesters, share our concerns," said a young woman from Patras who now lives in Athens. Individuals who did not wish to protest, or were critical about the protest, visited the square out of curiosity, or to pursue a semiaccidental meeting "with that handsome boy or pretty girl they expected to be there." And later, in the course of July, many protesters departed from the campsite: "It is time for them to go on summer holiday, to Anafi, Folegandros or another island with free camping," said one of the critically predisposed citizens with uncontained sarcasm. Yet, when the police officially closed the site on the last weekend of July 2011, the remaining protesters raised their voice for one final time: "You do not scare us, you infuriate us: we continue peacefully, with determination and creative spirit."[15]

Conclusions

The local views that I presented in the previous sections shed some light on the complexity of the anti-austerity protest in Greece, its dynamic nature, and its capability to move beyond and between traditional political alignments. During conversations about the protest, local actors used selectively left- or right-wing political arguments to arrive at diverse conclusions about the protest, in a desire to explain the financial crisis, make meaningful its causes and, during this process, to articulate their own personal trajectory of discontent. This attempt intentionally engendered a desire to make apparent the

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13. For the importance of the notion of the resurrection of the nation in Greece, see, among others, Millas 2007.

14. In many conversations, Angela Merkel (Chancellor of Germany) became the target of satirical anecdotes in a manner that resembled the local Greek commentary on Madeleine Albright (US Secretary of State) during the NATO intervention in Yugoslavia (cf. Brown and Theodossopoulos 2000, 2003).

15. *Den mas fovizete, mas exorgizete, synehizoume eirinika, apofasistika, dimiourgika.*

unique perspective or circumstances of one's one personal indignation, an intention achieved (in many cases) through commentary about others. In the resulting discourse, many local actors did not merely attempt to explain the causes of the crisis but also the incentives motivating the indignation of their fellow citizens and the policies of other nations: the Other—proximate and personalized or foreign and undifferentiated—provided the point of departure for rhetorical self-reflection (cf. Theodossopoulos 2007a).

And so local commentary often focused on the causes of indignation, the accountability of discontent. In most cases responsibility was traced externally: among wasteful politicians, inefficient civil servants, unscrupulous speculators, and inequalities in the global financial system. This proclivity to explain away problems by stressing external causal factors has been analyzed by psychologists in terms of attribution biases, such as the self-serving bias: the tendency of attributing failure to external situations and success on inherent qualities.[16] In local commentary about politics in Greece, mistakes are frequently blamed on inherent qualities in the character of others: self-interested protesters, lazy civil servants, ungrateful Germans, exploited Greeks. To anthropologists this style of thinking "looks suspiciously like the racial characterology of the nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries, and . . . reproduces the humoralists' practices of dividing up the world into unchanging types of people" (Herzfeld 1992:134). It certainly reminds us of the culture and personality school in anthropology, or Huntington's civilizational orders (1996), types of explanation that resort in caricaturing peripheral actors (or cultural Others) according to stable essentialist dispositions.

To avoid such stereotyping—which is often disguised as "theorizing" in psychology and political theory—I follow here an anthropological and interpretative approach in explaining blame. I call attention to the profound disbelief of most local Greek actors in the transparency of their political system: their aversion for the formalism and inefficiency of Greek bureaucracy (Herzfeld 1992) or their distaste—complicit as this may be—for clientalist structures that have not radically changed in past decades (cf. Mouzelis 1978) and political practices that can still be explained by using classic anthropological work from the 1960s, such as John Campbell's (1964) deeply perceptive analysis of patronage. For Herzfeld (1992) the disappointment of local actors with a disempowering bureaucratic system is negotiated through a secular theodicy of accountability. As with many other flaws in the world that often lie beyond one's control, secular misfortunes (such as a financial crisis) beg explanation: the interpretative attempts of my respondents to justify their protest (or comment on the protest of others) represents such a cultural meaningful

response that resonates with a well-established discourse of attributing blame on systemic factors.

Such interpretive attempts during the anti-austerity protest resulted in multiple interpretations of the crisis, which, although diverse, seem persuasive when they are voiced in local conversation: this is because the recently imposed austerity measures in Greece echo other familiar explanations of bureaucratic imposition or injustice that already have an established place in the local secular theodicy. "Such explanations are not necessarily believed by those to whom they are offered," Herzfeld explains, "but it is not at all clear that belief is the issue" (1992:7). Here, blaming Others to escape responsibility is not merely a rhetorical tactic but is also, more importantly, an attempt to explain—and through explaining decode and make less threatening—an external crisis, which is beyond one's control. It is in this respect that the negotiation of blame in Greece seems less mechanical and more complex than the perpetuation of a self-serving bias.

Seen from this point of view, the process of commenting on the crisis and the austerity measures can be seen as empowering. In previous work I have argued that the discursive practice of cutting down to size (and discussing as equals) the powerful—often in an overtly critical manner—contributes to developing a perspective of local empowerment (Kirtsoglou and Theodossopoulos 2010b; Theodossopoulos 2010). This rhetorical tactic becomes more evident in times of crisis (see Brown and Theodossopoulos 2000, 2003; Loizos 1981; Sutton 1998), but it is also common in everyday social life, especially in the context of dealing with bureaucracy (Herzfeld 1982, 1992). In the context of the Greek financial crisis, many ordinary citizens, unable to change the course of events that affected their lives, looked—as some similarly infuriated Argentinean citizens did 10 years ago (Goddard 2010)—beyond the mechanical rationality of the economic establishment. By contesting the prescriptions of the European financial establishment, the protesters did not explain the problem away (or simply refuted responsibility); they voiced their view that alternative economic and social policies (or solutions) may exist.

Their defiant stance was criticized in less public local commentary by other Greek citizens who adopted positions that did not refute neoliberal economic rationality and also by left-leaning individuals who criticize capitalism on a more prescriptive agenda. As with the protesters, the discourse of those who were critically predisposed toward the protest echoes a very similar desire to assume some sense of control over the interpretation of the crisis. The critics of the protesters were also indignant, and their criticism of particular manifestations of infuriation-cum-protest provided them with a sense of interpretative control over their own perceived peripheralization. Thus, in most cases, I would argue, divergent degrees and forms of (or identifications with) indignation represent a profound desire to (rhetorically) subdue the crisis through interpretation and identify its causes.

The dynamic nature of the resulting (multiple) local explanations of the protest rely, as with other political discourses

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16. The concept of self-serving bias was based on Heider's (1958) work on behavioral attributions. The particular bias has been subsequently criticized for lacking empirical underpinnings (see Miller and Ross 1975). Nowadays, the ambiguity and generality of self-serving judgments is recognized (Roese and Olson 2007).

in Greece (cf. Theodossopoulos 2004), on a combination of new and older arguments. Here uncertainty in the present is negotiated in terms of certainty about the past (Just 1995) and analogic thinking—the interpretation of the present in terms of familiar historical themes (Sutton 1998). In more private contexts, local interpretative tactics also include (in combination with analogic thinking) the sharing of dreams articulating anxiety about (or attempting to diagnose) the crisis (cf. Stewart 2012) and the occasional references to prophecies or conspiracy-prone narratives (cf. Brown and Theodossopoulos 2000, 2003), which "fill the explanatory void, the epistemic black hole, that is increasingly said to have been left behind by the unsettling of moral communities" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2003:287).

Such a sense of unsettlement permeates local discourse about the financial crisis in Greece and fuels the declaration of outrage. The historically embedded relationship between debt and obligation, combined with a perceived lack of social controls or institutions that moderate or cancel debt (Graeber 2011), leads many Greeks to believe, as Herzfeld has recently explained, that obligation is negotiated unidirectionally: the politicians and technocrats that negotiate the restructuring of the Greek debt promote "a one-way indebtedness antithetical to Greek notions of obligation" (Herzfeld 2011:24). Such cultural mismatches, argues Hirschon (2012), represent onto-logical differences in the perception of time, personhood, and authority, and become apparent in the dissonance of expectations between foreign technocrats and local—culturally situated—actors.

In the local context—where social obligations matter—character evaluations provide more persuasive arguments than abstract economic ideas. In the preceding sections I have presented character evaluations based on one's hard (or *not* hard) working ethos, resonating with an agonistic view of life as a "struggle" elucidated by previous ethnographic analyses (du Boulay 1974; Friedl 1962; Herzfeld 1992; Theodossopoulos 2003b). Here, arguments that rely on the semantics of a hard-working ethos draw their persuasiveness by appealing to a moral community—a sphere of sociality—threatened by the impersonal and monetary dimension of the crisis (see Parry and Bloch 1989). Such a demand for resocializing the terms of economic interaction reemerges in different historical periods (Graeber 2011) and should be viewed separately from the pervasive and colonizing consciousness of neoliberal capitalism. In fact, as becomes apparent in the example of Greek "agonistic" ethos (and the related notions of life as struggle and hard work), similar cultural values support the stance of both the protesters and their critiques, both sides being equally concerned about the collapse of the moral community: unemployed "indignants" from both leftist and conservative persuasions demand the dignity of work.

"Embarrassing" examples of protest behavior, such as the destruction of marble around Constitution Square or the encampment of the protesters, are criticized as inappropriate for the public profile of Greece, echoing the *disemic* orientation of Greek local discourse between the formality of public representation and the informality of culturally intimate contexts (Herzfeld 1997). In all these respects, anthropological concepts can help us appreciate the complexity of local discontent in ways that move beyond statistics, mathematical models, and hard data (Papagaroufali 2011). After all, what can be a more striking example of *disemia*—an anthropological concept developed by Herzfeld 3 decades before the current crisis—than the desire of the overwhelming majority of Greeks to remain in the Euro-zone but not abide by the economic rationality that (purportedly) will guarantee Greece's position in the Euro-zone!

As we have seen so far, the threat and experience of austerity in Greece is negotiated in terms of contradictory and complicated "indignant" views, the ambivalent "poetics" of discontent. New types of protest have emerged that defy old political boundaries and affiliations (Yiakoumaki 2011), facilitated by a new digital mediascape that communicates discontent from the bottom-up (Papailias 2011). Yet, older arguments tinted by established political affiliations persist and, as I have argued in previous work (Theodossopoulos 2003a, 2007b), reappear in the form of new combinations of arguments, providing connections between established interpretative threads and the latest news about the crisis. Thus, my interpretation of the local indignation in this article does not attempt to offer an all-inclusive explanation of a developing crisis. It rather represents a modest attempt to draw attention to the complexity and dynamic nature of local resistance, which can be—to paraphrase Ortner (1995:191)—"more than opposition," a "truly creative and transformative" process. From this perspective, we can see the discourse of local discontent in Greece as an attempt to contextualize—and make less threatening at the discursive level—the crisis and the impeding austerity. The arguments of the infuriated Greeks—as these were articulated in 2011—did not provide absolute explanations of events but interpretative connections, meaningful within a preexisting secular theodicy of accountability. From this culturally informed point of view, the two local arguments below can be seen as similarly defiant and agonistic, representing a resisting stance toward the unsettling of the moral community:

> I am happy to see [my fellow-]Greeks suffering. It is about time! They sit all day in the cafeteria and have an opinion about everything. They swallow up the government's and the European Union's money. Now, with the crisis they will learn what work is. They will learn to work like we do. (55-year-old Greek migrant in Panama City, Panama, April 2011)

> I want us to go bankrupt. Yes, I want to see what will happen if Greece goes bankrupt. I am bored with hearing all the threats [about the potential bankruptcy] from the government and the powerful of Europe. Let's go bankrupt then, to see what will happen. (24-year-old Greek student in Patras, Greece, June 2011)

Acknowledgments

Comments

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Dimitrios Theodossopoulos sets out to analyze what he calls "critical local discourse" about and among the "infuriated," the participants of the protest movement against the Greek government's austerity measures in 2011. He proposes a bottom-up analysis, building from his ethnographic observations through conversations with people met in Patras and Athens during the summer of 2011 and also among Greek migrants to Panama, where he is also conducting fieldwork. According to the author, this perspective allows more focus on local views rather than on resistance, thus avoiding romanticizing resistance. This statement may refer to *Cultural Anthropology*'s October 2011 forum in relation to the Greek crisis (http://www.culanth.org/?q=node/432), and more specifically to Rosen (2011) and Papailias (2011). To give more context, it is good to mention Theodossopoulos's plenary paper at the EASA conference in July 2012 in Paris on the Greek crisis and the study of resistance (2012).

In this paper, Theodossopoulos analyzes representations of the crisis against older anthropological work on representations of self and other in relation to national identity, on the attribution of stereotypes, on the ambivalent position in respect to the West, on the poetics of honor and shame, on the strategy of blaming others while avoiding responsibility, on the intricate relations of citizens and bureaucratic states, with special emphasis on Michael Herzfeld's work on Greece (Herzfeld 1985, 1987, 1992 and 1997). It is about examining core concepts of the anthropology of Greece in relation to timely ethnographic data in the context of economic crisis and the way it is experienced and represented in Greece.

The demonstrations and occupation of Syntagma Square in Athens that took place from May to July 2011, widely reported in international news, shared a few common features with those that took place in Spain (*indignados*) and the United States (Occupy Wall Street): nonaffiliation to political parties and a discourse hostile and defiant toward government officers and members of Parliament—situated on the other side of Syntagma Square. Theodossopoulos argues that other Greeks criticizing the protesters did so on the basis of common values: Greek migrants in Panama who represent themselves as working hard but also older people in Greece who had experienced hardship and poverty in WW II, accused the protesters of lacking moral character and being spoiled, lazy, and irresponsible. The "infuriated with the infuriated" are not adopting a different ethic (Western capitalist ethic, for instance); they ground their opposition on what Mediterranean anthropologists have termed a "hard-work ethic" or "agonistic" spirit, life as a struggle: hard work, resistance, defiance—all come together into a complex nexus of values and representations of individual or collective self.

The ethnographic material comes from three "sources": actors among the protesters in Syntagma Square, onlookers and/or other commentators in Athens and the city of Patras, and Greek migrants in Panama commenting on events in their home country. This bottom-up stance offers the reader scant information and limited context related to the phenomenon of the protest. Theodossopoulos makes the choice not to include in his study top-down interpretations made by economists, journalists, or political analysts. Limiting one's scope to the local and the oral is limiting access to sociological context and local knowledge. The choice then is not just between a "bottom-up" and a "top-down" analysis; it is also between oral and written data, between firsthand and "processed" information. Context includes newspapers, TV shows, but also facts and figures that can be found in other specialists' work on the Greek crisis, including fellow anthropologists working in Greece and commenting on the crisis. Very few references to this production are made—and only in passing, at the end of the paper. Leaving out such rich data (articles, blogs, interviews, books) is a methodological choice that needs to be addressed and discussed in more detail, especially in relation to the argument about resistance. The "left" (Aristera) media is a case in point: here is where the different attitudes around the notion of "resistance" are debated and commented. Comparing writings about self and other, Greece and Europe, or national and social stereotypes on the value of work, on the agonistic rhetoric, or about traitors or thieves between the "left" and the "right wing" (Dexia) media could be rewarding.

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That this article still seems timely is testimony to the profundity of the crisis that overshadows the future of Europe. One thing it does well is explore what it means to think of oneself as a citizen of a "peripheral" zone of that precarious political construction, burdened, in the case of Greeks, with a particularly uncomfortable historical relationship with Germany, the state with the most power to insist on the cate-

gorical imperative of austerity in the face of denunciations of its irrationality by economists of the stature of Joseph Stiglitz and Paul Krugman. That alone suggests that the European crisis is not simply financial and economic, but Theodossopoulos's purpose is not to analyze crisis from above but in terms of the discourses that Greeks produce when talking to each other about crisis and austerity within their own intimate cultural worlds.

The paper shows that some Greeks are "indignant" about the crisis but nevertheless declare themselves "indignant" about other Greeks who have taken up the challenge of the Spanish "*indignados*" to occupy public space (to reject not simply cuts and austerity but also conventional party-based liberal democratic politics, although that aspect is not explored much here). Theodossopoulos seeks to give actor voices priority over a priori analyst theorizing about the meaning of protests on the lines recommended by Sherry Ortner in her celebrated critique of the "interpretive refusal" of much of the resistance studies boom of the 1980s. This is an aim with which I wholly sympathize, and, not being a Greek specialist, I learned a lot simply from the way the article showed the broader historical and cultural resonance of particular elements of the discourses it reported. Methodologically, the piece was opportunistic in a positive way, since it was the author's work on indigenous people in Panama that brought him into conversation with Greek migrants working in that country, with their strong discourse on laziness and corruption in the home country as the root of its problems. It would be interesting to follow this up in other areas of the Greek migrant diaspora, including Germany, where Greek workers escaping from the crisis apparently find themselves stigmatized in terms of the same stereotypes. But Theodossopoulos takes us beyond what can be explained in terms of the "orientalization" of southern Europe toward thinking about the development of a double consciousness on the part of socially situated groups of Greek actors that also reflects a local "work ethic" forged in the aftermath of war. Such antiessentialist accounts of the historical production of "culture" are particularly valuable contributions to contemporary political debate. Methodologically and epistemologically, ethnography based on enjoying the culturally intimate company of other Greeks challenges the contention that cultural "otherness" is invariably an asset, particularly when time is short and the researcher aspires to access a broad spectrum of research subjects. Although the interpretative framework adopted clearly rests on the contributions of both Greek and non-Greek anthropologists, there was no lack of critical distance in this exercise in "native anthropology."

Theodossopoulos relates his diverse range of voices to variables such as age and political orientation. People on the left of the political spectrum criticize the protestors in Constitution Square for lack of a coherent strategic and organizational vision, for example, and the damage the protestors do to marble offends more conservative citizens. We are told about differences over how best to negotiate over the austerity packages, the long-standing contradictions of Greek desires to remain in the Euro-zone but not accept the rules of the game that it imposes, and the different ways Greeks try to "subdue the crisis" through interpretation and assignment of blame. But we are not told much about class, a pity since some would argue that the core of recent protest movements consists of young people whose perceived life chances have deteriorated sharply. Nor are we told much about the implications of the different forms of "indignation" for Greek politics. The ultra right seems absent from this discussion. To argue that both "leftist" and "conservative" arguments are "similarly defiant and agonistic" responses to the "unsettling of the moral community" perhaps replicates past tendencies to look on the bright side in resistance studies. As in the case of the Occupy movement, differences in social situations, historical experience, and ideas about dignified conduct reduce the likelihood of convergence between social actors even where most are afflicted by the crisis. Given the social impacts of austerity, which apparently include a sharp increase in suicide rates, we should try to move on from feelings of empowerment linked to discourse, or to participation in protest action, to ponder the material balance of social and political relations, the fields of force of hegemony and transformation. Although historians may ultimately find that easier to do successfully than anthropologists, this paper offers us essential foundations for beginning the task.

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If there is one thing everyone is agreed on, it is that Greece is in an economic mess and increasingly a social and political one. After that, matters become a little more contentious. Has the crisis been caused by endemic corruption among Greece's political classes and a chronic unwillingness by its citizens to pay their taxes; by an unsustainable system of pensions and social benefits and a Greek disinclination to do a decent day's work; by structural incompatibilities between the Greek economy and the economies of northern Europe and a historically overweening ambition by French and German politicians to enlarge the European Union regardless of the economic frailty of the newer states it encompassed; or by the inherently unstable nature of late capitalism and the knock-on effects of collapses in international banking and financial markets? And what is to be done? Should yet further austerity measures be imposed on a population already suffering real material hardship and with no foreseeable end to its misery; should the EU strive toward greater fiscal integration, and therefore governance, of its members states at the price of national sovereignty and the erosion of democratic institutions; should Greece have its debts forgiven or at least renegotiated, leaving northern Europe (with its own problems) to pour yet more money into what has every appearance of a black hole; should

Greece be expelled from the EU or at least the Euro-zone, for which, apparently, no plan B exists; or should Greece unilaterally decide to declare itself bankrupt and see what happens then to the rest of Europe? And finally, there is the apportioning of blame in all this: corrupt politicians, lazy Greeks, unrealistic ambitions, ill-conceived plans, heartless technocrats, greedy bankers, the mysterious machinations of "the market," and the interests of other international parties both within and without the EU.

As Theodossopoulos suggests, these are the sorts of issues that have been (and are being) "overanalyzed by economists, journalists, and political commentators." His approach is to avoid such top-down analyses and instead, as befits an ethnographer, to focus on local interpretations of discontent and local conversations about the national and international events in which the Greeks are currently embroiled. To my mind, the question must then be: what does such an ethnographic approach add? I think it has to be admitted that what it does not add is some radically new understanding of the "Greek crisis" overlooked by economists, journalists, and political commentators. Nor is that surprising. If one leaves aside the personal dimensions of individual suffering so beloved by TV journalism (and which, wisely, Theodossopoulos does leave aside), then local interpretations and local conversations of national and international events are inevitably refractions and partial recapitulations of the top-down analyses with which we are familiar. Theodossopoulos's informants may be in the thick of it, but when it comes to understanding what is going on, then they too are reliant on the top-down analyses of economists, journalists, and political commentators (of which they are assiduous readers).

What Theodossopoulos's ethnographic approach does add is nevertheless extremely important, for "on the ground" the Greeks' response to the crisis is anything but uniform. The versions of events they espouse, in part or in whole, are quite various and do not even divide along the predictable lines of political allegiance. This is true even when it comes to issues of blame. In moments of what Herzfeldt has famously termed "cultural intimacy," they are deeply self-critical, and there are those who style themselves as "indignant with the indignant." This alone should put paid to the notion pedaled in some sections of the northern European media that Greece is a nation of people happy to play the bouzouki while the Treaty of Rome burns. On the contrary, what an ethnographic account shows is a nation of people desperately, and variously, trying to understand the causes and consequences of the situation in which they find themselves and over which they have very little control. And it is in this attempt to understand their own predicament that the various and contradictory narratives they espouse, while not radically different from those proffered by external commentators, can be seen in a new light. The Greeks may be powerless (as most of us are powerless) to substantially affect the course of national and international events, but at least the ability to comment on them (and thereby to comment on one's collective self), to

become the observer as well as the observed, affords a degree of empowerment. To coin a phrase: if you can't beat them, analyze them. Theodossopoulos suggests that this is a tactic historically ingrained in Greek society. I would agree. I doubt, however, that it is an exclusively Greek proclivity (which is why it is important for the study of resistance). After all, it may be, subliminally at least, why so many of us became academics.

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Theodossopoulos's essay makes a significant contribution to the ethnographic understanding of experiences of the Greek crisis (cf. Dalakoglou 2012; Herzfeld 2011; Kalantzis 2012; Yiakoumaki 2011). The author commendably brings to the fore Greek epistemologies that entail, so he argues, nuanced and often contradictory perspectives on the question of the crisis: something neglected in the macro-analytical models that dominate public discussions/representations of the matter (cf. Kalantzis 2012:7). However, the distinction that Theodossopoulos draws between local views and public representations of the crisis is possibly too acute, as it sidesteps the potential of exploring how local views become shaped in light of what occurs in the field of public representation. An analysis toward that end would have been particularly pertinent, given that many of his informants' views are echoed in various official spheres of enunciation.

A similarly sharp distinction is drawn between the "local" and wider political forces in his discussion of Greek notions of obligation and the Greek work ethic. Drawing on Herzfeld and Hirschon, the author considers the "local" to be operating in a "relatively autonomous" fashion (as certain subaltern studies scholars might label it; cf. O'Hanlon 1988:206) in relation to what he sees as external to it (e.g., the European work ethic). Rather than choosing between the local as ontologically distinct and/or the local as a product of (a totalizing) European influence, however, one could instead trace the various amalgamations and power flows that occur between the local level and the various European ideologies/orientalism(s) that affect it.

Theodossopoulos successfully demonstrates the multiplicity of Greek views on the crisis, especially as he examines the Syntagma Square 2011 protests, a sphere that could be anachronistically (and provocatively) described in Marx's own words as a "mixture of high-frown phrases and actual uncertainly . . . of enthusiastic striving for innovation and more deeply-rooted domination of the old routine" (Marx 2008 [1852]:22).

His discussion of the square captures the fluidity and potential of that new political arena and briefly acknowledges the parameter of materiality (even if translated into what people say), which could, however, have been more central

to the essay. On one level, his elision of materiality might have dissatisfied the square's left-leaning participants, who would presumably insist more on the importance of the material sphere (both in the Marxist sense, e.g., the lost jobs, and in the sense of sensorial experience, e.g., the police teargas) as opposed to the essay's emphasis on "views" and "rhetoric." Further, though I applaud the effort of tracing the common "aesthetics of exasperation" (Kalantzis 2012:7) that characterize the whole square, one might have expected more reference to the (experiential and symbolic) distinctions within the geography of Syntagma (cf. Panourgia 2011). For instance, the division between the lower and the upper square, though perhaps simplifying, has become a leitmotif in leftist commentary, especially after the recent election of an ultra-right-wing party that is seen as linked to the *patriotic carnivalesque* performed at the so-called upper square.

This point on social topography leads me to comment further on the interconnected question of the body (Stallybrass and White 1986:192) and its relative absence from this essay. Theodossopoulos's ethnography briefly includes the question of tactile materiality (e.g., the sunburned arm as a sign of hard work), but the author otherwise tends to relegate everything to the sphere of "discursive weapons" and "rhetorical tactics." This subjects the vibrant complexity of ambivalent dissent that he documents to specific (linguistic-based) models (e.g., *disemia*), which neatly place things into stable (op)positions. Recent anthropological work has emphasized the importance of the visual and material as spheres that may complicate what we know from the sphere of discourse and rhetoric (Pinney 2006:131, 137). This is not some altered reinscription of the old modernist distinction between rhetoric (considered superficial) and practice (supposedly more real) but an invitation to engage embodied culture and go beyond the logocentric bias of ethnography.

Arguably, what the Greeks experience as tutelage then is not a disembodied discourse that merely prompts rhetorical negotiation of blame but a perennially vexing, felt gaze, experienced in the most culturally productive scenes (that Herzfeld might call "culturally intimate" [1997]). Thus, a group of Athenian tourists, inside a boat returning from their August vacation, asked publicly in my presence, oscillating between amusement and worry, what will the "Germans" and the "IMF" say about their suntanned skin (the sunburned arm being a signifier of guilty leisure this time). This reminded me of my informants in Sphakia, Crete, who often anxiously wondered what "will people say" during those practices that produced both pride and uncertainty to them. Importantly, though they often expressed verbal disapproval of these practices, they also experienced lenience or lure for them at the level of embodied practice—something that would be obliterated if one focused exclusively on rhetoric. Such considerations of embodied culture push toward a model of ambivalence that is more analytically recalcitrant. Yet, its political potential draws exactly on the dynamic unpredictability of the visceral oscillations experienced by the (Greek) dissenting actors

(cf. Bhabha 2004; Kalantzis, "On Ambivalent Nativism: Hegemony, Photography and 'Recalcitrant Alterity' in Sphakia, Crete," unpublished manuscript under review by *American Ethnologist*).

Still, Theodossopoulos's insightful and sympathetic essay ethnographically grasps and puts into perspective the dispersed landscape of Greek discontent. His discussion opens up the field for further interventions, which might destabilize even those things we already know about Greek society and account anew for the recent context of dissent and its corporeality.

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It is refreshing to "hear" the multiplicity of voices emerging during the "Infuriated" social movement in the summer of 2011. The international media have to a large extent portrayed the economic and political crisis in Greece through the figure of the "angry Greek," missing the nuanced and often self-critical narratives proliferating in the country.

Ethnography is truly valuable in providing rich, textured accounts of collective action, while grand interpretative theories in their abstraction tend to oversimplify. The ethnographic method is particularly appropriate when trying to understand social movements, precisely because, as Edelman (2001:310) says, real social movements are often "notoriously ephemeral and factionalized (Brecher, Costello, and Smith 2000; Tilly 1986), manifest major discrepancies . . . (Edelman 1999; Morris 1999; Rubin 1997), and . . . rarely attract more than a minority of the constituencies they claim to represent (Burdick 1998)."

However, trying to avoid appropriating, repressing, or corrupting the voices of the protesting people (the ethnographic other) by not overtheorizing (Theodossopoulos refers to Ortner's 1995 critic) has led, here, to the other extreme. This article lacks "etiology" and purpose. The problem with avoiding social movement theory and specific historical and sociopolitical contextualization is that the engagement with the material is not substantial enough. This unfortunately leads to the same type of power relations one was trying to avoid in the first place: that is, the distance created between the knowing/powerful subject standing outside and above the (messy, factionalized, contentious) knowable object of study.

We need to get beyond the chatter of the café and the kitchen table and seriously engage the narratives of anger and blame through a dynamic analysis of the larger political context within which this particular mobilization and the reactions to it are taking place. For example, what does it mean to be "a committed conservative supporter" or "a left-wing sympathizer" today in Greece? As the sociopolitical reality started unraveling in the country, these political signifiers have

radically shifted in meaning. This was actually a characteristic of the "Infuriated" movement: the powerful political party (ideological/affective) identifications that traditionally activated such mobilizations were now suspect and often rejected.

The shift away from traditional politics, a characteristic of the "New Social Movements" that came out of the 1960s, did not manifest itself in Greek social mobilizations until the twenty-first century, when (due to the crisis) it skipped ahead into a whole new type of political identification and mobilization characteristic of the "occupy" movements rallying against global social injustices (Habermas 1981; Juris 2012; Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Razsa and Kurnik 2012; Tarrow 2011; Touraine 1988 [1984], 2000).

How can we speak of the Greek "Infuriated" without engaging the issues that concern the grand theorists of contentious politics, without any references to social movement theory, "resistance" theory, or any discussion about collective action? The observation that Greeks blame each other, the powers that be, and everyone else, as a form of "empowerment against their perceived peripheralization," can apply to anybody: the German working class, African Americans in the USA, Islamic fundamentalists, and so forth. Without any historicity, without sociopolitical contextual moorings, all that is solid melts into thin air. And this is not what we need now.

The hard realities of the increasingly desperate, depressed, and violent city of Athens are pervasive. The fascists on rampages, the politicians avoiding all responsibility, the unions in their own orbit, the immigrants, the jobless, the homeless . . . the country feels like runaway train. This context of a 5-year economic and social crisis calls for more serious and productive attention.

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Theodossopoulos's article is about the complex ways Greek citizens expressed their "indignation" or "infuriation" with the austerity measures imposed as a response to the recent financial and political crisis in Greece. The article's main virtue is that it does not focus one-sidedly either on images promoted by the national and international media—that is, images of "angry Greeks" protesting in the Constitution Square in Athens, or on the latter's self-justifications. Instead, its author also delves into the narratives of discontent of those who, though themselves outraged with the crisis, are infuriated with public protesters' motivations of infuriation and form of protest. Even more interesting is that the ethnographer's interlocutors include citizens living in a town (Patras) rather than the capital city of Athens only, as well as Greeks who had migrated abroad (Panama City) during the postwar and the post–Greek civil war era (early 1950s), under the

force of another financial and political "Greek crisis." In this way, Theodossopoulos, on the one hand, avoids identifying "Greek crisis" with the "Athenian crisis" (Boubari 2011). On the other, he succeeds in revealing the contradictory diversity of Greeks' views about responsibility and accountability, as these emerge in "culturally intimate contexts," in Greece or abroad, where Greek actors feel safe enough to expose their "mutual embarrassments"—albeit "in private conversations."

One of the harshest criticisms expressed—in private—by Greek-Panamanians is that public indignants are "lazy"—compared to themselves, who have worked hard in self-exile. Their view that protesters protest because all they know is how to "eat" the European Union's money and "complain" meets with the infuriated citizens of the mainland who accuse protesters of "serving their personal or trade-union interests." Through these accusations against "compatriots," the two categories of Greeks seem to express dissatisfaction less with the perceived crisis in "representative" democracy (see, e.g., Juris 2012; Razsa and Kurnik 2012) than with the "inappropriate" ways protesters in the Constitution Square have chosen to "represent" Greece and the rest of equally indignated Greeks to the world. To their eyes, the protesters' encampment in front of the Parliament looked like a "gypsies' one," and their rebellious rhetoric ("They are afraid of us! . . . if we fall, they will perish as well!") sounded not serious and threatening—"They will throw us out of Europe!" Hence questions such as "who had the right to appropriate the title of the indignant?" or "who was justified to be more indignant than others?" not only surfaced through Theodossopoulos's ethnography but revealed self-taxonomies such as "real" (vs. fake) indignants, meaning implicitly "purer" Greeks (and "more Europeans" for that matter)—the latter including the Greek hard workers abroad and those who do not expose their infuriation in "bravado and blackmailing" ways that ridicule their country's public face.

Theodossopoulos makes clear that instead of discussing the "top-down," "overanalyzed" global-cum-European economic background of the Greek crisis, or of interpreting resistance "from above" (through the "overexhaustive historical or sociological contextualizations" of local meanings of resistance), he will prioritize the "bottom-up" local points of view of protesting actors, so that he captures the "complexity of discontent." Faced with all this diversity of "local interpretations," he concludes that despite their divergences and due to their "similar cultural values," both public and less public expressions of infuriation should be seen as narratives that provide natives "with a sense of discursive empowerment against their perceived peripherialization."

As a reader of this otherwise very illuminating article, I would counterargue that in an era of "fast capitalism" and "glocalization," it is imperative to interpret both bottom-up and top-down practices of citizens—including the "overanalyzed" top-down interpretations made "by economists, journalists, and political commentators." In the opposite case, especially the one that prioritizes the native's point of view,

readers are usually confronted with an endless multiplicity of the Same and the Similar and with the reproduction of the us/them moralizing binarisms rather than with the quality of complexity itself. The latter can be traced not simply in the diverse and antithetical points of views of the locals but mainly in the intersections between the "top," that is, the global-cum-European Union which is still "a work in progress" (Abeles 2000) and thus, an "enigmatic" political configuration (Holmes 2000, Shore 2000), and the "bottom," namely, the citizens of countries like Greece (though not only) who confront an "unexplainable (and not transparent)," thus more complex, relationship with their state governments and the larger international unions and organizations of states (EU, United Nations, etc.). The Greek informants' fear that Europeans "will throw them out of Europe!"; the Greek-Panamanians' support of the ethos of hard work as it is experienced abroad; and the "bravado" stance of the public protesters against Greek politicians and EU officials, show the extent to which the bottom-up intersects with the top-down and vice versa. Both are equally contested and constitute the locus of complexity the author is looking for.

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In the wake of the Greek financial crisis, many accounts of the events in the international media have generated more heat than light. Theodossopoulos's article provides a refreshing, complex interpretation of the divergent opinions coming from Greeks in Greece and abroad concerning their understanding of the financial crisis. It highlights the "interpretive trajectories of ordinary citizens" as they engage with the ongoing events of protest and how these interpretations may be empowering to those otherwise marginalized from the global discourses generated from the centers of economic and political power.

Theodossopoulos provides some of the important contexts, social values, and familiar interpretive tropes for making sense of competing Greek claims about the significance of work, laziness, blame, and the role of ordinary citizens in relation to the state. However, there are dangers in the work of contextualizing beliefs. As with Evans-Pritchard's contextualization of Zande witchcraft beliefs, we run the risk of reinscribing otherness if only the beliefs of the Zande require cultural context, while Western European medical ideas are taken for granted as rational. While Theodossopoulos is careful to put "rational" in quotations at some points, elsewhere the "rationality of consequences" is used as if it requires no interpretive work. Ideally, Western economic discourse would receive the same interpretive scrutiny and cultural contextualization as that of the infuriated. I am uncomfortable

with the notion that the protestors were "self-destructive" and "refus[ed] to calculate the consequences of noncompliance to EU regulations and the austerity measures." Perhaps that may be true for some. In my own research, however, I found that just as those "infuriated with the infuriated" foresaw devastating consequences of noncompliance, protestors also foresaw the devastating consequences of compliance with measures that many would argue are continuing to strangle the Greek economy while opening up the likelihood of the massive sale of national assets—Greece itself—to outsiders. Thus the importance of the protestors' arguments throughout that there were other solutions. Certainly one of the ways that neoliberalism becomes hegemonic is through insinuating itself as the only "rational" solution to contemporary world events.

In making this argument I believe I am extending Theodossopoulos's call for taking local voices seriously. In my own research on the crisis with my student Leonidas Vournelis (see Vournelis and Sutton 2012), we have traced some of the ways that food has been central to the discourse about the crisis—in arguments over "who ate the money"—and in the protests themselves. Here we have seen a variety of acts from Communist MP Liana Canelli's attempt to enter a loaf of bread and a liter of milk into the parliamentary record, to dairy and potato farmers giving away their products free to protestors, to protestors in Crete setting up traditional cast-iron pots in the central square and cooking pasta to distribute to passersby. In each of these cases food is used, because of its centrality in Greek culture as a marker of sociability, to criticize the potential of the austerity measures to abrogate the most basic community bonds, to challenge specific government policies and suggest alternatives,[17] and to reassert claims to a moral community of commensality that is, also, the community of the nation.

One of the most striking uses of food in the Greek protests has been the employment of yogurt as a projectile to hurl at politicians of all parties, as well as at police. Not any yogurt was chosen for this—it was typically sheep's milk yogurt, that is, yogurt most clearly associated with rurality and images of traditional Greekness. The sharp contrast between eating food—a traditionally social activity in Greece based on sharing, remembering, and exchanging—and the use of food as a tool of condemnation and ridicule reflects the equally sharp contrast between the protestors' vision of an economy embedded in a moral community and the neoliberal view represented by the Greek government and the EU. Covering the government's representatives with a key symbol of Greekness suggests not just a public shaming but a reminder of the social values represented by traditional Greek food. It is striking that this message did not need to be elaborated through inter-

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17. Two new practices that have sprung up in the wake of the protest: (1) the self-named Potato Movement, involving farmers selling directly to buyers, cutting out what they see as rapacious middlemen, and (2) the establishment of nonmonetary service exchange networks in several cities and towns across Greece,

pretation but was well-enough understood that some civil and religious leaders specifically referred to "yogurting" as a justified mode of protest. Theodossopoulos makes the interesting suggestion that there are "ontological differences in the perception of time, personhood, and authority [which] become apparent in the dissonance of expectations between foreign technocrats and local—culturally situated—actors." I believe that interpretive work of this kind is critical to making sense of contemporary protest whether in Greece, Occupy Wall Street, the Arab Spring, or wherever else it may arise to contest neoliberal policies and regimes.

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Dimitrios Theodossopoulos's article is very timely in tackling states of unsettlement among Greeks in its various manifestations as one effect of the current crisis in Europe. The text is also evidence of a consistent intellectual thread in his work concerned with emotion and sentiment in a population's political culture.

The author is immersing us into the discursive universe of everyday Greeks experiencing the crisis. He renders the various nuances of the category "indignant," thus demystifying the popular depiction of the "crowd" taking the streets, and of the Greeks (suddenly) unified in rage or in compassion, beyond social-class constraints or political party allegiances. The sweeping categorizations produced by the media obfuscate the important details in the picture.

What I will engage in is certain interpretations of this discursive universe, particularly pertaining to the ideas of resistance and empowerment. Specifically I am referring to the author's position on a very common, and popular, set of utterances, in which we hear the "indignant" Greeks underrating the crisis, resorting to conspiracy theories, blaming outside forces, denouncing Western "ungratefulness" toward Greece, charging Germans with "harshness," and so on. The author dissects these statements thoroughly, to admit that they are produced by subjects in a state of predicament. I could not agree more. Crucially he also admits such statements may be modes of evading responsibility. It is this direction that I wish he had privileged equally. The author does see the ambivalent, passive-aggressive nature of such statements (e.g., Greeks simultaneously boasting and self-pitying). He is aware that statements of professed (Greek) defiance, self-complacency, and embitterment can be the other side of the inner awareness of the "flaw." Attributing, blaming, or relegating can be modes of bypassing the discussion or denying reality. Therefore, there is also a dark side to the Greek indignation. Is this a Pandora's box that the author does not wish to open? I understand the weight of this responsibility.

This is indeed a dismal moment for the majority of Greek people. Unsettlement and indignation, however, may mean disenfranchisement for some, or they may just mean the loss of excessive power for others (or *volema*, in the vernacular). Besides the obvious interpretations, therefore, indignation may imply desire to maintain established power hierarchies, due to economic interests. Indignation (with the *ksenoi* [the foreigners]) may originate from a sense of never-ending entitlement; this indignation, in turn, can be the other side of submissiveness. All these reflect various pathologies of the Greek state, particularly since the *metapolitefsi* (postdictatorship period). The latter is, I believe, at the heart of deconstructing dominant Greek mentalities. It is this aspect of Greek reality that current analyses of public protest could illuminate more.[18]

For the above reasons, I am a little skeptical vis-à-vis the author's main contention about empowerment. I, too, believe that the moment of indignation, as pursuit of "their own interpretive trajectories," can be enabling for the subjects. However, this is only a momentary gain at the level of emotional well being and not analogous to the dimensions of the actual problem: it can be crushed on a daily level in the harsh reality out there. It feels a bit like the "weapons of the weak" (Scott 1985); it leaves you with a sense of fleeting, thus eventually, and bitterly, unattainable victories. Furthermore, once again we need to make the distinction: for the many disenfranchised, criticism and indignation can be empowerment, but for others (the non-"subaltern") it can be a reaction of intransigence.

For the same reasons I would hesitate to call it resistance, at least not in every instance. Provocative statements such as yes, "Let's go bankrupt!" are not necessarily "defiant" or "agonistic." They can be read variably: the informant is entirely unaware of the social and economic consequences of this; or, the informant is in a state of destitution, hence has nothing to lose; or the informant speaks from a position of privilege. The author is well aware of the shortcomings in the literature on resistance. Nevertheless, he leaves the reader a little uncertain as to what his position is. I detect a degree of admiration, or even affection, for indignant subjects, whose very attitudes he has taken pains to deconstruct.

The author alerts us to the fact that such rhetoric "crosscuts political affiliations." I take this as a crucial call for anthropologists to reflect upon the political as it is invoked by many subjects and collectivities today, that is, beyond "traditional political alignments." The author is one of the first contributors to the so far unexplored area of the crisis in Greece from the point of view of anthropology. Undoubtedly the overall impression is of a brave attempt to avoid easy answers (so common on the topic of the crisis, alas) and to grapple with the complexity of the situation.

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18. For an oft-cited but useful work, see, e.g., Diamandouros 2000 on the figure of the "underdog."

Reply

There are two easily identifiable inclinations in the anthropological analysis of Greek political discourse:[19] the first, which I call "Herzfeldian" (as its prime example is Michael Herzfeld's work), makes visible the everyday tactics of local actors, the cultural etymology of their excuses, and the nationalism (and racism) inherent in Greek unofficial rhetoric. The second, which I call "Suttonian" (in acknowledgment of a perspective taken by David Sutton[20]) engages critically with the tendency of Western academics to pathologize local Greek views that challenge Western hegemonic rationality and legality. The two interpretive routes are deeply anthropological and anti-orientalist, although the second stretches anti-orientalism further (sometimes, at the risk of "absolving"—unintentionally—local nationalism); the commentary received provides an opportunity to explore these two analytic trajectories.

First, however, I would like to thank the commentators for engaging with the article and extending its interpretative threads. I strongly believe that an anthropological understanding of the Greek crisis will only emerge through a collaborative and comparative exercise. For such is the enormity and complexity of the response to the crisis—that any single interpretation will be inherently incomplete. On my part, writing immediately after the 2011 protest, I had to choose my focus carefully and make choices regarding the theoretical orientation (e.g., more Herzfeldian and less Suttonian) and the methodological approach (bottom-up vs. top-down, with more or less reference to a historical/media context). The commentary received gives me an opportunity to explain further the choices that I made.

In the year that has followed the initial writing of this article, remarkable developments in Greece (including two elections) have changed the political landscape: established political parties have found their support base reduced, while previously small parties have increased their power dramatically (including a sizable leftist—*not* social-democratic—opposition but also one with an explicitly fascist agenda). The Greek anti-austerity protest has been hijacked by electioneering politicians from the left, the right, and the extreme right, while the original spirit of the protest (favoring anti-structure and direct democracy) has been depoliticized by "structured" party politics (claiming authority through parliamentary representation).

At the local level, as Sutton remarked, networks of food exchange and redistribution of agricultural produce provided a sense of social unity against consumerism (and there have been similar reactions, such as high school teachers tutoring impoverished students for no charge). Such reassertions of

the moral community, and the overall defiant rhetoric of all kinds of "infuriated" Greeks, can be seen as ephemeral victories, Yiakoumaki suggests, and "weapons of the weak" in James Scott's (1985) terms. The limits of resistance—its ephemerality and functionalization (see Myrivili's comment)—are now, a year later, easier to notice, as well as the appropriation of discontent by formal party politics. I very much agree with Yiakoumaki in that there is also a "dark side" to Greek indignation: the longing of so many politicians, union leaders, and journalists (even a few academics) to mimic the defiance of the protesters so as to defend established privileges and blame others, "otherizing" foreign nations, and "pleasing" ("stroking the ears of," as the Greeks say) the discontented public.

In such a highly politicized context, it takes courage to follow the Herzfeldian direction, as does Yiakoumaki (and myself in the article), and expose the contradictions—the many *disemias*—of anti-austerity rhetoric. Nevertheless, in this process, we can benefit from the Suttonian approach and ensure, while deconstructing nationalism and the blaming of Others, that we do not pathologize as paranoid or "irrational" the (nationalist, responsibility-evading) local actors, an analytical trap that Herzfeld has masterfully avoided.

I have to admit that, while writing this article, I felt as though I was treading a fine line between the trespasses of orientalizing and idealization. Yiakoumaki detected a certain "degree of admiration, or even affection, for indignant subjects," and she is right: in practice, idealization is as hard to avoid as ethnocentrism; Abu-Lughod (1990) and Ortner (1995) have forewarned anthropologists about this danger. To balance my account, I treated with the same affection those respondents who were "indignant with the indignant," even when I did not always share their arguments. The self-critique of indignation was not absent in unofficial discussions, but it was not very visible in the media (national and, especially, international).

I would be very sad to see anthropology following such an unreflexive course, that is, to idealize (or exoticize) the protest, reproducing a condemnation or an *apology* for the "dark side" of Greek indignation: unconstrained nationalism, anti-immigration racism, clientalist unionism (e.g., lobbying for those privileged bonuses that maintain consumerist lifestyles). The discourse of the media and many politicians in Greece is a good example of this "apologetic" trend, which I deliberately ignored in this article, prioritizing instead a Herzfeldian analysis that focuses on accountability and the cultural embeddedness of the Greek responses.

Yet, I would be equally saddened to see academic analysis victimizing and orientalizing the Greeks as an undifferentiated category. "Neoliberalism becomes hegemonic," as Sutton boldly admits, "through insinuating itself as the only 'rational' solution to contemporary world events." Following Sutton, I have challenged such taken-for-granted versions of rationality before—for example, while writing about conspiracy theories (see Brown and Theodossopoulos 2000, 2003) and anti-Amer-

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19. For a more detailed description of these approaches, see Theodossopoulos 2013.

20. See, in particular, Sutton 2003.

icanism (see Kirtsoglou and Theodossopoulos 2010a, 2010b)—and I would claim that I have indirectly contextualized "rationality" in this article too, although admittedly not as much as a Suttonian trajectory would permit. There is a reason I have not developed this trajectory fully: as in previous periods of crisis, the critique of Western hegemony in Greece has become a populist feature in the discourse of leftists but also of rightist and extreme-rightists(!); in the critique of the latter it inspires not so much a critique of power but, instead, nationalist agitation and the uncritical blaming of Others.

I have chosen to provocatively avoid historical contextualization in this article, a decision critically evaluated by many commentators (Couroucli, Just, Papagaroufali, Kalantzis, Gledhill, and Myrivili, albeit to different degrees): this was originally a choice of necessity relating to the word limit. Nevertheless, as most commentators also recognize, this particular choice provided a "refreshing" perspective: more space was devoted to local voices, highlighting complexity but without superimposing on those voices a top-down, singular, unilineal vision of history (e.g., the Theodossopoulos version of historical causality). I agree with Couroucli, Just, Papagaroufali, and Kalantzis that a consideration of the broader sociopolitical context can shed further light on the complexity of the crisis; for example, as Couroucli points out, mediatized news and interviews, blogs, books, and articles, inspire the articulation of local resistance—and such varied mediums of expression add to the complexity of the response to the crisis.

In the long run, as Papagaroufali points out, it will be important to acknowledge the intersection of the bottom-up and the top-down in the analysis of the crisis, a direction for future research that Gledhill also suggests. Local informants too, Just adds, are reliant on the very top-down accounts I have chosen to avoid. Thus, I fully agree with Kalantzis that a more complete interpretation of the crisis will eventually emerge by bringing together analyses that focus on both ontological distinctiveness (see, e.g., Hirschon 2012) and the totalizing influence of systemic factors: in fact, such analytic trajectories mirror the tensions between the two anthropological perspectives I have outlined at the beginning of this reply.

Another potential thread of interpretation, which I have not developed in this article but am exploring in current work, regards social movement and resistance theory. Such a perspective, as Myrivili points out, can offer valuable comparative perspectives. Yet, the analysis I provide in this article is deeply rooted and emerges from a close reading of resistance theory, as Gledhill, a major author in this field, observes. In fact, the theoretical advantages of pairing the "double consciousness" of Greek actors—to use Gledhill's sharp observation—with Herzfeld's *disemic* model can be enormous, and such potentialities have emerged from bottom-up analysis.

Additional topics that I have not touched upon and deserve further research include the corporeality of dissent, or the distinction between patriotic/ultraconservative and left-wing expressions of the protest (e.g., "lower and upper square") as Kalantzis aptly observed. The latter distinction has become more salient, a year after writing this article and with the rise of fascism (and its rationalization by representational democracy and electoral success). Apart from the role of the ultra-right, the issue of class, as Gledhill points out, has also emerged as a pertinent question, especially with unemployment among a highly educated, "young" middle class that was heavily represented in the protest. Such topics beg further analysis and empirical research.

At the time of writing this article, without foresight of later developments, I took one of the first interpretive steps in the anthropological analysis of the Greek crisis.[21] I decided to detract attention from the banal (and nationalist) recycling of a superficially antihegemonic discourse in Greece, which victimizes foreigners, exonerates the Self, and aims at the accumulation of political capital (or privilege). I focused instead on the exegetical strategies of local actors, the voices of the people affected by the crisis, and I chose to prioritize anthropological theory written about Greece, as this was developed in conversation with the particular social context,[22] while also believing that the political anthropology of Greece can inspire analyses beyond geographic boundaries: for example, the Herzfeldian and the Suttonian trajectories outlined above have resonances with crises in other peripheries in the global distribution of power.

A bottom-up approach, combined with explicit use of theoretical ethnography—we should always remember that ethnography is a theoretical medium, not a method of data collection—enabled me to underline two important issues: (*a*) that local voices are much more complex, diverse, and self-critical than international and Greek media presented them to be, and (*b*) that indignation with the crisis, in its local complexity and contradictions, generates cultural meaning that embraces but also denies (and expands beyond) the rationality of Western economic narratives. In such a transcending capacity, indignation can be a liberating experience for the dispossessed, inspiring a discursive empowerment that may encourage, as time has indicated in Greece, transformative effects on social and political relations. Thus, I believe, Greek indignation is not merely a weapon of the weak.

Point *a* (above), so all commentators acknowledge, contributes to the de-orientalization of the Greek crisis: a serious departure from the image of the "angry Greek" (see Myrivili, Papagaroufali), "lazy" Greek (see Just), but also, I would add, that of the "poor" Greek (eliciting the patronizing, exoticizing sympathy of Western educated elites). The "aesthetics of exasperation," as Kalantzis (2012) has demonstrated, can lead

21. A response simultaneously undertaken by others; see Herzfeld 2011, Hirschon 2012, Kalantzis 2012, and the short articles edited by Papailias and published in "Hot Spots: Beyond the 'Greek crisis'" (2011).
22. To some significant degree, the contextual embeddedness of the anthropology of Greece has compensated for the lack of sociohistorical contextualization in the article, and my particular choice of theory also attempted to partly remedy the issue of contextualization.

to such stereotyping and exoticizing. Point *b* (above) provides a uniting link between Herzfeld's attention on accountability and Sutton's concern with the pervasiveness of neoliberal rationality. A purpose of my article—which Myrivili did not see, but reassuringly the other commentators did—was to take a first step toward integrating points *a* and *b* and the two analytical trajectories outlined above. And beyond academia, such a deconstructive step can contribute, through self-critique, to the greater project of developing a new ideological platform for the global Left, one that can aid in the resolution of the crisis.

In the year that has followed last summer's anti-austerity protest, the ambivalence of Greek resistance has culminated in a publically expressed desire to remain in the consumerist sphere of the euro but without obeying the consumerist rationality and regulations of the European economy. *Disemic* contradictions such as these are very hard for non-Greek journalists and economists to tackle, yet the anthropological perspective demonstrates that cultural identities embrace and flourish under such contradictions.

It is this appreciation of the complexity in anti-austerity discourse—"anything but uniform," to use Just's words—that has inspired this article and my use of theoretical ethnography as the medium of analysis: a radical bottom-up perspective, even if here it is delivered at the expense of context, can shake the formalistic and static linearity of top-down narratives. Instead of trying to explain the "total" phenomenon of the crisis—an unrealistic, if not arrogant, undertaking—social analysts (journalists and politicians too!) would benefit from appreciating the ambivalence and contradictions of unofficial views discussed at the local level: everyday actors, discussants of the ordinary and the extraordinary, in Greece and everywhere, dehomogenize accountability, evade responsibility, blame others (and also their ethnic Self), reshaping, gradually but relentlessly, their intimate social worlds. Anthropology can show us how.

—Dimitrios Theodossopoulos

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