Life under Austerity:

Intimacy and Precarity in a Greek city, Thessaloniki

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Abstract

This thesis studies the consequences of austerity in low-income neighborhoods in Western Thessaloniki, Greece. It documents and analyses views, relations and practices in daily life under austerity, focusing on experiences of precarity and affective familial and neighbourly forms of intimacy and how these link to global and local inequalities.

The thesis argues that austerity is experienced as a form of crisis in the everyday, and that it produces inequality and exclusion, negotiated in culturally nuanced terms. It shows that struggles against the uneven impact of austerity by women who shoulder household and family precarity and by young adults who face precarious employment, mobilize continuities in intimate relations, roles and identities. But they also entail conflicts and tensions that disrupt these continuities under the pressures they cause in contexts of precarity.

Relations of intimacy between neighbors are also examined as contradictory forms of a constantly contested communality that can generate hostility and racism but also kindness and generosity. Attention is paid on a common political project centered on the neighborhood -an autonomous solidarity initiative. This and the other forms of neighborly relationships discussed in this thesis, indicate that the neighborhood can be a valuable social context for developing inclusive and open forms of relatedness and engagement with the precarity of Others.

The central contribution of the thesis lies in its cumulative ethnographic testimony of a particular social reality-life under austerity-recorded here as a series of detailed ethnographic narratives. The latter shed light to the intimate and dubious operations of public debt policies, the way precarity is produced and how it moulds household and neighbourly intimacy and the political articulations against it. Intersections of precarity and intimacy reveal the play between politicization and depoliticization, critique and complicity, and the sharpest contradictions of austerity capitalism.

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Chapter One: Searching for the crisis in Thessaloniki

The ethnographic context

This thesis explores experiences of austerity in a cluster of low-income neighborhoods in Thessaloniki, Greece. It focuses on relations of family and neighborhood intimacy and the way these are shaping and are shaped by precarity during a period of institutionalized austerity from 2015 to 2018. In this respect, the thesis provides an account of the consequences of austerity measures and the concrete ways they affect the lives of residents of a Western area of Thessaloniki. The account is grounded on ethnographic explorations of embodied and affective relations in the household and in the neighborhood. I focus on the various ways the residents live and narrate the present and respond to others amidst precarious circumstances. The experiences of the residents make visible the production of precarity at the local level, and how this is defined by histories of political and social configurations and cultural practices, under the influence of demoralizing neoliberal priorities.

The ethnography presented in this thesis contributes to emerging anthropological literatures that examine austerity and, in particular, the contemporary and precarious conditions of living under austerity in Greece. In this more specific sense, the thesis is in conversation with the anthropology of Greece, which nowadays comprises of a vast ethnographic literature that addresses diverse cultural contexts and phenomena, practices and religious and political views. My ethnographic account adds to this literature by providing a view of austerity from an urban context in the Northern Greece, the city of Thessaloniki. Thematically, the thesis aims to shed some ethnographic light on the concepts of intimacy and precarity, and the forms they take in this significant moment in the lives of citizens afflicted by austerity. Hence, significant part in my ethnographic analysis -besides the anthropology of Greece- is dedicated to the notions of precarity and intimacy and thus to issues of sociality, impoverishment and debt. My interest in these themes emerged organically from my fieldwork experience and addresses the concerns and life projects of my respondents in Thessaloniki.

A tour of the city of Thessaloniki

'I can't see the crisis', Kristian exclaimed. Kristian was a Norwegian visitor in Thessaloniki. He was an Airbnb guest of Pavlos, a friend of mine who lived in the city centre and had invited us that April night at his flat. We were playing a board game, myself, Kristian, Pavlos and his sister Eleni when the conversation on the crisis was begun by Kristian. 'You don't want me to explain you my financial situation', Eleni replied. 'You can't see it because you don't know what is happening inside people's houses. You see only the facade of people's lives. You don't know what it takes for Pavlos to pay his rent', she added with a note of irritation.

Pavlos, a young English language teacher who gave private lessons, had started to rent a room in his rented flat to guests encountered through the Airbnb platform in order to cover his rent. His sister Eleni, a thirty-five-year old jewellery maker, had chosen to squeeze a bed into her tiny jewellery workshop, moving there when she faced economic constraints. She spent the tourist season on an island selling her jewellery, whilst Pavlos had reduced his classes' hourly rate and travelled long distances around the city in order to keep his students. Both relied on forms of tourism to ensure survival. Their mother, who survived with a reduced widower's pension, provided regular help but could not financially support them.

Kristian who was born in Norway but had lived most of his life in France and Germany, was looking for a place to rent in order to move from Berlin to Thessaloniki. He was fifty-six years old and also faced economic problems and ended up owning money to Pavlos, since his precarious freelance subtitle-editing job only covered his unstable residence patterns with difficulty. Kristian 'loved Thessaloniki', as he said, and frequented the central modern and more traditional cafes and restaurants. He enjoyed walking daily around the centre of the city and described how he was overtaken by the tastes and smells of the central open market of spices, fruits, vegetables, fish and meat. He used to walk along the Roman and Byzantine walls and ruins, along the port and the renovated promenade of the waterfront, along the Upper Town's (neighbourhoods at the top of the city) cobblestone narrow streets embraced by Ottoman relics and enfolded in breath-taking views. The best times, as he stressed

to me, were under twilight hues, the marvellous red, orange, violet and pink colours of the sky at sunrise and sunset.

Pavlos, who was a 'super host' according to Airbnb ratings, noted a few times in our conversation that, 'the city is becoming a central tourist destination and Airbnb is changing the city'. He did not like the gentrified processes that were taking place nor the Airbnb platform, but it was a source of a much-needed extra income for him.

The centre of Thessaloniki, although it is not considered the most popular mainland tourist attraction, had developed into a tourist destination largely driven by thematic forms of tourism, mainly gastronomical, historical and religious. In addition, the beautiful beaches of the Chalkidiki peninsula and Mount Olympus are a short ride away. Boutaris, the present mayor, is considered by most locals as a great initiator of the city's tourist development. Taxi drivers that transfer tourists from the city's airport, hotel as well as restaurant owners, travel agents and tour guides praise the mayor for developing a tourism policy in the city, causing an increase in levels of income. The process of touristification involved among other things, the rediscovery of Thessaloniki's past cultural plurality and an emphasis on the city's historical importance. Many of the tourists that visit the city are Turkish and Israelis, as Thessaloniki was an important Ottoman city, the birthplace of Kemal Ataturk, as well as the 'mother of Israel' (Mazower 2003). Recent attempts to recognise the city's Jewish past include the construction of a new Holocaust museum which has increased the number of Israelis tourists who also visit, amongst other places, the registry office to find the birth certificates of their deceased kin.[1]

But recovering Thessaloniki's silenced cultural past is nothing new (Agelopoulos 2000). In 1997, when the city was proclaimed the Cultural Capital of Europe, various intellectuals and policy makers openly embraced the discourse of multiculturalism as the characteristic feature of the city which distinguished it from Athens (Agelopoulos

[1] Between 2010-2013 the number of Israeli tourists increased by 358% and of Turkish tourists by 226% (ekathimerini 2014)

2000). Yet, the discourse of multiculturalism, as Agelopoulos (2000) has argued, is controversial in terms of the way it failed to challenge or reverse the social marginality of the city's migrant population, 'failing to incorporate the non-Greek elements who created the cultural plurality of the city (Agelopoulos 2000: 149)'.[2] If we take into consideration the social marginality of the city's migrant population 'the form cultural pluralism takes is connected to issues of political order (Agelopoulos 2000: 142)'. The celebrated form of multiculturalism in Thessaloniki recognises the cultural plurality inherited from the Ottoman past which is simultaneously within the framework set by the Hellenic identity of the nation state. This kind of multiculturalism settled for a 'middle ground' in the city's Byzantine past (Agelopoulos 2000). Thus, the Byzantine heritage and Greek Orthodoxy, as its characteristic feature, are celebrated as marks of the city's multiculturalism.

Greek Macedonia, and its capital city of Thessaloniki, was once a geographical territory of cultural pluralities and fusions shaped by the Byzantine and the Ottoman periods and their forms of population administration (Cowan 2000, Mackridge and Yannakakis 1997). For instance, the Millet system of the Ottoman period was an administrative system of a non-Muslim population that included autonomously administered communities based on 'religious affiliation' and concerned with secular matters (Agelopoulos 2000). Unique forms of syncretism emerged from the 'amalgamation of linguistic, socio-economic, kinship, political and religious domains (Agelopoulos 2000: 143)' of the Millet system (Hirschon 2003).

The present population of the city of Salonika is the result of population movements and exchanges that took place during the Ottoman Empire and after its dissolution in 1912, and the annexation of the city by the Greek state following the Balkan wars (Agelopoulos 2000). With the 1922 compulsory population exchange, Salonika's Muslims resettled in Turkey and Greek Orthodox Christians of various cultural and linguistic backgrounds settled in Thessaloniki, and other parts of Greece (Agelopoulos

[2] Since the beginning of the 1990s there have been calls for the recognition of the multicultural present of the city and for the establishment of rights for the migrant population and ethnic minorities, expressed by activists and anti-racists groups (Agelopoulos 2008)

2000).[3] During the Second World War and under the Nazi occupation the Jews of Thessaloniki, who comprised one third of the city's population in 1922, were deported to concentration camps and only a few returned to the city after the war (Agelopoulos 2000, Mazower 2003).

However, the city's development was grounded on 'the ideological basis of the Greek state (Agelopoulos 2000: 144)'. The area of Greek Macedonia was a locus of intense and often violent assimilation processes, and of the imposition of silence and a form of cultural nationalism (Agelopoulos 2000, Cowan 1997, Danforth 1995, Karakasidou 1997). Most of the population has been assimilated to the Greek national ideology and ethnoreligious linguistic homogeneity (Cowan 1997, Mackridge and Yannakakis 1997). Thessaloniki thus, became a linguistically, religiously and ethnically homogenised city of the Greek nation state.

In 2012 a local anarchist collective formed by activists and intellectuals living in the city, published a critical text on Thessaloniki's past and present called 'Bastard Memory', on the occasion of the city's celebration of its hundred year anniversary since its 'liberation' from the Greek state. The collectively published work emphasized the recreation of a homogenous Greek Thessaloniki based on the destruction of her 'bastard memory' in favour of a 'gentrified memory' as a product aimed for consumption and tourism (Bastards with memory 2012). What the volume proposes is the nurturing of a 'counter memory' of the city which springs from the grass-roots, counteracting prevailing discourses of national homogeneity and instead bringing to the surface forgotten and disturbing experiences for the hegemonies of power (Bastards with memory 2012). This, as the book points out, could guide a 'revolutionary, communist, libertarian way out from the capitalist barbarity (Bastards with Memory 2012: 24)'. This critical text further links the rise of nationalisms in the Balkan areas with capitalist modes of production and class struggles (Bastards with Memory 2012: 106).

[3] Among the Greek Orthodox refugees that settled in Salonika, almost 200.000, were 'Pontic Greeks from the Black sea coast of Turkey (Greeks speaking the Pontic Greek dialect), bourgeois Greeks from the cities of the Turkish Aegean Sea coast and Turkophone Greeks from highland villages of central Turkey (Agelopoulos 2000: 152)'.

The nationalist homogenous reconstruction of the city and the erasure of its 'bastard memory' is captured in infrastructural changes and the development of city planning and the way Thessaloniki loses its Balkan orientation and becomes dependent from South Greece (Bastards with memory 2012). Except from few architectural remnants that confirm the city's Ottoman past, the Ottoman history of Salonika from 1430 to 1912 has been at large erased, driven by a deep and intense European antipathy towards the Ottoman (Mazower 2003). The history of the Sephardic Jewry community in the city was also erased (Mazower 2003). The Jewish cemetery was destroyed and the (47) minarets of the city demolished, apart from the one at the central religious site of Rotonta. While the White Tower has attained such a great symbolic status in the city that many people today, are not aware or refuse to believe that it was an Ottoman construction (Mazower 2003).

The reconstruction project following the 1917 fire that destroyed two thirds of the city (Yerolympos 1996)[4] played a key role in the recreation of Thessaloniki as a city of the Greek nation state. When the fire broke out, Thessaloniki had been a Greek city for only five years, and the reconstruction project rebuild the city with no continuity with its Ottoman past apart from the Roman and the Byzantine periods (Yerolympos 1996). Town planners supported urbanisation and modernization projects and erased 'Oriental traces' whilst establishing historical continuity with Western culture through the classical and Byzantine tradition (Yerolympos 1996). The city centre was rebuilt with urban parks, University campuses, garden suburbs, worker's housing areas and industrial zones, while labyrinthine neighbourhoods were replaced by wide avenues and diagonal streets (which enabled the suppression of the 1936 uprising initiated by tobacco workers) (Yerolympos 1996). The reconstruction highlighted the monuments of the Roman and the Byzantine periods and downgraded Ottoman structures such as Muslim temples and hammams which were surrounded by high multi-storey buildings (Yerolympos 1996). Likewise, churches of other religious communities were hidden behind buildings, such as the Armenian church, the Roman Catholic church and Jewish

[4] As argued, the reconstruction projects designed by Ernest Hébrard, followed the general 'City Beautiful Movement' that aimed at controlling the social and political interactions of the city (Bastards with Memory 2012: 112).

synagogues (Yerolympos 1996). The Jew and Muslim cemeteries were built over by universities and of the International Fair of Thessaloniki (Yerolympos 1996).

By 1950, after the end of the civil war with the triumph of the anti-communist Right, the city's openness was further limited with the closure of borders to the Balkan countries marked by two major 'open "wounds"': the extermination of the city's Jew population and the marginalisation of the left-wing population (Hastaoglou 2008). With a shrinking economy after the war, the previous economic elite, largely comprised of Jews, was replaced by a rising class of contractors that directed the development of the city (Hastaoglou 2008). Thessaloniki was set for a rapid and large post war expansion and within the next couple of decades its population doubled and trebled (Mazower 2003). Thousands of new immigrants arrived from the countryside in search for work and the city's population grew fast (Mazower 2003). New multiple-storeyed densely packed blocks of flats were raised, worker's apartments extended over the hills and around the suburbs, and a new seafront promenade was built (Mazower 2003). The development of reconstruction was mainly based on small scale private property (Yerolympou 2008) and the gradual increase of building allowance (Hastaoglou 2008).

The collapse of socialism in the Balkans in the beginning of the 1990s and the new economic order of globalisation impacted in the city in significant and contradictory ways (Kafkalas et al. 2008). A utopian vision of Thessaloniki as the 'Metropolis of the Balkans' collapsed under significant changes of capital flows and population (Kafkalas et al. 2008). The de-industrialization of Thessaloniki, an important facet of the present city, started in the 1990s, as investments and businesses found less competitive labour and product markets in the neighbouring Balkan countries (Kafkalas et al. 2008). While many local companies were influenced by a fragile economic climate and struggled to survive through cheap labour, institutional arrangements related to taxes and flexible employment conditions were implemented to impede the relocation of companies to the neighbouring Balkan countries (Swyngedouw 2008).

Concerns followed over the economic status of the city in relation to global forces of capital. In this case, whether it should turn to industrial production of compound products or to a services industry (Kourtesi 2008). As has been noted, the city paved the way to innovation, yet, it did not deliver any efficient results (Sefertzi 2008). The city lacked infrastructural development (Labrianidis 2008), while its unequal position in relation to Athens driven by the effects of globalisation, was also pivotal (Kamaras 2008). As such, it appears that the economic prospects of the city in the 1990s were largely guided by the dominance of Athenian financial interests and the concentration of political power in Athens as the capital of Greece (Kamaras 2008).

In the 2000s development programmes of Thessaloniki were guided by a view of Thessaloniki as a central geopolitical and economic national city and the heart of Northern Greece, that linked to the enlargement that saw Bulgaria and Romania join European Union (Thoidou 2008). Thessaloniki was perceived as an 'economic, commercial and transport centre' that could greatly influence the South of Europe and Mediterranean, but also the Balkan and Black sea territories (Thoidou 2008). In the strategic national plans of 2007-2013, supported by European funding programmes (ESPA), the city emerged as a 'centre of innovation and services' (Thoidou 2008). European projects implemented in the city were linked to great changes, such as the renovation of the centre and traditional markets, and the decentralisation of economy and housing, supported by new transport axes (Andrikopoulou 2008).

Hence the 2000s appeared to be a period of changes for the city, and the possibility to expand its influence in the European, Balkan and Mediterranean territories. These processes, however, took place under significant deficiencies in the institutional and political realms (Kafkalas 2008). The city was pictured more as a 'passive bystander', locked into a national historic and geographical bond, enveloped in promises but also many contradictions (Swyngedouw 2008). For this period, the city's GDP (gross domestic product) fell, the unemployment rate of educated persons increased, and overall, the educated population and important businesses moved to Athens. Meanwhile, the city registered a small number of multinational companies (Kafkalas et al. 2008).

Furthermore, the increase of the migrant population greatly influenced the city and generated a cultural heterogeneity, evident in the daily life of the city (Labrianidi and Hatziprokopiou 2008). In the 1990s the city received many migrants mostly from the former USSR, Albania, Bulgaria and Romania. Some of the Albanian nationals were ethnic Greeks while many of the migrants from the ex-USSR countries were Greek repatriates (Agelopoulos et al. 2018). Recent migrants mostly come from the Middle East, North Africa and Southeast Asia (Agelopoulos 2013), and today migrants in Thessaloniki form 10% of the population, most of whom reside in the Western districts of the city (Agelopoulos et al. 2018). Yet, migrants move across the city, and as argued, the increased visibility of migrants in language, press and newly formed enterprises points to a slow improvement of their living conditions (Labrianidi and Hatziprokopiou 2008).

As Agelopoulos (2008) points out, for the citizens of Thessaloniki who have moved beyond a conservative nationalist ideology the city has been reimagined as a multicultural community. This involves two different discourses: one that focuses on the past, and specifically on the Byzantine past of Thessaloniki, which coexists or diverges from a discourse that focuses on the present and the migrant population of the city, which usually involves the Albanian and ex-USSR population but that also includes the new elements of the city, such as the Chinese shopkeepers and the Nigerian street peddlers (Agelopoulos 2008). The two discourses are geographically represented: the centre of the city is attached to the discourses of the recognition of the city's multicultural past where most monuments are located, and the Western districts relate to the claims of recognition of the present cultural heterogeneity of the city linked to the presence of migrants (Agelopoulos 2008).

Today Salonika's expansion and transformation continues; a new metro is being constructed and the city's airport is being extended.[5] During the present crisis, many Thessalonians have migrated abroad, being part of the almost 200,000 people from

[5] Thessaloniki's 'Macedonia airport' was the biggest privatization project under austerity. The city's airport together with 13 more regional airports were delivered to Fraport, the German transport company. The company has recently invested in the renovation and construction of a new terminal for Thessaloniki's airport. (ekathimerini 2018)

Greece, mostly skilled professionals and University graduates, that have migrated to other European countries, Canada, USA and Gulf states (Agelopoulos et al. 2018). At the same time, many refugees from the Middle East, Africa and Asia who arrived in Greece then sought to move to North Europe and Scandinavian countries (Agelopoulos et al. 2018)[6] when faced with the dire economic conditions of the country. However, with the closing of the borders in March 2016, the refugees found themselves stuck and many settled in the camps in mainland and island Greece and in the Western outskirts of the city of Thessaloniki.[7] The new social transitions related to the newcomers-refugees combined with socio-economic and political conditions of the crisis and austerity define Thessaloniki. A city that, as we saw, expresses an internal tension of modernity and memory depicted in architecture, but also in the perceptions and attitudes of its residents (Kafkalas et al. 2008) which oscillate between future changes and a nationalist provincialism (Swyngedouw 2008). The 'borderline city' of Thessaloniki, as it has been called (Swyngedouw 2008), numbers today a population of over one million (1,110,551) according to demographic data from 2011 (Hellenic Statistical Authority 2011a).

Pictures of "the city in crisis"

Kristian explained in detail to us that night how much he enjoyed the vibrant student life of the city and the 'friendliness' of its residents, and that he planned to move to Thessaloniki. However, he insisted that he could not understand 'how come the city is in crisis'. As he explained, he had pictured 'Greece in crisis' and expected a 'different reality'. He acknowledged that his 'impressions' were created through the years by following international news coverage on the so called 'Greek crisis'. He said he had pictured 'Greece suffering' and that he was surprised to see people in the streets and cafeterias as if everything was normal. It seemed as if he was searching for a crisis, or a specific image of a crisis, he could not find.

[6] According to the United Nations during 2015, the number of refugees that entered the country was 851, 319 (U.N.H.C. R. 2016)

[7] In 2016, the numbers of refugees residing at the camps around the area of Thessaloniki was 19.859 (Coordination Centre for the management of refugee crisis in Greece 2016)

At this point a question emerges. How does the circulation of images and narratives in the media, the mediatization of the crisis, construct certain representations of the "reality" of the crisis? How do these representations shape opinions and moral feelings of consumers of news on television and in the press? Images and narratives of the present economic and socio-political condition in Greece have entered houses from all over the world, connecting spaces and locations (Kleinman and Kleinman 1997).

As argued, mediatized representations might act in ways that 'prevent silence' but can also generate a kind of voyeurism deprived of the social and moral responsibility of a real engagement (Kleinman and Kleinman 1997). At the same time, experiences of crisis as images of suffering turn into advertised commodities, fashioning what is "real" through what is represented and what is not. As it has been suggested, this is characteristic of the politics of the spectacle, through which suffering and violence are normalised and commodified, while its victims are 'disposed' (Evans and Giroux 2015).

Media representations can largely influence social experience and cultural practices and symbols and generate great historical changes in the present (Kleinman and Kleinman 1997). However, that which is made visible in the media does not always correspond to the everyday, while at the same time, ordinary experiences are rendered invisible (Kleinman and Kleinman 1997). What Kristian pictured as the 'Greek crisis', was an outcome of visible media representations. At the same time, it became an image of the reality of the local people experiencing the crisis. When he came thus in Greece, he was searching to authenticate the reality represented (Kleinman and Kleinman 1997).

Although today the search for verification is mostly realised through the Web, across endless sources of news and social media shaped by internet algorithms, Kristian was looking beyond the virtual representations of the crisis. It appeared as if he was searching for the material affective consequences of the crisis in the urban fabric of Thessaloniki. It was as if he expected a sensorial and visual 'blast' that would reveal

the effects of the crisis in the urban materialities of Thessaloniki and confirm and complement the picture in his mind.

Eager to discover the city and at the same time the "real" crisis, he walked aimlessly through the urban landscape, crossing through various 'ambiences' in search for the crisis; a 'dérive' mode of strolling the city (Debord 1997). Although a 'dérive' was a critical notion and practice aimed at combating the politics of the 'spectacle' (Debord 1994), in this case it aimed at confirming representations of the spectacle, constructed through the media, the images of a 'city in crisis'.

Kristian's encounter with a vibrant city and an animated sociality, was perceived by him in contrast to his ideas of a "city in crisis". However, as anthropologists working in Greece have noted, the image of a local strong sociality is an intrinsic part of the representations of the crisis in Greece (Kalantzis 2016, Knight 2015). As shown, the image of locals frequenting the cafes is a powerful representation that offers premises of pro-austerity arguments; an image that depicts a population that exhibits 'a shameless' immunity to austerity (Kalantzis 2016), or a collective refusal to perform the impoverished subject in crisis (Knight 2015).

I must admit that when I arrived in Thessaloniki, having no prior connections to the city and destined to ethnographically explore the urban and affective dimensions of austerity, I wandered around like Kristian in search of the intensities and resonances of residents' daily crisis. I was looking for the visibility of precarity in the infrastructure and the individual and social body of the city. During my first week in the city, I saw a smart dressed woman who was street scavenging half inside a garbage bin, retrieving a tomato which she placed straight into the bag over her arm. I captured this image on my phone's camera and it was an image that has played out a lot in the media representations of the Greek crisis. There are many more visible representations that have shaped the mediatization of the crisis and austerity, such as homelessness, riots and closed businesses. However, I argue and hopefully show through the ethnographic chapters of this thesis, that beyond the media constructions of the reality of the crisis and austerity the present reality of Thessaloniki is firstly plural and secondly classed,

gendered and historically and culturally situated. Ethnography I believe is the best way to critically engage the present moment and recognise the specific and the generalised qualities beyond the commodification of the crisis and a market of victimhood and blame.

The visibility and the invisibility of the crisis

'So where is the crisis?', Kristian asked, looking at me persistently in what it seemed as an attempt to demand an anthropological understanding of the situation.

It was the third time I had met him and astonished by his persistent question, I could not help but wonder whether his question demanded a single straightforward answer that would reduce the multiple realities and deny the structurally constructed differences in experience? What if to really see the crisis one must follow people's lives and stories across a narrated past and an unfolding present in order to see how they are entwined with the forces and histories shaped by social and cultural specifics and local and global political economies.

Ethnographic research can grasp, reconstruct and communicate the multiplicities and complexities of forms of life. The anthropologist, through ethnographic encounters with people and along the periods of writing, expects that answers will emerge amidst gestures, words, sentences, paragraphs, sections, chapters, memories, notes, emotions. The writing materialises the experienced and documented ethnographic reality. Yet still there is not a straightforward answer to Kristian's question.

Kristian's question seems to assert distinct realms arranged in the urban setting of Thessaloniki, which refer to the realms of display and of concealment. The question suggests that one is looking for the crisis displayed, while the city tends to conceal the crisis and thus, strip ordinary life from the logics and the aesthetics of crisis emergency and alarming representations; the sensorial and visual eruption that emergency weaves into reality is what Kristian was looking for. This raises important questions:

Could we say that eight years after austerity reforms were implemented, time has normalised the crisis? Could we say that the crisis moved from being exceptional to being normal and ordinary (Mbembe and Roitmnan 1995)? Or perhaps are there distinct realms of visibility and invisibility of the crisis?

It seems that Kristian's question marks a distinction between visibility and invisibility of the crisis. The invisible realms of the crisis are the subject of expressed concerns of the way people's precarious situation is invisible and dispersed in the daily unfoldings of ordinary life (Panourgia 2014). Drawing from my ethnographic encounter with the city of Thessaloniki during austerity, it seems that the demarcated distinction between visibility and invisibility crosses many spheres of everyday life. It plays out in the long queues of soup kitchens that were kept out of the public eye or contained within the interior of a building. Weather variables were of course considered as much as the wish of the recipients to remain invisible. Similarly, the houses that operated without electricity as the result of unpaid bills, are spheres of invisibility, that although are sometimes interrupted by local grassroots initiatives that performed illegal electricity reconnections, build up the hidden picture of present precarious conditions. These disconnected houses can be described as invisible experiences of crisis during austerity periods and the way households turn into zones of privatised precarity. In a similar vein, the invisible realms of queues for soup kitchens refer to the institutional biopolitical administration of visibility of the crisis, namely the way municipal programmes implemented to ameliorate poverty, including soup kitchens, mastered not only the everyday lives of citizens but also the way their presence and precarious situations were visible or invisible.

The municipal authority of the area of Neapoli in Thessaloniki researched, implemented state programmes of 'poverty alleviation' introduced during austerity that included a soup kitchen, social clinic, urban gardens and groceries distribution. These structures of support aimed to ameliorate the daily hardship of the impoverished households. But although they provided for basic needs, such as food and health, they tended to intensify the uneasiness of precarity residents experienced through the moral effects they produced and the temporal uncertain renewals under

which they operated from 2012 to 2017, which is further discussed in the sixth and seven chapters. Since the end of 2017, the structures were reintroduced and supported exclusively by the municipality. Other structures of support implemented by the municipality are also the 'Fead'- (*Teba*), the Greek fund for European Aid to the most deprived, that offers one off distribution of food and basic material aid twice or three times a year, and the 'Social Solidarity Income', a means-tested national minimum income scheme, introduced in 2017 that increased the number of residents that turn to the municipality for social support by 67% (Municipality of Neapoli-Sykies).[8] The municipality also offered help towards employment as the 80% of the people that turned to it for help were unemployed (Municipality of Neapoli-Sykies). It also organised several other social politics-based initiatives, such as a blood bank, structures for refugees and migrants, and programmes for free nursery schools and centres for creative activities (Municipality of Neapoli Sykies). By doing this the municipality claims it implements a 'social politics' that focuses on the needs of the residents by providing a 'network of social care', driven by a 'spirit of solidarity and a multilevel social intervention' that responds to the 'consequences created by the economic crisis' (Municipality of Neapoli Sykies 2016).

Based on my voluntary work experience at the municipality during fieldwork, it seemed that the arrangement of visibility and invisibility of daily crisis was entangled with various social, political and temporal orders. Firstly, the support a resident could receive depended not solely on personal and household income and social conditions but also, on the performance of narrating experienced precarity and on successful navigations of bureaucracy. Residents ought to demonstrate and make visible their experienced crisis in persuasive performances to municipal agents. The performed narrations that comprised unique experiences of precarity, were turned into records stored in the archives of municipality, and then made the statistical representations of precarity experiences in the municipal area. This process not solely solidified various precarious circumstances as categories, but also secured the future implementation

[8] In 2016 there were 2.321 households living below the poverty line that were registered for the *Teba* programmed at the municipality (Municipality of Neapoli Sykies).

of social programmes of support. Since the municipality had to demonstrate not only the hardship and poverty experienced but also the effectiveness of the programmes implemented through these statistics. Hence, personal accounts of experienced precarity but often even simple inquiries about benefits available, made up the municipality's statistical proof. While the residents that turned to municipal authorities for support formed the "statistical army", indispensable for the municipality's applications for future funding and the operation of structures of support, but also for a righteous proclamation of 'social politics' exercised by the municipal political party elected.

In a similar way, people that were long term unemployed (for more than a year) were usually selected for short term job contracts of three or six months to decrease the rates of unemployment, since these were based solely on long term unemployment. From the above we can see that during the crisis there is an entire institutional biopolitical alchemy of precarity visibility, that administers an economy of experiences of crisis and austerity and implements not solely programmes of support to citizens but also minuscule calculations that arrange and adjust the realms of visibility and invisibility of the crisis and regulate people's access to social rights. At the same time, citizens are in such positions that must manoeuvre the conterminous boundaries between visibility and invisibility of precarity in engaging with official structures of support.

A note on Neapoli, a Western area of Thessaloniki

Have you been to the Western areas of Thessaloniki? I asked Kristian the fourth time I met him. It appeared that he had been to a theatrical performance at the Monastery of Lazarists, an important cultural centre of Thessaloniki located in *Stavroupoli*, at the West side of the city. After the performance, Kristian decided to return to the centre on foot, determined once more to explore the city. But he walked the forty minutes' distance fast, as he described, driven by 'a strange and vague feeling of discomfort in the atmosphere'. However, it seemed that these areas did not register as the "real" Thessaloniki to him as much as the vibrant and touristy centre of the city did.

In a similar way, a couple of Thessalonians that lived in the city centre and who proudly claimed to be 'real Thessalonians', descendants of families that had 'always lived in the city', argued that the Western districts of the city 'is not the real Thessaloniki'. Their arguments raise important questions: Why are Western areas of Thessaloniki not the "real" Thessaloniki for the elite of the city centre? Considering that most of the Western areas are low-income areas with a population that is the outcome of internal and international migration, and that most areas were originally populated by Minor Asia refugees, what do such arguments suggest? Do these claims, that divest the Western areas of a "Thessaloniki" identity, assume an exclusionary homogenous Thessalonian identity that legitimizes relations of inequality between social classes and ethno-national based groups (Argyrou 1996)?

The Thessalonians that expressed these opinions have a specific residential history. In the past, they moved from the centre to the area of Panorama, a North-Eastern area that is considered the most high-income and privileged area of the city due to its geographical location in the high forest hills on the foot of mount Chortiatis. It has taken its name from the panoramic views of the city. In the present, many residents of Panorama faced with economic difficulties, tried to sell or abandoned the costly to maintain large Panorama houses, and moved back to the centre.

For some Thessalonians the centre was an ideal place to live. It provided its residents with an impregnable privacy and a prevailing anonymity that offered a sense of freedom (Yanakopoulos 2014). In contrast, many Thessalonians residing in the centre pictured the neighbourhoods at the Western areas as 'villages' defined by 'gossip' and neighbourly conflicts. It appears thus, that claims that Western areas are not the 'real Thessaloniki', entailed criticisms of backwardness that appeal to the authority of an ideal Western modernity (Argyrou 1996), while they assert a classed and modern

identity for the real Thessaloniki.[9] For the bourgeoisie of the centre, thus, the Western areas epitomise backwardness and represent a deviation of modernity.

When one visits the Western areas, the making of (in) visibility of the crisis changes. The facades of buildings with closed business stores and signs for rent and for sale increase. This communicates a visual fragmentation of public space and a feeling of void in landscape and existence (Bourdieu 2016). Similar in void, are now whole abandoned industrial blocks further West in the outskirts of the city, or the empty seaside zones of restaurants and night life in the Eastern areas of Kalamaria. Areas that were in the past vibrant and occupied, 'once full of life', as many Thessalonians commented.

The Western areas which are located at the north-west of the city, are a territory unmapped by the touristic gaze. They include low-income neighbourhoods that its residents often describe as '*laikes sinikies'- '*working class areas'. Today this part of the city comprises some of the poorest neighbourhoods of Thessaloniki and the highest immigrant population. Residents in the Western areas often express their identity, as for example '*laikes taksis'* – 'working class', in relation and in contrast to the residents of the Eastern areas, and the opposite. The opposing and relational collective identity involves distinct self-perceptions that usually associate with a series of stereotypes reproduced.

Hence, the geographical division between Eastern and Western areas of the city has developed over the years into social, class and cultural differentiation. Both areas were largely populated by refugees from Minor Asia and have been in the past low-income areas. Yet, the Eastern areas that are located by the sea, developed through the years into middle class and high-income areas, and are mostly populated in the

[9] It is important to note that already in the last periods of Ottoman Thessaloniki there was a complicated interface of modernity and tradition (Bastards with memory 2012). The private schools of the city that accepted all religions and ethnicities were defined by a European education, ideology and lifestyle, creating a cosmopolitan class comprised by the wealthy population of the city (Bastards with memory 2012: 136). In the start of the 21sth century, the development of commerce, industry, as much as the new life styles introduced and the struggles for class emancipation, pictured the European character of the city, as a modern city (Bastards with memory 2012). While at the same time, amidst intensification of nationalisms nurtured by the expectation of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, tradition and religion figured equally important with economic and class interests (Bastards with memory 2012: 137).

present by University educated and skilled workers. [10] This polarity however, as noted, dates to the Ottoman periods and the creation of a wealthy Eastern part of the city and a poor Western area around the Vardaris square (Bastards with Memory 2012, Yerolympou 2008). The Eastern part was created during the Ottoman period as the area of wealthy Greeks, Turks, Jews, Armenians, Domnedes, French and Austrians, that transcended the ethnic and religious organised residential communities of the centre (Bastards with memory 2012: 131).

The divisions are never firm and static, as theory and practice have proved in so many ways. Although the Western areas record the highest rates of unemployment and of households living below the poverty line, there are many households facing severe economic difficulties in Eastern areas of Thessaloniki as well. It is important to note that Toumpa, a traditionally working-class area is a district in Eastern Thessaloniki.[11] While in the Western district of Oreokastro there are affluent households and high-income residents, considered by many Thessalonians as the 'neo-rich' of the city, many of who have turned into the 'neo-poor' population under austerity crisis (Panourgia 2018). Of course, people move from Western areas to the Eastern areas and the opposite. During present difficult times and as the rents are much lower in the Western areas, many people move to Western areas. What is more, intimate relations criss-cross the two sides of the city.

The experiences and relations of the residents of the Western and Eastern areas of Thessaloniki and the cultural and social aspects of these, have developed in complex and contradictory ways into multiple attitudes and practices. These are often expressed as forms of collective identities of common characteristics that are opposed between the residents of the East and the West. It is not unusual that residents of Western areas perceive themselves in contrast to Eastern area residents, often in

[10] In the area of Neapoli at the West of Thessaloniki researched in this study, the 6, 9% of the population have a bachelor's degree, and 0.13 % have a doctorate degree. While in the area of Kalamaria in the East side of the city, 15,54 % have a bachelor's degree and 0,68 % have a doctorate. (Hellenic Statistical Authority 2011b)

[11] Toumpa hosts the football stadium of one of the most popular clubs in Greece, called *PAOK*, that was founded in 1926 by Constantinopolitans that resettled in Thessaloniki. Westerns residents, most of who are great supporters of the team, refer sometimes to Toumpa as an area of the centre and not as an Eastern area.

antagonistic terms, and the opposite. The opposition tends to produce stereotypes of 'uncivilised' and 'brutal' Westerners and 'pretentious' and 'soft' Easterners.

For instance, scattered references by some of the Westerners suggest a prevailing opinion that Easterners are 'soft' and 'college children'. While some Easterners have hinted that Westerners are 'backward' and often call them '*kagoures,*'[12] a local slang metaphorical idiom that signifies a person who shows off in a self-degrading manner and becomes the object of mockery (as for example men driving motorbikes or cars adjusted to make noise and attract attention, or women wearing lot of make-up).[13] Opposing differences are expressed at times in humorous terms, in such a way that they tend to unload the symbolic weight of the assumed opposition. But humour can sometimes recreate stereotypes, as for example the phrase 'wild wild west', (drawing references to an old American TV series and recent movie) that has been expressed by Easterners for the Western districts, and that makes assumptions of criminality.[14]

The recreation of local cultural disparities that accompanies social divisions and that shapes forms of antagonistic collective identities, organises sociality based on shared demarcated similarities and differences (Papataxiarchis 2006a). It further, resonates with ethnographically documented ways of making collective identities in opposition to the other, as for instance, between distinct villages and between village and urban communities (Argyrou 1996, Campbell 1962, Cowan 1990, Du Boulay 1979, Just 2000, Friedl 1964).

As Western residents and participants in the research have explained, in the 1980s the conflict between West and East was expressed as a conflict between '*tsinari*' and 'freaks'. The *tsinari*, that comes from the Turkish word *cinar* and means plane tree, is

[12] It literally means kangaroo and it refers to the body posture of the person driving a moto which resembles that of the kangaroo.

[13] This is at the same time repeated by residents of Western areas that are located nearer the center towards the residents of Western areas that are further West. For example, a woman from Neapoli might comment about women from Evosmos, an area further away from the center at the West side of the city, that they 'wear extreme make up and dress'.

[14] The percentage of population that voted for Golden Down in the 2015 national elections was for Neapoli, the Western area researched in this study, 6.88% and for the area of Evosmos, an area that is located further West, was 9.68%, and for the Eastern area of Kalamaria it was 5.5 %. (Ministry of Interior 2015)

the name of a Western area of the upper town of the centre of Thessaloniki, that used to be the Turkish quarter of the Ottoman city (Metaxas 2015). In the 1960s the '*tsinari'* described a working-class man that was treated with irony from the middle and upper classes of Thessaloniki, and represented a general conflict between 'lads'-'toughs' ('*magkes'*) and 'butter boys'-'softies' ('*voutiropeda'*) (Metaxas 2015). This conflict was expressed in geographical terms in the post-war Thessaloniki, as a conflict between the centre and the Upper town – the *tsinari* area – that later became a conflict between the centre and the districts around, and later it turned into a conflict between the Western and Eastern areas (Metaxas 2015). In the 1980s the meaning of *tsinari* changed and it came to refer to the young people who liked disco music and frequented a central patisserie shop at *Tsimiski* street (Metaxas 2015). The '*tsinari'* people conflicted with the 'freaks' who were a group of people characterised by rock musical preferences and left and anarchist political positions (Metaxas 2015). The 'freaks' frequented a café by the seafront, called Thermaikos café,[15] and often met with the '*tsinari'* at the centre and played yogurt and egg "wars" and often brawled in the streets. This division was perceived as a division between the East-'*tsinari'* and the West-'freaks', although there were 'freaks' in the East and '*tsinari'* in the Western areas.

As participants described, the polarity did not correspond solely to music tastes and lifestyles, but also to attitudes towards for example, school education and teachers. The good student was traditionally an object of mockery in the Western areas and it represented a student from the East. However, as participants noted, significant cultural distinctions between the Western and Eastern areas collapsed in the 1990s. A change that they identify with a political period that was defined by the PASOK government.[16] They explained that the PASOK period signalled the commodification of culture and the loss of cultural traits attached to the Western areas, such as those related with popular Greek night clubs. Any cultural traits and practices associated

[15] The café is named after the Thermaikos gulf the north-western part of the Aegean Sea and where Thessaloniki lies at its north-eastern tip.

[16] *PASOK*- 'Panhellenic Socialist Party' is a social democratic party in Greece, founded with the fall of the military junta in 1974. It exchanged government with its historical rival, the '*New Democracy'*, a centre-right political party, for decades until the crisis and the loss of most of it popular support.

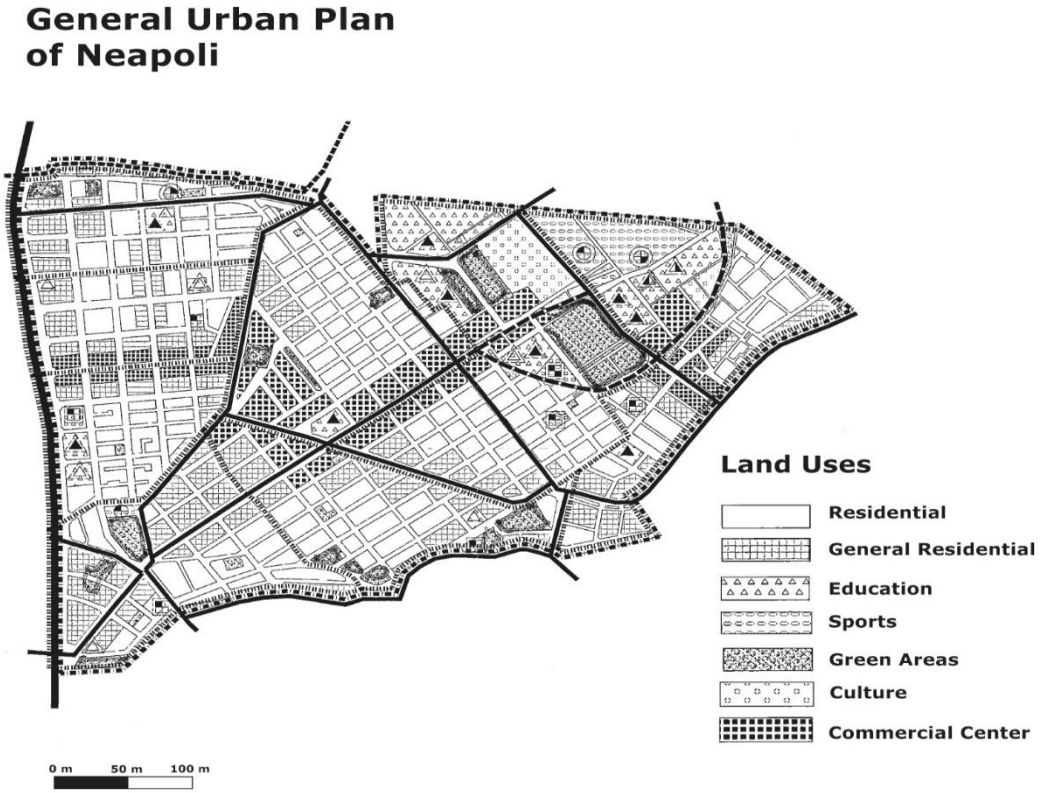
with the Western areas could be copied and sold. An example they provided was a story of a young boy from the Western areas that was wearing worn out athletic shoes (All-star converse) and was approached by another young boy from the Eastern areas to exchange his old torn shoes for two new pairs. Thus, this period identified with the politics of *PASOK*, signified to them processes of alienation, where all things acquired a value of exchange, like the old used shoes that became an object of desire and self-fashion for the wealthier young people of the East. This also points to a characteristic cultural class distinction that associates higher classes with aesthetics and lifestyles and working classes with concerns over practical matters (Argyrou 1996, Bourdieu 2010/1984).

The research was based on ethnographic encounters in neighborhoods located in the Western area of Neapoli which is closely located to the center and is administered by the municipality of Neapoli-Sykies.[17] Neapoli is a low-income, working class area with around 26.613 residents (Hellenic Statistic Authority 2011c). The area was built originally as a refugee settlement that turned over the years into one of the densest areas in Greece.[18] The first settlement in the area was raised in 1923 by minor Asia refugees from the city of *Nevsehir- Neapoli* in Cappadocia, who settled in the hills outside the Byzantine walls of the city, giving to their new homeland the name of the old, and building in the centre the Orthodox Christian temple of Saint George, in memory to the homonym temple in their past homeland. The low-income neighbourhoods researched in this study are located around the main church, where there are amphitheatrically and compactly built multi-storeyed buildings.[19]

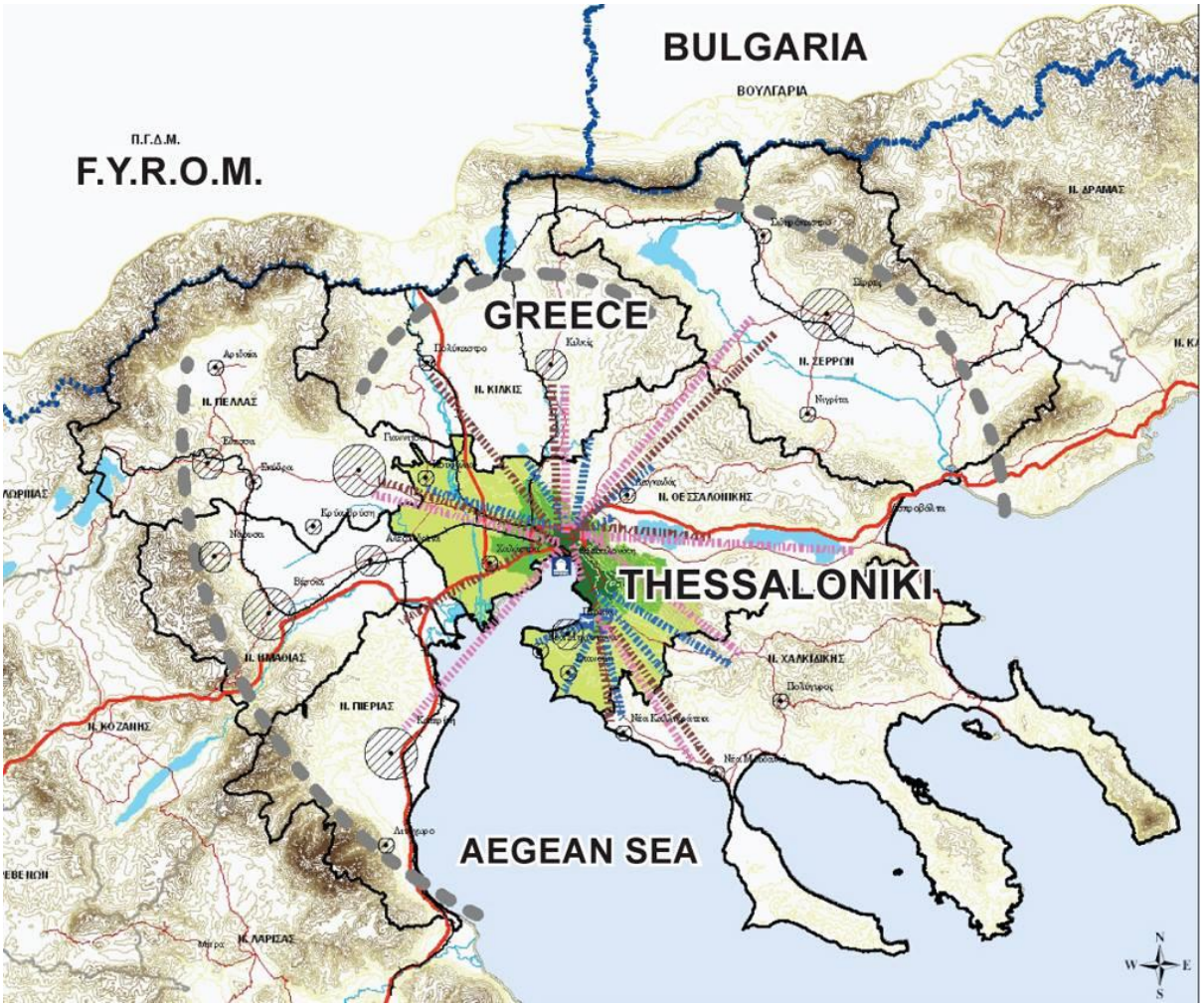
[17] Neapoli is part of the newly formed municipality of Neapoli-Sykies, which includes the neighbourly areas of Sykies, Retziki and Agios Pavlos, under so called *Kallikratis* programme, a 2011 implemented law reform that redefined the borders of the administrative units of Greece, reducing expenses and costs responding to the crisis and in accord to the commitments to the country's creditors. The new administrative borders transferred social responsibilities from the state to the peripheries and the municipalities.

[18] The Neapoli population is 26.613 for an area of 1.168 km2. Neapoli has a population density of 22.8 residents/km2, while Thessaloniki 16,8 residents/km2, Athens 17, 04 residents/km2, London 5,6 residents/ km2, and Berlin 4,2 residents/km2.

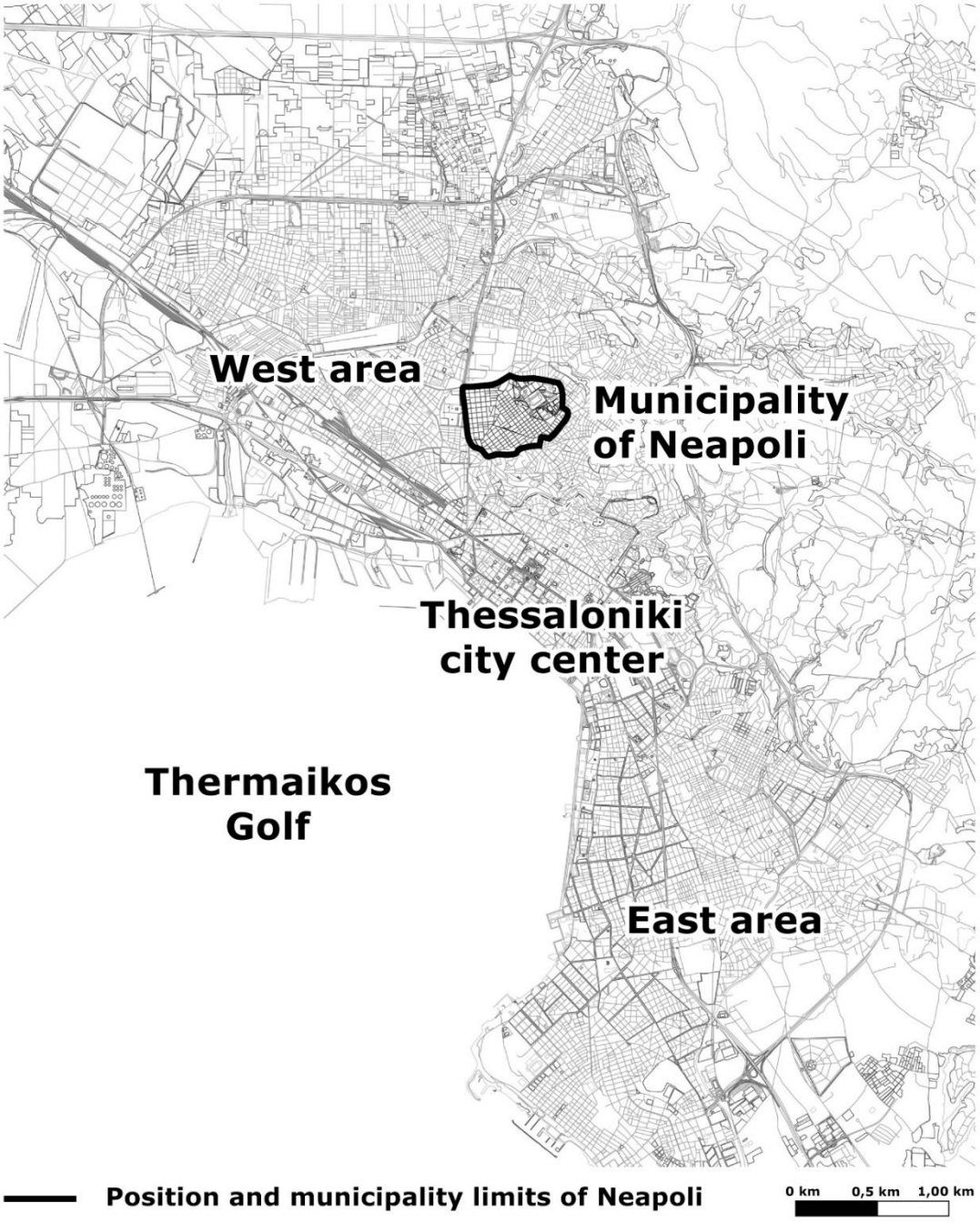
[19] The unemployment rate for Neapoli in 2011 was 24,76 % (Municipality of Neapoli and Sykies, 2015), while Greece's unemployment for the same year was 18,7%. Obviously, these rates increased the following years under austerity.



Map 1. General urban plan of Neapoli (source: by the author)



Map 2. Metropolitan area of Thessaloniki and connections with close cities. Source: Regulatory Urban plan of Thessaloniki metropolitan area.



Map 3. Positions and Municipality limits of Neapoli (source: by the author)

Research Methods

Temporality and topography

The way anthropologists' own frameworks influence ethnography and the textual writing of culture, in short, the politics of representation, have been widely discussed (Clifford and Marcus 1986, Appadurai 1988, Pina Cabral 1992). Ethnography includes the anthropologist's personal vision that is shaped by notions which in turn shape the analytical frames and methodological tools employed. These map the determinations, limits and possibilities of the written, of the present and the potentialities of what is to come. In present 'critical times in Greece' (Dalakoglou and Agelopoulos 2018), in which reality and anthropological research are bound up with a political future, ethnographic writing constitutes a generative potential for a refined understanding of this historical moment.

At the same time, there is no escape from confusion and the 'troubles' that 'invade' the social and epistemic domain of crisis (Papataxiarchis 2018). The anthropologists researching the present in Greece must deal with the fact that fundamental analytical concepts are morally, politically and ideologically charged (Papataxiarchis 2018). Ethnography must face these complications in an attempt to clear the 'blurred picture' of the unfolding reality (Papataxiarchis 2018) and introduce order to the 'unsafe' grounds of the epistemic object, the crisis which materialises while it is exorcised (Panourgia 2014).

In completing this thesis, I fought with the impasses and difficulties of researching in critical times. I dutifully recorded general fieldnotes searching for signs of coherence amidst uncertainty, instability, conflicts and blurring of boundaries. Faced with the countless clashing expressions of daily life, I discovered many (re)configurations, embodied and articulated, the multiple and complex ways hegemonic frames were acted and reconstructed on the ground. The ethnography documents continuations and re-positionings and the way these are warranted by culture and history, marked by the ontological dimensions the conditions of austerity crisis have taken after many

years. The point of "entry" into the field overlapped with the historical moment of the failure to bring down austerity. This was the starting point of my fieldwork. The thesis sketches this period of fieldwork and attempts to put pieces together in a coherent way. Pieces that describe daily forms of human relations and life projects in the precarious present, and specifically the way these are shaped by and shape multiple kinds of intimacy, sociocultural, familial, friendly and neighbourly. The end in this sense remains open ended (Loizos 1992), incomplete under the 'unfinishedness' of life (Bielh 2013), and the continuation of austerity crisis.

The start of my fieldwork coincided with the announcement of the referendum for the 5th of July 2015, by Tsipras, the prime minister and leader of the left party *SYRIZA* that since January 2015 had formed a government coalition with *ANEL* (Independent Greeks, a national conservative, right wing and austerity based political party).[20] The public referendum called people to vote no or yes to further austerity. Amidst media campaign for a yes vote, closed banks, and capital controls, the results were 61% of a no vote.[21] The outcome of the no vote was celebrated as a democratic gesture of a collective agency, an affirmative no. Only to be reversed a few days after, into a full acceptance by the government of further austerity measures with terms harsher than those originally proposed.

A day after the announcement for a referendum I visited the house of young friends for a birthday celebration. There was a general upheaval and the opinions expressed were diverse. Some voiced concerns, others joked while waving drachma notes and teasing that they could be finally used, others were enthusiastic about voting while others refused to vote in what they saw as a charade of legitimation of the government's decisions. Much has changed since that day; a couple of the people that were present back then have now migrated to the Netherlands in search of employment, while soon after that meeting, the intense discussions about the

[20] The leftwing *SYRIZA* party went from 5% to 36% during the period of crisis and became government in 2015, which is closely linked to the way the Greek socialist party *PASOK* went down from 44% (2009) to 5% (2015).
[21] The division was classed, as the outcome showed, in low income areas the no vote was high and in wealthy areas the yes prevailed. In the areas researched the vote was 60.92 % no.

austerity crisis between this company of friends were replaced by talks on the reality and urgent needs of hundreds of thousands of refugees arriving in the country.

At this point in time refugees were arriving at the north of Greece to cross the border to Macedonia. A few months later, the border was closed, and thousands of people were left stranded waiting at the Idomeni camp (half an hour drive from the city of Thessaloniki) for the border to open. The violent consequences of austerity and the violent conditions the refugees faced, produced an entanglement of different kinds and forms of precarity, of gestures of help and xenophobia. The emergence of a 'crisis within the crisis' revealed the 'creative and destructive sides of the 'crisis'' (Papataxiarchis 2018). It seemed that these conditions were creating an ethnographic 'topography' in the city of Thessaloniki, as in other places in Greece, shaped by the emerging conditions of crisis, that could be linked to established and new concepts (Strathern 1988b).

This was a period of complex social and political dynamics, an interface of conflicts and support, during which Greece's creditors insisted on the irrelevance of 'refugee crisis' and the implementation of third Memorandum of austerity measures. While news reports were dominated by the increasing number of refuges drowning in the Aegean Sea. Big changes were taking place, although sometimes, they seemed to be absorbed by the pace of daily life.

Thus, the ethnographic temporality and topography of this research was marked by these two historical moments, the passage, the waiting and staying of many refugees in Thessaloniki and other places in the country, and the setback of anti-austerity politics. The latter has been articulated as the 'collapse of institutional hope' (Holloway et al. 2018). Characteristic of the period and the place is the graffiti that appeared on the walls of the city, voicing and emphasizing important aspects of daily experience and the complexities of hope in such perplexing times.[22] The graffiti in the

[22] Through graffiti and stencils the walls become mediums of expression that reflect the spirit of the period. Graffiti and stencilled messages stand out in Thessaloniki as statements that draw attention and mark surfaces of interaction that reshape the urban space (Harvey 2003). Many of the images portray slogans of ironic humour that express protest practices and political agency (Knight 2015).

first illustration -'the light at the end of the tunnel is a train'-, describes the 'courage of hopelessness' (Zizek 2015). The second graffiti is indicative of the present 'crisis of legitimation (Papataxiarchis 2018)', that was intensified after the introduction of further austerity following the no vote referendum. It reads: 'hope is coming, have you seen it?', and pictures a bird's head stuck and concealed in a ballot box. This image playfully protests and subverts the political mottos of *SYRIZA* party 'hope is on its way' and 'hope begins today'. It also summarises a general dissatisfaction with mainstream politics evident in the exceptionally low turnout in the national elections in September 2015.[23]

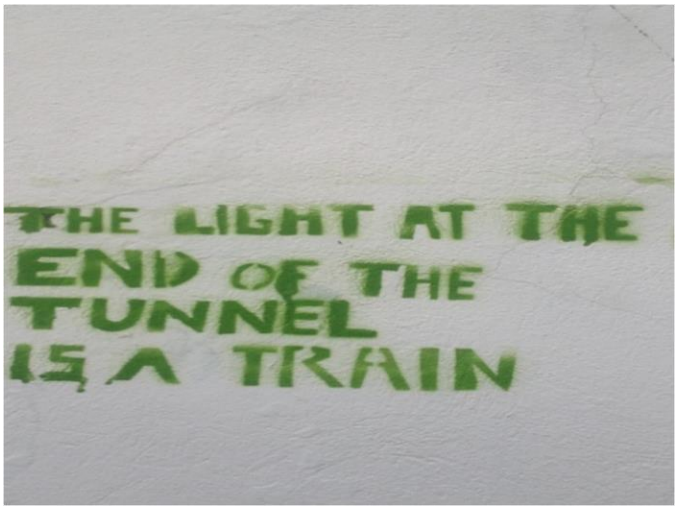


Fig. 1. Graffiti A in the centre of Thessaloniki.

Fig. 2. Graffiti B in the centre of Thessaloniki.

[23] Almost one in two people turned out in the national elections of September 2015, participation was 55, 9%. It is important to note that absence during pro-austerity periods was no more than 30% (ekathimerini 2015).

Hope as a method

Yet, this perplexed and critical moment that was recreating the 'field' seemed at the same time to reconfigure hope. Although the material conditions of the low-income neighborhoods in Thessaloniki researched did not leave much room for optimism, people continued to survive and relate in the everyday. They searched for ways to endure and make sense of the experienced precarious situation. The characteristic 'present-ness' of the austerity crisis disrupted modes of anticipation (Bryant 2016), however, people's daily practices turned hope into a vital element of the ethnographic present. We need to understand hope here, not as a future oriented action in line with the objective possibilities of the present social and economic conditions (Bourdieu 1979). Neither linked to the temporal paralysis of pessimism, nor to the aspirational projection of optimism (Massumi 2015). The potential for hope in these precarious times in the neighborhoods researched links to the complexity of people's everyday intimate encounters with culture, hegemonic discourses and frames of crisis, family, friends and neighbors. It links to the affective aspect of everyday living and relating and thus it is placed in the present (Massumi 2015). Hope is 'tied to the limits of uncertainty (Narotzky and Besnier 2014)' but it is also an 'open threshold-a threshold of potential' emerging in the margins of 'maneuverability' amidst uncertainty, and involves not a far reaching goal in the future but a 'next step' (Massumi 2015: 2-3). In this sense hope refers to the daily affective and embodied possibilities of 'navigating movements', 'the next experiential step' in the present situation (Massumi 2015: 3)'. This recreates hope not as a utopian thought but as an outcome of social relations and practices, of 'interaction or interlocution' (Crapanzano 2003). In this sense, the focus on intimacy and its affective manifestation, can reveal the way hope emerges as an outcome of human interactions and daily practices.

As it has been argued, the 'hope boom in anthropological studies' links with present generalised conditions of uncertainty that have generated a subsequent interest in searching for hope, most often in resistance and agency (Kleist and Jansen 2016). The search for hope in the realms of resistance, however, dates back in time, particularly if one takes into consideration E.P. Thompson's opus of '*The making of the English Working Class*' and other works on late eighteen century England that evoke an

optimism in the possibilities of resistance (Taussig 2002). Though, as Taussig (2002: 52) points out, hope is something that is conveyed in the politics of writing, in the writing that challenges 'conventions of how words work'.

I focus on hope as a method of knowledge (Miyazaki 2004) communicated in the writing (Taussig 2002). In this sense, I treat hope as an experiential moment that can be expressed, effectively I hope, in the ethnographic writings of intimacy and precarity in present urban Greece. As Miyazaki proposes, hope as a method of anthropology is a form of 'reception and response (Miyazaki 2004: 7)'. In the ethnography that follows hope represents 'a modality of engagement' (Miyazaki 2004) with the precarious situations of urban citizens in Greece and the way these intersect with intimacy and its various transitions. Taking also into consideration that emergent instances of hope are embedded in historical and cultural specificities (Crapanzano 2003, Appadurai 2004).

Situated anthropology

The method of hope and the results of knowledge it brings are of course mediated by my own experience in the field, something that doesn't reduce 'the truth-value of the results (Pina Cabral 1992: 10)', but makes clear that knowledge is always entirely situated (Haraway 1988). The relations with the people studied were criss-crossed by multiple intimate points of connection and distance. The shared language offered of course a level of intimacy and granted me access to the details of people's daily lives (Herzfeld 2005). I was the 'native anthropologist', however, I was 'the Athenian' and not the Thessalonian, and a resident of UK, and this was often perceived with suspicion.

The ambiguities and contradictions involved in being a 'native anthropologist' or doing 'anthropology at home' have been extensively discussed (Abu Lughod 1991,

Agelopoulos 2006, Bakalaki 1997, Hastrap 1993, Narayan 1993).[24] Discussion has raised, among many things, issues concerning the way native anthropologists often introduce political questions (Bakalaki 1997). Yet, is not all knowledge political, since the scholar is enmeshed in 'the circumstances of life' (Said 2003)?

The discussion on native anthropology underlines a distinction between self and other, insider and outsider. However, inclusion and interiority are two different kinds of experience (Panourgia 1995), and as Herzfeld (1987, 1986) has showed, boundaries between exclusion and inclusion are shifting in Greece. For example, I was a Greek, but also an Athenian, who often, occupies an inferior status for Thessalonians. At the same time, I was someone who grew up in a working-class area in Athens. I was also a female thirty-eight-year-old researcher, unmarried and with no children. I was a PhD scholar at a British University, but also an economic migrant in UK. The various positions I occupied, and my background were important features in navigating the field and building relations of trust. But also, in the production of ethnographic data. For instance, as it will become apparent in the ethnographic descriptions, the research participants are primarily women, and this was a result of an ethnographic gendered encounter, my female body as much as my personal interests in the gendered aspect of austerity.

The various positions I occupied in the field, relocated me back and forth between the poles of inclusion and exclusion. With time, I progressed across levels and forms of intimacy, as familiarity reworked relations and as I attempted to combat mistrust. Sometimes strong connections with participants emerged and I found myself being deeply involved in their personal lives. Much of the ethnography comes of intimate friendly relations (Powdermaker 1966) and experienced transitions in the field and the transformative power of these on research participants and the anthropologist (Biehl 2013). The writing moves across dialectical oppositions between 'epistemologies of

[24] The concept of the anthropology at home, although less hegemonic in its pronouncements, still assumes a uniformity of culture in the same way native anthropology assumes an a priori knowledge (Panourgia 1995).

intimacy' and 'epistemologies of estrangement', between ethnographic co-presences and the creation of 'portable objectifications' (Keane 2003).

Methods of data collection

The primary method of data collection was participant observation. I spent a year in 2015-2016 in fieldwork that was accompanied by many short and long visits. I orbited the lives of participants, following them as they performed relations, unpaid and paid work, met neighbours, did shopping and socialised in houses, cafeterias, restaurants and bars. The embodied daily interactions but also informal talks and conversations between and with participants and other Thessalonians, formed the basis of data collection (Silverman 1993). The voiced and non-voiced expressions and opinions, the observed bodily interactions and performances, and my reflections were recorded daily on my field diary.

After many long and short stays at Thessaloniki, the city came to feel like home and an intimate place in the world. At the start of fieldwork, I found out about a bazaar organised by an autonomous neighbourhood initiative in the area of Neapoli, in the Western districts of the city. This first encounter with the initiative turned out successfully and thus, the low-income neighbourhoods around the initiative were selected as "the field" of research. The economic and geographical facets as much as the fact that the area's municipality claimed a 'social politics' and implemented a number of structures, were important premises for the selection. But the first ethnographic encounter was also a matter of luck in the field (Powdermaker 1966).

My participation in the neighbourhood's autonomous political initiative was the most intimate and thus accessible field realm. Since members of the initiative embraced me in their lives, I followed the relations of the group and I became an active member in actions and events organised. While I participated in the daily lives of some of the neighbours in the area and I followed their relations with family and other neighbours. Hence, the data informing the ethnographic analysis comes from daily relations with participants; observations of how they communicate experienced precarity and create

eventful intimacies (Chapter Four), how they negotiate family intimacy as an ambiguous safety net (Chapter Five), how they relate with neighbours and remake neighbourly intimacies (Chapter Six), and how they recreate the neighbourhood as an affective and political endeavour (Chapter Seven).

I also volunteered in the municipality's support programmes, specifically in the structure of a soup kitchen, as well as spending time in the offices of municipal social workers where residents inquired about available assistance. At the same time, as some of the municipal workers in the soup kitchen, were residents of the area and dealt with precarious livelihoods and working conditions, their lives were included in the research.

Lastly, some ethnographic data comes from the municipality's Facebook page and from two Facebook based groups called 'Neapoli' and 'once upon a time in Neapoli' (*Kapote sti Neapoli*). The first group is a platform for Facebook users that discusses issues about the area of Neapoli, but also about the city and the country at large. 'Once upon a time in Neapoli' ('*Kapote sti Neapoli'*) is a group through which people share memories, past stories and photographs related to the area. The virtual communities were important sources of information and of capturing general local opinions on timely topics.

Care and engagement as a method

An anthropological inquiry into social precarity suggests specific ways of examining human life; firstly, it requires an exploration of life histories and the way these are embedded in social cultural and historical circumstances. Life histories were collected through interactive and naturally occurring conversations and in-depth interviews (Chase 2000). Broad questions I prepared invited narration, but stories usually followed messy and complex routes that involved multiple negotiations and contradictions (Rapport 2000) and shifts of subject positions (Chase 2000).

Secondly, the study of precarity requires attention to the way people feel and suffer in specific situations and thus it requires a form of engagement based on care with the sources of precarity and suffering, and how these can change (Wilkinson and Kleinman 2016). I believe that care and engagement with precarity as methods of inquiry can yield important knowledge. My methodological approach and involvement during fieldwork was characterised far more from care and intervention, than distance and dispassion.

Firstly, I was involved in the autonomous initiative organised by the neighbourhood, political actions of support for neighbours in need and refugees in the camps around the city. Secondly, I was often mediating between people, NGOs and municipality to facilitate support needed for those facing severe economic problems. I employed information from my participation in the municipality's structures to help people navigate bureaucracy, and sometimes I accompanied them to the municipal offices of Neapoli. At the same time, I directed people in need to an NGO with whom I was in contact in order to receive coupons for shopping that were distributed to refugees at that time. Lastly, I often acted as a bridge of connection between refugees and neighbours, as I hosted homeless refugee families for a long period during fieldwork and sometimes they came with me to meet people in the neighbourhood. These joyful encounters encompassed valuable cultural exchanges and managed to create disruptions in the xenophobic feelings that some of the participants often expressed.

Fieldwork, the art of following peoples' lives, involves various levels of ethical obligations and engagement (Caplan 2003), especially in precarious conditions. Fieldwork as a form of human contact involves of course mistakes, disappointments and failures, but also connections and important developments along which the participants' interests and rights must be considered (Punch 1986). Ethics in the field in this sense, is situational and pragmatic as it is based on everyday interactions, the messiness of daily life and its felt proximity (Merleau-Ponty 2002/1945). While in the field the anthropologist, usually, must move between different moral registers in order to be committed to a sense of responsibility towards the participants in the research and be responsive to their needs and wishes.

In order to protect the lives of some participants that are at a threshold of legality and illegality, I have replaced real names with pseudonyms. By doing this their lives could maintain confidentiality and the ethnography could unfold around real people. The writing of their lives and stories is of course an ethical reengagement that involves a different temporality to field working. Ethnographic writing is, therefore, an ethical endeavour through which I attempted to be critically attentive to the complexity and subtlety of peoples' concrete experiences by pouring 'thick light' (Wagner 2001), as another way of responding to their lives.

Chapter Overview

In the following chapter I discuss the literature on the concepts of intimacy and precarity. These discussions illuminate the way intimate life and personhood are discursively constituted as realms of power, and the way they refer to questions of belonging and change. While the exploration of the concept of precarity follows the various ways economic and political forces manifest in and impact the lives of citizens in very unequal ways. I also examine the concept of precarious labour and the ethics and politics of precarity. In the third section of this chapter, I explore how the concept of intimacy articulates across the development of literature on the anthropology of Greece.

In chapter three the notion of the crisis is critically explored; how it relates to debt and austerity and the way it resonates across time and space. Hence, chapter three examines the epistemological, moral and political aspects of claims to crisis (Roitman 2014) and how these relate with austerity and the history of debt and austerity, in an attempt to unknot the intricacies enmeshed in narratives of crisis. I argue that debt crisis and austerity constitute a whole web of discourses and a powerful moral and political frame that extends across history and geography and that shapes economic, social and political life. Yet, for the participants in the research, the notion of crisis describes their everyday precarious realities largely defined by present austerity

policies. Their experiences suggest a reframing of crisis as an austerity crisis, that describes that crisis is the outcome of the imposition of austerity. Lastly, a brief review of the ethnographic material produced on the present political and socio-economic conditions in Greece, reveals that austerity crisis is tied to local historical and cultural specificities and is a source of disruptions. The ethnographic works reviewed, describe an ambivalent and contradictory reality and significant changes and reconfigurations.

Chapter four focuses on the (in) visibility and the gender aspect of daily experiences of austerity. We follow the reproductive labour and performative narrations of three Thessalonian women, housewives, mothers and grandmothers, that expose invisibility and protest present intensification of giving for their families, through claims to daily forms of self-sacrifice. The eventful and performative accounts of sacrifice reveal the gender dimension of the impact of austerity policies and the invisible and uneven registers of precarity. We see how the women absorb emergencies, as common as striking, in the household and their children's households, and try to pre-empt and limit the precarity austerity reforms produce. They manage financial and affective economies and temporalities, by improvising the everyday upon valuable generational knowledge of reproduction. While they try to secure survival, daily austerity crisis is transformed not in solutions but in forms of self-sacrifice that describe the way precarity is experienced as physical exhaustion. As they protest the overburdening caused by present conditions, they develop valuable affective forms of gender intimacy and solidarity. Yet, these concur with women's everyday acts and words that are complicit with structures of inequality. Moreover, we see how their concrete experiences of sacrifice depict the uneven distribution of indebtedness and thus, they are juxtaposed to government's call for people's sacrifices as a national duty under the crisis.

In chapter five, the ethnography explores family intimacies under austerity; the forms austerity crisis takes in daily household life, the construction and history of an obstinate precarity of an indebted household, and the experience of return to the parental household of young adults facing economic difficulties. The return involves economic impasses and illuminates the production and the experience of precarity for

young adults from working-class backgrounds. The return to the parental household is culturally grounded, yet it is the subject of negotiation and reconsiderations of independence and family intimacy *vis* a *vis* European belonging, hegemonic modernity and neoliberalization. It appears that as precarity creeps into the everyday, the family household becomes an ambiguous realm of reparation and conflict. The parental household emerges as a tenuous shelter, a protection and blockage at the same time. It is seen-imagined by its members as a form of unification in the present, against neoliberal austerity.

Chapter Six explores the dynamics of intimate relations in the neighbourhood; the daily interactions between neighbours that describe affective forms of dwelling and relating. The imagination of intimacy in ethnonational and gender normative terms creates various forms of exclusion and racism that overlap with inclusive relations built in emergent affective neighbourly spaces defined by proximity. Daily encounters and reciprocations create a picture of the neighbourhood as a messy intimate space, where cruelty and kindness are difficult to distinguish, as they are entangled in complex ways. Neighbourly intimacy might signal the reproduction of hierarchies and hostilities but also a threshold in time and space that generates inclusive forms of relating and engaging with the precarious situations of others. Intimacy is also a matrix of proximities that supports strategies for securing everyday survival for impoverished residents. Hence, neighbourly intimacy emerges as an ethical relation with important social, economic and political dimensions in this neighbourhood marked by forms of precarity shaped by contexts of inequality, precarious labour, exclusion and racist and xenophobic attitudes.

As past ethnographies have showed, locals often transcend conflicts through the reciprocities characteristic of practices of commensality. Chapter seven studies the commensal events organised by the neighbourhood autonomous initiative called *Apan* (*Aftonomi Paremvasi Neapoliton*- Autonomous Intervention of Neapolites). The weekly meals offered to neighbours and citizens in need, are based on a politics of sharing. They create an open space where neighbours share food, emotions, memory and experiences and interrupt forms of exclusion and indifference. During the meals,

experiences of precarity are communicated and shared and novel connections and relations develop. Neighbourly and friendly relations are the basis of this political and ethical project, supported by a *parea*-a collective of friends that grew up together in the neighbourhoods of Neapoli. The *parea,* which has evolved into a large nexus of people that offer help and participate in the various events organised, merges different groups of people together based on a shared interest for the neighbourhood. The initiative of Apan enacts a certain politics that attempt to break with habituated attitudes that can act in stereotyping. Neighbourhood thus becomes a space of intimate politics where one can engage with the precarious situations of those one recognises as “intimate others”.

Chapter Two: Intimacy, Precarity and the Anthropology of Greece

Introduction to theoretical overview

In this chapter I will offer a brief review of the literature that examines the question of intimacy. As it will become apparent, intimacy is a concept that closely links to the anthropology of Greece through the work of Herzfeld (2005), while it provides a suitable lens to study the large economic and political forces intrinsic in the politics of austerity. As the ethnography of the following chapters demonstrates, the politics and experiences of austerity are contingent to global economic orders but also to local specificities. Intimacy can offer the foundation for examining the social texture of the scope of austerity, the far-reaching impacts of economic policies. A discussion of the most relevant literature on intimacy makes evident the utility and relevance of the concept in the study of present economic crisis and provides a foundational starting point for the ethnographic exploration that is presented in the following chapters.

The second core lens of this research refers to the concept of precarity. Hence, I will examine the anthropological, sociological and philosophical studies of experiences and meanings of precarity. This exploration will provide core theoretical realms that will support the ethnographic explorations of precarity that follow in the next chapters. The literature discussed will enable to ground and compare the multiple ways precarity registers across social groups and contexts during austerity.

The third part of the chapter offers an exploration of anthropological works on Greece available in order to match theories on intimacy and the ethnographic analysis. Hence, I will also look at the articulation of intimacy in the previous ethnographic accounts of anthropologists writing about Greece. The way intimacy relates to local values, ideologies, identities and relatedness across histories of gender, class and ethnic based relations. This way continuities and historical and theoretical changes can be taken into consideration in analysing the forms and transformations of intimacy in present experiences of austerity. Thus, previous ethnographic accounts on Greece on the articulations and changes of intimate realms, will offer, in broader this sense, a

theoretical and historical orientation for the data I will bring forward through my own research.

Intimacy: a flexible term

Intimacy constitutes the main rubric of the ethnographic exploration of this research project. It is a term that received recently considerable attention in scholarly work as an analytical concept and a subject of exploration. As Wilson (2012: 45) points out, the proliferation of studies on intimacy describes 'scholars' desire for a flexible term that allows new descriptions' and that can cover a dynamic array of relations beyond ideological reifications of inherited concepts, and thus, beyond the production of a knowledge that tends to maintain inequalities. Intimacy portrays a loose and general term that it usually captures personal and deep-rooted practices and relations. Yet, as the works discussed here reveal, intimacy refers also to large forces of power and entities, such as the state, modernity, global capitalism, colonialism and imperialism.

Through the question of intimacy—e.g. what, how and when forms of intimacy emerge in the everyday lives of the research participants – we can study the local and great forces entwined in the economic crisis in Greece and the applied austerity. An ethnographic exploration of the question of the intimate can reveal to us the concrete effects of abstract forces, the way they are locally and historically grounded and experienced and felt at an intimate level. Intimacy thus, offers a rubric to explore how the nation state, the European Union, neoliberal economies and values, and discourses of modernity, central in the politics of austerity (chapter three), are lived in the everyday as embodied experiences.

Hence, by focusing on intimacy, we can examine the localised and embodied ways of experiencing the global forces of austerity, but also how the application of austerity was based on intimate grounds in Greece, such as intimate discourses of modernity and progress (chapter three), and how it shapes and is shaped by local institutions of kinship (chapters four and five). This way we can study the concrete consequences of reconfigurations of capital, labour and social rights in the operations of austerity

(chapters four, five, six and seven), but also, critically examine how these shape the contexts of intimacy across gender, class, ethnicity and other inequalities (chapter four and six).

The theoretical engagement with intimacy draws largely from Herzfeld's (2005) work on cultural intimacy based on extensive fieldwork in Greece, and other ethnographic studies that focus on different settings and realms of intimate life (Constable 2009, Feld 2000, Povinelli 2002, 2006, Singh 2001, Stewart 2000, Stoler 2002, Wilson 2004). It also draws from studies on intimacy coming from other disciplines, such as philosophy, history, film studies, media and cultural studies, political science and literature (Berlant 2000, Berlant and Warner 2000, Boym 2000, Vogler 2000, Zelizer 2005).

Intimacy: a critical approach to power

The works discussed here are based on a shared understanding that intimate life and personhood do not lie outside power. They approach intimacy as a relational life that encompasses feelings and practices and that is discursively constituted as a field of power. This way they investigate the intimate operations of power, the diffused and discursive channels of power and the ways subjectivity and relations are called into being and negotiated amidst intimate past and novel ways of world making. As they show, intimate relations are public and political and involve discourses, symbols and ideologies. For example, intimate family relations are affective and national matters at the same time, providing the intimate symbolic representations of a nation state (Berlant and Warner 2000, Herzfeld 2005).

Intimacy operates here as a 'bridge' between the 'microphysics' of power and large forces of power (Oswin and Olund 2010). It refers to the intersubjective relations of daily life and to the large contexts that provide the specificities for these relations to be formed, recognised, structured, and transformed. Studies on intimacy explore the discursive and symbolic operations of social norms, hegemonies and ideologies, and the way they are taken for granted. They illustrate how intimate forms of life are linked

to essentialisms of power (Herzfeld 2005), to normativity, meaning the hegemonies accepted in the mainstream culture (Berlant and Warner 2000), to the biopolitics of colonial power (Povinelli 2006, Stoler 2002), to the hegemonies of liberal capitalist democracy (Povinelli 2002, 2006) and to the dimensions of global political economy (Wilson 2004).

Intimacy: a challenge to binarism

Hence, intimacy serves as an approach to think about power, the multiple ways large forces and entities act affectively in the way they shape and are shaped by intimate, daily and embodied relational life. This enables to draw connections between what is understood to be different spheres and scales of life, between the local and the global, the economy and the domestic, the private and the public. As shown for example, intimate spaces have been central to the rule of global powers, such as the colonial and the imperial powers of Europe and United States (Stoler 2002, Povinelli 2006). As ethnographic descriptions portray, colonial regimes operated intimately, affecting and managing social reproduction, kinship relations and the domestic (Stoler 2002). The microphysics of colonial rule centred on the intimate domestic were gender specific and set 'the personal and public boundaries of race (Stoler 2002: 42)'.

Therefore, the study of intimacy's contexts and spaces refers to the local and micro relations of daily life, but also to the national and the global at the same time. In contrast to understandings of an affective private sphere separated from the public sphere, all studies here, stress the intimacy of public institutions and ideologies. They disrupt clear cut dichotomies between the private and the public and challenge the idea that intimacy involves the private sphere, distinguished from the forces of empires, the state and the market. This way they explore how aspects of colonialism, nationalism, modernity and global capitalism shape intimate ideas, relations and practices and vice versa.

Following queer and feminist understandings of the intimate as inextricably linked to large structures of power, studies on intimacy explore the way powerful entities and

ideologies are shaped by, and shape intimate relations that correspond to unequal social arrangements. They show the many ways intimacy builds a life shared and the unequal structures of these shared realms as they are connected to evaluations of intimacy attached to social inequalities. For example, the valorised conjugal couple represents the symbolic universe of nationalism in popular culture, law and economy and the model of intimacy people invest for social belonging (Berlant and Warner 2000, Herzfeld 2005, Povinelli 2000). A model, as studies on intimacy show, that often strengthens arrays of gender, class and race inequalities (Berlant and Warner 2000, Povinelli 2002, 2006, Stoler 2002, Wilson 2004).

Following from the above, it seems that intimacy constitutes for research a critical and anti-essentialist exploration of circuits of power and agency beyond the binarism of public and private, passive and active. For example, Herzfeld's (2005) study based on a non-essentialist approach of the state as the sum of individual wills and interests of the citizens, illuminates the subtle forms through which the nation state and citizens mutually recreate social conventions and stereotypes. In this study Herzfeld (2005) employs the concept of cultural intimacy to describe everyday social actions and interactions that reproduce but also deform, social conventions in daily negotiations of status and identity. Intimacy here is all about de-essentialising, recasting and disrupting stereotypes, the forms of identification people invest (Herzfeld 2005). It is a daily sphere of action that shapes ambiguities, contradictions and inequalities, therefore, a space that can be anthropologically studied (Herzfeld 2005).

Cultural intimacy operates for Herzfeld (2005) as the "militant middle ground", as a critical ethnographic 'performance' that studies the constructed nationalist ideology by focusing on intimate cultural formations. As he shows, nationalism corresponds to a 'symbolic universe' that is grounded in the most intimate spheres of life, and state ideologies and essentialisms draw their symbolic and representational tropes from the everyday language of intimacy, such as kinship (Herzfeld 2005). 'Nationalism and cultural intimacy are entwined in a mutual dependence (Herzfeld 2005: 8)', depicting the overlapping of the intimate and the political realm of the state.

Similarly, Singh's (2001) anthropological study of the moral and religious intimacy in popular Hinduism, examines how moral aspirations animate intimate public worlds between hostile neighbours. These intimate relations or as he calls them 'agonistic' intimacy, are characterised by contradictory relations of coexistence and conflict. This form of intimacy, linked to the figure of the neighbour and to the context of increased democratization of Indian caste society, challenges binary oppositions between the private and the public, but also blends distinctions between friend and enemy along 'mobile coordinates of difference and relatedness (Singh 2001: 446)'.

Further anthropological readings of intimacy explore the various ways relations of social reproduction are commodified under global capitalism and transnational mobility (Constable 2009). Characteristic here is the impossibility of maintaining binary oppositions between the private and the public, the economic and the emotional, the personal and the impersonal and the local and the global. Similarly, Zelizer (2005) argues against the separation of economic practices and intimacy and shows how money and care complexly comingle and how economic exchange and activity is central in building and maintaining intimate relations (Zelizer 2005). Economic transactions are embedded in renegotiations of forms of care and intimacy, through which people are defining the meaning and importance of social relations (Zelizer 2005).

Berlant's and Warner's (2000) analysis of institutions of intimacy, critically approaches the private domestic realm and gender as it explores the way everyday practices and knowledge become normalised. This study argues that public intimacy has been replaced by privatized forms of intimacy based on privileged realms and linked to what they call 'heteronormativity'. This refers to 'a sense of rightness' that builds realms of 'normal intimacy' and shapes social life according to ideas about race, class and gender (Berlant and Warner 2000). As they describe, forms of 'normal intimacy' provide a 'founding condition of unequal and exploitative relations throughout even straight society (Berlant and Warner 2000: 328)' and form the basis of national culture. They stress how a division between politics and intimate life and the investment on an ideal space of home as an intimate sphere separated from politics and economy, produces

the privatization of intimacy (Warner and Berlant 2000). This describes how 'state mandates of social justice' are replaced by 'private ethics of responsibility' (Berlant and Warner 2000: 318)'.

Povinelli's (2002, 2006) work shows the material consequences of evaluations of intimacy. Focusing on evaluations of forms of intimacy in gay communities in the United States and 'settler colonies' in Australia, Povinelli (2006) shows that liberal beliefs and investments on the conjugal couple produce uneven material distribution that contradicts the liberal values of egalitarianism (Povinelli 2006). Specifically, she shows how valorisation of intimate relations based on Eurocentric understandings of modern forms of intimacy as egalitarian, progressive and less constraint by tradition (Giddens 1992), must be seen through the impacts of colonialism and racism that recreate otherness and uneven material distributions in the global south (Povinelli 2006). This analysis stresses the hegemonic pronouncements upon what may count as legitimate forms of intimacy according to modern legitimations of relations, and what forms of intimacy and citizenship are policed and refused recognition (Povinelli 2006).

Intimacy and social belonging

The study of the question of intimacy we could say thus, enables observations that expose the limits of inclusion to citizenship and rights. Inclusion and social belonging as we saw, depends on valuations of and investments on institutions of intimacy that are politically and ideologically laden. As shown, it is not a matter of how individuals give in to oppression but how aspirations and desires for belonging are formed and negotiated. In that sense, the prospect of inclusion entails not only the reproduction of certain forms of intimacy recognized and valorised, but also the internalisation of the norms that make possible these acts of recognition and valorisation.

These processes are pictured for instance, as forms of identification and attachment in the works of Herzfeld (2005) and Berlant and Warner (2000) respectively, and they often depict the depth of citizens' connections to national culture, largely based on a

nostalgia of a unified culture. They depict that intimate life is not simply connected to family or friendship but to large entities which 'draw sustenance (Herzfeld 2005: 31)' from it, and to 'the public world governing both policy and everyday life (Berlant and Warner 2000: 347)'. Similarly, Stewart's (2000) work on intimacy depicts forms of 'intimate publicity' as scenes of recognition associated with threats and promises for social inclusion that erupt or are staged in everyday life, through which affective complexities are 'distilled' into recognizable intimate forms (Stewart 2000).

The peoples' investments to institutions of intimacy refer to the discourses, symbols and affective qualities that provide the representations of large entities and that build at the same time, the criteria according to which lives are included or failed to be included in collective entities. Hence, it seems that intimacy links personal lives to collective identities. As Berlant (2000: 3) stresses, intimacy 'poses a question of scale that links the instabilities of individual lives to the trajectories of the collective'.

Now, let me pose a different question: Do relations, institutions and ideologies of intimacy remain unquestioned? While the question of intimacy points to continuities and familiarities with forms of living and relating shaped by ideology and power that further signal the perpetuation of inequalities, the works reviewed suggest that the question of intimacy refers also to possibilities for change. For example, Herzfeld's (2005) study emphasizes the 'recasting' of discourses and stereotypes through which investments for social membership are endlessly negotiated. This illustrates a daily 'play' of practices that affirms or denies the legitimacy of institutions and that can produce disjuncture and inversions of power relations (Herzfeld 2005). It emphasizes the instability of ideologies and stereotypes, the diverse social uses they are put by people in the everyday, in other worlds as he says, the 'social poetics' of experience that portray the performative acts of deformation of social conventions as people negotiate status and identity (similarly ethnographic work is performed in writing and deforms models and conventions)(Herzfeld 2005). Thus, Herzfeld (2005) stresses a daily creative dissent in intimate forms of living that is embedded in "real" events and that corresponds to the social poetics of experience.

In Herzfeld's (2005) work, the aspect of instability in forms of intimacy expresses the potentiality to overturn structures of power, not in terms of an opposing force but as a recasting in social practice. Whereas for Berlant and Warner (2000) the instabilities of intimacy represent radically different forms of living to the normative institutions of intimacy, not necessarily associated to the domestic, the family, the nation and property. Hence, Berlant and Warner (2000) speak about the queering of intimacy as a critique to authoritarian and unequal structures (Berlant and Warner 2000). Queer forms of intimacy describe here a 'radical anticipatory' critical mode of citizenship that is 'trying to bring a world into being (Berlant and Warner 1995: 344)' and create publics 'that can comprehend their own differences of privilege and struggle (Berlant and Warner 1995: 344)'. In this case, belonging is a 'matter of aspiration' and mobile attachments that can build intimate realms where one can return (Berlant and Warner 2000). It links with queer forms of intimacy and thus, a defamiliarization with taken-for granted socialities and knowledges (Berlant and Warner 2000).

In the same line of thinking, Boym (2000) analyses forms of intimacy constituted by 'defamiliarization' and 'unpredictable chance encounters', what she calls 'diasporic intimacies'. As she says, 'intimacy is not solely a private matter; it may be protected, manipulated, or besieged by the state, framed by art, embellished by memory, or estranged by critique (Boym 2000: 228)'. Diasporic intimacy comes as a 'surprise', a 'hope' amidst feelings of uneasiness and alienation that punctuates 'the habitual estrangement of everyday life (Boym 2000: 229)'. This kind of intimacy can come for example, amidst urban anonymity and an impersonal public and not necessarily in the designated private realm (Boym 2000). It can be triggered by the shattering of reality, the loss of recognizable forms of living (Boym 2000).

Similarly, Vogler (2000) describes forms of intimacy emerging from intimate spaces of talking, such as trouble talking between women, that transcend the 'borders of selfhood'. These 'depersonalising intimacies' as she calls them, are affectively coded in the loss of separate grounds of selfhood and can politically contextualise personal history and recast the personal in political terms (Vogler 2000). While Feld (2000) stresses the inventiveness inherent in the retelling of stories between people with

different histories that can create a kind of intimacy that disrupts 'the unfolding of naturalised, taken-for-granted embodiments and socialites (Feld 2000: 166)'.

From the above it appears that the question of intimacy corresponds to a specific approach of studying the interlinking of power, belonging and change. As stressed, this approach represents a middle ground between binary oppositions and attempts to realise observation and analysis without giving in to the binary framework of structure and agency. We could say that it poses important questions of adaptation, familiarisation and change without discrediting the way structures define the range of actions possible and how critical subversions emerge in daily life. The focus on everyday practices thus, is important in the question of intimacy. Intimacy emerges in the way 'it is done in talk and action' (Sehlikoglou and Zengin 2015). Yet it is also linked to large forces and entities as we saw. In the next chapter we see how crisis, debt, austerity, modernity and neoliberal capitalism shape a frame that structures reality. This is done in intimate terms as the following ethnographic chapters will show and produces violent forms of inequality, poverty, racism and sexism. Besides, feminist readings remind us that structures of inequality and forms of capitalism must be considered in the operations of power in diverse intimate relations (Bear et al 2015).

Affective intimacies

In the discussion above I have tried to put together different studies on the question of intimacy. This I hope formed common threads between distinct research topics and settings and gave a body of meaning to the elusive and open concept of intimacy. The question of intimacy necessitates further attention to the affective dimensions of daily relations and practices. Affect is key in the investigation of intimate realms of life since intimacy involves affective interactions and is affectively manifested, experienced, created and recreated. In this sense, affect is an important subtle dimension of daily human actions and interactions and the way these play out across intimacy. It conveys connections between bodies and their resonances that circulate in time and space and reveals the constrains and contradictions of the play of power and change, what Stewart (2007) calls the 'ordinary affects' of life. The ordinary untranslatable

intensities that channel and mediate embodied life and interaction (Stewart 2007). It is what Massumi (2002) describes as an operation in 'excluded middle, prior to the distinction between activity and passivity (Massumi, 2002: 32)' that shapes the 'connecting thread of experience (Massumi 2002: 217)'. In Spinozian philosophy, the nonrepresentational transitions and the power of a body to act, to be affected by and affect other bodies (Spinoza 1996).

Moreover, as numerous works emphasize, the intimate operations of power involve the creation and cultivation of sentiments (Mazzarella 2013, Taussig 1992), that is, the triggering and channelling of affect through social control and repression. These works remind us that we need to take into account the dynamics of affect to capture and comprehend the intimate operations of power. While also consider that affect and its relational aspect, the way it is transmitted between people, cancels theorizations of a self-sufficient and self-contained liberal subject and makes possible to understand the relational quality of human life (Brennan 2004).

Affect is distinct to emotion; it is a present force even when people are not aware or do not know how to feel (Ngai 2005). It is a force that describes how 'passions pass between bodies', what motivates people to do, make and say, the consequences of movements that might be overlooked and that break the boundary between reason and emotion (Rutherford: 2016: 289). Affect enables observations of 'the making of persons, practices, institutions, and emergent social orders (Rutherford: 2016: 289)'. Hence, affect is a key aspect in the way intimacy emerges in dynamic encounters and transformations in the everyday interactions between people. For example, between people with distinct cultural histories in contexts of migration and diaspora (Faier 2009). Indicative of the way affective intimacies operate, is Faier's (2009) work on Filipino migrant women that aspire to become the perfect Japanese wives. This work documents affective intimacies built in the everyday construction of meaning and belonging and describes emergent intimacies in the affective daily encounters that negotiate the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion (Faier 2009).

Affect is public in the way it circulates between bodies (Massumi 2002) and the way people are affected by each other's acts and views (Bloch 2013, Mazzarella 2009). But it also expresses the way people are affected by material environments filled with memory and trauma (Navaro-Yashin 2012). Here Navaro-Yashin's (2012) study in Northern Cyprus shows the affective force of non-human objects, the 'phantomic spaces' created in the wake of civil war, such as the houses, fields and commodities left behind following Cyprus partition that are re-inhabited by Turkish Cypriots in a way that contradicts the bureaucracies of the state and the idea of re-inhabiting an empty land.

Therefore, the focus on the way intimacies emerge or become solidified affectively, is the recognition of intimacy as embodiment and as something created and shared between bodies. But it is also important to include in the study of intimacy how the researcher feels and responds during fieldwork and the way her emotional response resembles or differs to her informants' (Rubin 2012). Affect here describes how the anthropologist employs her own sensory experience to grasp and determine the complex qualities of intimate relations and practices in the field (Rutherford 2016).

Precarity and neoliberal austerity

Precarity, a neologism deriving from the translation of the French precarite' that expresses an experienced insecurity in living and working, is a term widely employed in anthropology recently. All descriptions emphasize the cultural and historical mediations of the experience of precarity as it appears in distinct local settings. Yet, all works emphasize the way precarity as a term expresses a sense of anxiety, insecurity and loss that crosscut all aspects of life. In distinct ethnographic accounts precarity stands as a 'shorthand for those of us documenting the multiple forms of nightmarish dispossession and injury that our age entails (Muehlebach 2013)'.

As numerous works discuss, the employment of precarity in both activist struggles and the academy came with the increasing flexibilization of labour and the retreat of the welfare state in Europe and USA in the 1980s (Casas-Cortes 2014, Lorey 2015, Neilson

and Rossiter 2005, Standing 2010). In this context, precarity is used as the mark of a historical moment (Berardi 2009) and a sociological category to signify those who face insecure and causal patterns of labour, the loss of regular and secure work, and the retreat of the government from social provisions (Han 2018, Neilson and Rossiter 2005). Recently, precarity is used interchangeably with neoliberal capitalism and austerity. For Berlant (2007) precarity expresses the way 'capitalism thrives on instability' and the way capitalist labour regimes exhaust the body and the mind while wealth is privatized, and austerity becomes the new reality. The variety of phenomena of precarity that attract anthropological attention underscore post-Fordist neoliberal conditions defined by class relations but also by racist and patriarchal attitudes (Lorey 2015, Ettlinger 2007), conditions of forced displacement and ecological destruction and corporate resource extraction. Emphasizing the ways 'a society of the precarious' is built as 'a new form of regulation' and subjectification (Lorey 2015: vi). This process of precarization describes a form of neoliberal governance through which the unequal access to protection and job security is normalized and instrumentalized to render a population governable and complicit (Lorey 2015).

Precarious labour

The term precarity employed to group together various conditions of employment insecurity has been introduced from Italian Autonomia to describe the unstable and irregular forms of employment (Berardi 2009). In academic discourse the term was critically employed to investigate the increase of casual labour in the 1990s (Bourdieu 1998). Though the term had appeared in the economic and sociological literature concerned with family policies against poverty in France before it was widely employed in academic and public discourse (Barbier 2002). Following Bourdieu (1998) a number of scholars have developed analysis on precarious labour (Kalleberg 2009, Vosko 2006) as a new landscape of job insecurity that shapes 'precarious livelihoods' (Ross 2009). Precarious labour is employed to sum together a wide range of characteristics linked to the deteriorating quality of employment (Burgess and Campbell 1998). It strongly links to Post-Fordism and to widespread job insecurity, underpaid, temporary and part time labour and lack of social benefits (Kalleberg 2009,

Ross 2009, Vosko 2006). As Kalleberg (2009:2) notes it refers to 'employment that is uncertain, unpredictable, and risky from the point of view of the worker'. These analysis emphasize the novel conditions of labor that developed under a shift from the post-WWII Keynesian and Fordist model to the contemporary period of labour deregulation and trade liberalization, cuts in social provisioning and in programs of social security, limited entitlements and benefits and dismantling of workers' protections (Ross 2009, Vosko 2010). While others have stressed how precarious labour is linked to structural changes driven by increasing financialization (Chan 2013), and to changing employment relations that act as a disciplinary mechanism (Pedaci 2010).

Standing's (2011) discussion of a new 'class-in-the-making', 'the precariat', that describe the combination of precarious and proletariat and was taken from May Day claims protests, also emphasizes the characteristic insecurity in the new 21st century employment conditions. His analysis develops a term that corresponds to a socioeconomic class that includes various groups, from rural migrant workers to present youth temporary and part-time employed (Standing 2011). What the distinct groups have in common as he suggests, is an experience of loss of employment protections and upward mobility, trade unions political representation, stable income and luck of a work-based identity (Standing 2011). However, critique directed to Standing's analysis has stressed the different experiences of precarity across history, social positions and geography (Neilson and Rossiter 2008). While as many have pointed out, the precarious conditions have been the norm rather than an exception for many around the world (Neilson and Rossiter 2008, Seymour 2012).

Other works have emphasized the problematics of an inherent melancholia in some emerging politics of precarity that stress a loss of previous secured wage work and maintain this way an idealized image of work and 'the normative status' of employment as the sole medium of social inclusion linked to the 'emancipative promise of work' unrealizable under intense financialization (Barchiesi 2012a). Barchiesi (2012a) argues that we should see precarity not solely as an experience of insecure employment but as a 'condition that irrevocable subverts capitalist work

discipline'. As he has shown, the ethics of work have been tools of colonization and disciplinary mechanisms, while for example some populations in South Africa preferred precarious employment to the indignity they experienced in factories and mines (Bachiaresi 2011). In this instance, precarious labour 'was not a condition of disadvantage but enabled opposition to the labor-centered citizenship of Western modernity (Bachiaresi 2011: 15)'. His accounts of post-apartheid South Africa, remind us that we must be cautious and attentive to the way claims to full time employment strengthen the association of social citizenship with stable full-time wage labour, which can burden the precariousness of workers and reinforce nationalism and inequality (Bachiaresi 2012b).

As many works stress, precarity is not a novel condition, nor an exception but a norm, if we expand the scope historically and geographically (Berlant 2007, Lorey 2015, Neilson and Rossiter 2005). In this sense, precarity illustrates how subaltern and proletarian experience of insecurity became crisis when it affected the lives of the middle classes and took a general political expression (Berlant 2007). As scholars point out, precarity depicts an experience that is normalised since it is increasingly shared by more people as insecurity deepens and strikes the middle classes and privileged subjects, such as the white male bourgeois (Berlant 2007, Lorey 2015, Neilson and Rossiter 2005). These Eurocentric aspects of precarity have been brought into attention in Munck's (2013) 'view' of precarity 'from the South' that situates the term within the 1960s 'marginality debates' in Latin America and the 1970s work on the informal sector in Africa, and the 1980s literature on social exclusion in Europe and the USA. This wider historical and geographical perspective demonstrates that precarity has been the characteristic condition of capitalism in the countries of the South and for certain people in the North, such as women, immigrants, non-White and working class (Avdela 2009, Betti 2016, Lawrence 2005, Federici 2008, van der Linden 2014, Weston 2012). Academic work focusing on precarity in the global South have offered accounts that show the different forms and politics precarity takes in distinct places, historical moments and social positions and how they shape everyday sociality (Das and Randeria 2015, Hewison and Kalleberg 2012, Millar 2014, Sanchez 2018,

Schierup and Jørgensen 2016), or compare cases from the global South to cases in Europe and USA (Lee and Kofman 2012, Paret 2016).

The politics of precarity

At the same time as much work shows, experiences of precarity represent the emergence of new socialites and political collectivities amidst conditions of insecurity that differ from past struggles based on unions and political parties (Casas-Cortes 2014, Lorey 2015, Muehlebach 2013, Neilson and Rossiter 2005). As Neilson (2009) has argued, the politics organised around precarity point to a new kind of labour politics that are more flexible to those traditionally organised by trade unions.

Precarity has been the basis of various labor movements and activist networks that turned the experience of precarity into a new political subject and envisioned the possibility of bringing together the struggles of migrants, manual laborers, educated workers, women and so on (Casa Cortes 2014). Indeed, as work has shown, precarity is a tool for organizing struggles across gender, class and ethnic differences and building a platform for new political connections (Neilson and Rossiter 2008). It has been the political basis of social movements in the US throughout the 2000s and across Europe, what has been named the European precarity movement (Neilson and Rossiter 2008), prominent in May Day demonstrations (Berardi 2009, Neilson and Rossiter 2008), that has shaped local political groups such as the 'Precarias a la deriva' in Spain (Casa Cortes 2014). It has also been central in the massive uprisings in 2011 from Tunisia to the UK (Lee and Kofman 2012).

The employment of precarity in various social movements develops as a political 'toolbox' that encompasses struggles beyond workplace and national borders and challenges classical notions (Casas-Cortes 2014). Characteristic of the politics of precarity is the multiplicity of the subjects and positions involved, not limited to class and economic exploitation (Lorey 2015). The emergent politics of precarity describe the way people affirm and make equality and how the recognition of our interdependency and mutual need amidst insecurity can enable the political

organisation of equality (Butler 2016). For instance, the May day demonstrations, the Occupy movement and the movement of the indignant are all instances that posed important questions related to the politics of precarity, whether it could link different social groups and serve as a common political platform (Neilson and Rossiter 2008, Millar 2014, Schram 2013). However, Thorkelson (2013) has argued that political organisation around the category precarity involves conflicting aspirations and identifications, such as those portrayed in the reluctance of academic staff in France to self-identify with the term precarity because it signals an overexploited and degraded experience. In response, analysis has stressed how the diverse meanings of precarity across regions, institutions and subject positions require a 'politics of translation' (Neilson 2009), that could shape new connections across political struggles (Neilson and Rossiter 2008).

The ethics of precarity

According to Millar (2014), works on precarity differentiate between three understandings of precarity: as a labour condition (Bourdieu 1998), a class category (Standing 2011) and an ontological experience that is politically administered (Butler 2004). The third category is based on Bulter's (2004, 2009, 2011) analysis of precarity. In Butler's (2004, 2009, 2011) work, precarity registers in two distinct ways as precarity and precariousness. One the one hand, precarity stands for a political situation of inequality (Butler 2011) and this way it links to the sociological notion of the 'precariat', the proletariat of casual and irregular workers and the related terms of the 'lumpenproletariat' and 'informal economy' (Allison 2013, Han 2018). On the other hand, precarity expresses a precarious life shared between human beings as an embodied presence and vulnerability. This aspect stresses the recognition of our relations of dependency as humans, a recognition of 'a common human vulnerability, one that emerges with life itself (Butler 2004: 31)'. In this context precariousness is a relational condition of being and an acknowledgement of interdependence between human beings (Butler 2004). Yet, as Butler (2009) points out, the common human vulnerability is unequally distributed among people. Thus, precariousness emerges for Butler (2004, 2009) as an ethical basis for action in the contemporary world. For

example, she emphasizes an understanding of precariousness as a responsibility to the other against the violent responses to 9/11 attacks (Butler 2004).

As noted, the emergence of precarity today in Europe and the United States links not only to the reorganisation of labour but also to the politics and discourses of fear and terror of the post-9/11 (Neilson and Rossiter 2005). In a similar way, Butler's (2004) analysis of precarious life as ontological condition of human interdependency based on vulnerability that advances an ethics of non-violence, is a response to the aggressive post-9/11 USA war politics and the uneven distribution of precarity that defines whose lives are worth living and grieving. Her emphasis on precariousness expresses a fundamental ontological condition of embodiment, the vulnerability of being and the way humans share an embodied existence of vulnerability and thus, a responsibility towards the political and social organisation of insecurity based on social hierarchies (Butler 2004, 2016).

In Butler's (2004, 2016) analysis of precarity we engage with the ethical dimension of the term. Precarity here describes an ethical question concerning our responsibility to the lives of those who live in conditions of unsafety, insecurity and violence, those who struggle with unstable labour and a 'damaged future' under daily experiences of neoliberalism and forced migration (Butler 2016). These questions mark ethical problems of how to live a 'good life' in a general context of 'bad life' defined by social and political situations that distribute unevenly precarity according to normative forms of whose lives matter or not (Butler 2016). The question of 'good life', is for Butler (2016) a question of politics that calls for embodied performative politics of resistance that can comprise gestures, moves, silences and refusals towards the politically induced situation of uneven distribution of precarity.

Studies on precarity

Scholars have attempted to 'unbound' the concept of precarity, calling for attention to the wide range of processes and conditions that engender precarity (Ettlinger 2007, Tsing 2015). Academic studies have examined the relation of precarity and the

precariousness of life by focusing on precarious labour and human vulnerability (Alisson 2012, 2013, Berlant 2011, Lorey 2015, Mole 2010, Muehlebach 2011, Muehlebach and Shoshan 2012). These works examine labour relations, political and socioeconomic situations, and focus on the way waged (and voluntary) work shapes social belonging in neoliberal Italy (Muehlebach 2011), or how precarious employment disrupts the lives of youth in Japan (Alisson 2012), or how underemployment shapes the experiences of waiting and mobilises the political actions of young middle class students in India (Jeffrey 2010), or how job insecurity creates states of anxiety and normalises 'psychic uncertainty' in Italy (Molé 2010).

Precarity as a social condition of inequality expresses a temporal experience. An experience of time as discontinuous and fragmented that does not refer solely to work time but to all moments of daily life. It describes the inability to plan or predict the future and the collapse of upward mobility aspirations (Allison 2012, Berlant 2011, Ettlinger 2007, Muehlebach 2013). For example, Berlant (2011) talks about a form of 'cruel optimism' grounded in the personal attachments to a 'good life' to which citizens cling even amidst insecurity. While Bourdieu's (1998) work on precarity depicts a temporal experience of precarity as paralyzing in the sense that insecurity cultivates fear that halts all future actions. In Tsing's (2015: 2) study, precarity signals a form of living punctuated by indeterminacy and uncertainty, a 'life without the promise of stability'. While for Alisson (2016) precarity describes a life where 'everyday efforts don't align with the teleology of progressive betterment'. Precarity thus portrays the disintegration of the modernist narrative of moving towards future prospect and horizons of expectations.

Ethnographies from around the world have employed the term of precarity to describe various struggles and ways through which people sustain survival, and portray how life is experienced as 'boredom' by unemployed people in post-communist Romania (Bruce O' Neill 2014), or as 'waiting' endured by the young generation in Iran (Koshravi 2017), or as the 'indeterminacy of lived relations' in working class neighbourhood in neoliberal Chile (Han 2011), or as 'stigma' by people working the dumps in Rio (Millar 2014), or as a vertigo in an experience of kidnapping

in Iraq (Al-Mohammad 2012). Ethnographic accounts of precarity emphasize also how the term indicates the collective composition of personal life (Allison 2012, Al-Mohammad 2012). They draw attention to the way experiences of precarity and the struggle for survival are 'distributed across persons' (Al-Mohammad 2012). Precarity here designates the intertwinement of struggles across intimate relations, the entanglement of stories and practices in such a way that people work together for survival (Alison 2012, Al-Mohammad 2012).

Lastly, in response to important questions raised on the ethnographic treatment of precarity by Han (2018), it is necessary to highlight the role of writing in the anthropological study of precarity (Stewart 2012). As Han (2018) argues, precarity involves the specificities attached to singular forms of life as these are often portrayed in ethnographic descriptions. However, does the concept of precarity 'dissolves as ethnographic description offers finer, experience-laden concepts with which to engage the vulnerability of forms of life?', she asks. According to Han (2018), this represents the tension between the use of general theoretical concepts and 'the methods by which we may attune to that which is before our eyes'. What is more, the employment of a general theory can easily generate accounts of precarity external to the specific ethnographic circumstances that risk reproducing 'state categories of the poor and the vulnerable (Han 2018: 338)'. As she argues, the point is to attend to ethnographic details and make theory into the ethnography itself (Han 2018).

Yet, as Stewart (2012) reminds us the study of forms of precarity does not have to follow the mere imposition of a theory. Approaching forms of precarity requires to be attentive to the distinctive qualities of precarity through writing. Stewart (2012: 518) considers writing as 'a way of thinking' and precarity as 'one register of the singularity of emergent phenomena-their plurality, movement, imperfection, immanence, incommensurateness, the way they accrete, accrue and wear out'. Therefore, ethnographic writing can reveal how precarity 'starts to take form as a composition, a recognition, a sensibility (Stewart 2012: 518)'. This approach of precarity as an 'emergent form' and not as a representational and moral object, attends to the affective and corporeal composition of 'ordinary scenes' (Stewart 2012). In the writing

of ordinary scenes from ethnographic encounters, we can approach precarity as it comes 'into form through an assemblage of affects, routes, conditions, sensibilities and habits (Stewart 2012: 524)'. This depicts an approach of precarity 'as an open question about the relationship between forms of labor and fragile conditions of life', in which precarity 'retains both its analytical and political value (Milar 2014: 7)'.

The following chapters attempt to map in writing precarity as it emerges, to sketch the various forms of precarious living. Forms of precarity and the way they are experienced amongst multiple entwinements of intimacy and inequality between people and forms of living under austerity in Greece emerge in the ethnographic accounts. At the same time a critical analysis of these accounts attempts to generate knowledge on the way present life, for the research participants living in low-income neighbourhoods in Western Thessaloniki, is marked by loss, inequality and impoverishment. But also, how shared and non-shared forms of precarity and intimacy between them shapes a politics of everyday life.

Anthropology of Greece

The literature review of readings of intimacy outlined in the Greek anthropological enterprise, will include three distinct parts. The first part concerns the ethnographic articulations of intimacy in domestic and extra-domestic practices and relations, focusing on the core institution of intimacy, the dominant model of family household, the *nikokirio* and the way it shapes extra-domestic forms of social life characterized by antagonism and competition. This refers to the first anthropological phase from the 60s till the novel ethnographic descriptions in the 80s, and describes the way kinship is a central orientation in Greek social life—based on rather rigid and normative gender ideas linked to the honour and shame idioms. The second section that follows, is characterized by a shift to gender and observations that provide more dynamic understandings of intimacy that restructure the gendered distinction between private and public. Lastly in the third section, ethnographies document intimate forms of social life beyond the family household and linked to perceptions and experiences of modernity. This part includes ethnographic accounts of relations that challenge

dominant forms of intimacy linked to identifications of gender, sexuality and relatedness that battle however, with visibility and normative rigidities. As it seems the heterosexual conjugal household is the most significant institutions of intimacy that regulates forms of social life and belonging according to gender norms and national ideology. However, there are noted changes in this dominant institution of intimacy and other forms of extra-domestic intimacy linked to socioeconomic changes.

First chapter in the history of anthropology of Greece

Ethnographic descriptions in the 60s and 70s show that the family is the core realm of intimacy and an important aspect of local social life. In rather antiquated, structuralist functionalist terms, it is considered an economic, political and religious institution (Campbell 1964, Friedl 1962, Du Boulay 1979). In this context, marriage constitutes a strategic contract between adverse groups in order to extend family ties, limit hostility, and joint mutually opposed patrimonies in a hostile antagonistic environment divided by kinship into strangers and kin (Campbell 1964, Friedl 1962, Du Boulay 1979). The conjugal household based on heterosexual marriage, the *nikokirio*, is the main institution of intimacy that shapes gender identities according to explicit gender roles and the central values of honour and shame (Campbell 1964, Friedl 1962, Du Boulay 1979). The *nikokirio* is seen as a source of equilibrium; women's and men's roles complement each other in the public and domestic domain (Campbell 1964, Friedl 1962, Du Boulay 1979). [25] Women are closely attached to the *nikokirio*, and through marriage and childbearing, they are presented as fulfilling their 'sacred' destination, transcending an assumed inferiority of their 'nature', or undertaking social roles that complement those of men (Campbell 1964, Du Boulay 1979). [26] Men's

[25] In Campbell's (1964) ethnography the prescribed female shame (sexual purity/virginity and female chastity) and 'agonistic manliness' are the 'complementary qualities' of honour. Honour is the highest social value, and nonconformity with its normative standards leads to shame, social stigma, and sometimes even physical death (Campbell 1964).

[26] This distinction between female nature and role is described in Campbell's (1962) ethnography and further elaborated in Du Boulay's (1979) analysis on the symbolic association of women with both Virgin Marry (*Panayia*) and Eve. Women are sacred and profane, innocent and diabolic, but by becoming spouses and mothers, women can correct their dangerous nature and become (*Panayia*)-Virgin Marry.

activities relate more to extra-household concerns; yet, they exercise the formal and ultimate authority in the household (Campbell 1964, Friedl 1962, Du Boulay 1979). However, as Friedl (1967) shows women exercise an invisible and informal 'latent power' distinct to the normative and superficially visible to an outsider, male authority, by participating in household decisions, particularly those concerning the prosperity of the children (Friedl 1967). [27]

As ethnographies describe, kinship unites family members under normative obligations so that families are expected to come together in the face of threat, while kin collaborate to solve household problems (Campbell 1964, Friedl 1962, Du Boulay 1979). This, in the Sarakatsan community of Campbell's (1964) study, takes the form of fraternal associations, and in rural villages –see Friedl's (1962) and Du Boulay's (1979) studies—it involves mutual assistance in the fields, and cohabitation of families in the same household. Hence, family intimacy provides the material means to overcome difficulties and secure survival.

The earlier ethnographies of Greece underlie rural communities that are subordinate to the urban centres of wealth and political power. Life for the farmers and the seminomadic shepherds is always a struggle, an *agon*, and although the families make use of kinship networks of support to ensure survival, some of them often link to the centres of political and economic power through social and political patronage (Campbell 1964). This refers to kinship relations and the ability to turn friends into family members to secure a network of reciprocal relationships of prestige and material gain that links the local communities with the state (Campbell 1964).

Second chapter in the history of anthropology of Greece

The above ethnographic accounts form part of the early Mediterranean field and are thus, characterised by an attempt to highlight unique characteristics of Greece in

[27] Friedl's (1967) study follows the feminist call for an 'anthropology of women' that will re-examine classical anthropology and its inherent male bias, and rediscover women's position in society. See Rosaldo and Lamphere (1974).

relation to other European societies. The second phase of anthropological accounts followed the critiques to the hypothesis of a Mediterranean cultural unity in the 80s, that stressed the exoticizing aspect of constructing a homogenous Mediterranean cultural area (Pina Cabral 1989), and how it glossed over indigenous terminologies (Herzfeld 1980). [28] In addition, this anthropological period in Greece was marked by a break with the structuralist functionalist framework and a general shift to gender that encouraged research of cultural variations and change.[29]

Attention was given to the significance of practices, symbols and values and the way these shape intimate and embodied gender identities in performance. In this context, Herzfeld's (1985) study on 'the poetics of manhood' in a Cretan mountain village, and Cowan's (1990) ethnography of the relation between gender dance performances and 'the body politic' in Northern Greece are landmarks of the anthropological study of the way gender becomes intimate in performance. Both studies show how gender relates to power and how it becomes intimate in social performances, embodiments and negotiations (Cowan 1990, Herzfeld 1985). For instance, Herzfeld's (1985) work suggests that men in Crete engage the 'poetics of manhood' by public agonistic performances that demonstrate how 'being good at being a man' one is, and that this way one affirms prestige and 'self-regard' *(egoismos).* As Herzfeld (1985) describes, by participating in identity-making practices—e.g. in reciprocal animal theft, in the coffeehouse, in the way one plays cards, in what kind of a man of the household *(nikokiris)* one is, in practices of hospitality, in the Cretan song dueling (*mantinada*), in the way one narrates a story, in the wearing of headband and moustache, one demonstrates and affirms how 'being good at being a man' is and gains prestige. This means that masculinity is performed and acknowledged in front of others, involving contradictions and manipulation of values to suit the occasion (Herzfeld 1985).

[28] Further issues were raised on the limitations of the isolated community model (where cultures were treated as self-contained internally coherent isolates) and the ahistorical approach of functionalist structuralism that denied change and history (Goddard et al. 1994).

[29] This represents a shift from the anthropology of women to the anthropological study of gender. The anthropology of women that assumed a shared common women's point of view (standpoint theory) was criticized for eliminating cultural and racial differences and creating an isolated category of women that was largely informed by biological understandings. The shift to gender translates biological understandings into sociocultural, and thus multiple, that involve a range of roles, symbols, norms and values, upon which gender inequality is based. The collected volumes edited MacCormack and Strathern (1980) and Ortner and Whitehead (1981) are landmarks of this shift from women to gender in anthropology.

Cowan's (1990) study documents gendered dance performances in a Macedonian provincial town as embodiments of social practice and expressions of the social formation of gender. Cowan's (1990) analysis replaces the idea of complementarity of previous ethnographies with the idea of gender inequality and shows how intimate forms of gender are embedded in hegemonic relations that involve pleasurable activities, such as dance. As she describes, in dance performances 'gender inequalities and other social hierarchies are constituted and even celebrated', but also often negotiated, as women are encouraged to display beauty, skill and seductiveness, while they are treated with suspicion for attracting attention or lacking self-control (Cowan 1990: 4). Women must be in constant self-vigilance, control self-presentations and manage their reputation (Cowan 1990).

Cowan's (1990) work documents also changes linked to modern aspirations and ways through which women challenge dominant and intimate gender ideologies. Herzfeld (1991) corroborates this position in an article about the subversive power of irony. Female ironic resistance to male authority is a creative deformation of submissiveness that marks alternative meanings of resistance to marginality and that is overlooked by a verbocentric and androcentric approach (Herzfeld 1991). Important changes in intimate forms of gender are also produced by neolocal patterns of residence that depicts a characteristic social and economic transition in Greek urban society and the desire to escape the authority of older generations (Just 2000), in which also women's subordination was limited, in contrast to virilocal settings. [30]

Further studies by Herzfeld (1987) describe intimate forms of national identity that refer to two contrasting models, the Romaic and the Hellenic. The first embodies the Ottoman/Eastern history of the country and symbolizes the ethnically impure qualities of the collective self that disqualify for official representation, and the latter links to the history of ancient Greece and the qualities of a collective self that associate with

[30] As ethnographies show, variations in gender link with household relations and regional patterns of post-marital residence: women experienced greater subordination and muteness in virilocal settings with an agnatic bias, and men greater marginality to the household in uxorilocal settings with a matrilateral bias (Loizos and Papataxiarchis 1991, Sutton 1998). As shown, in uxorilocal settings women's practices had a structural dimension (Dubish 1991), while in virilocal settings women tended to feel dislocated and silenced (Kennedy 1991).

a European self and the official representation of the Greek state (Herzfeld 1987). This opposition expresses how locals perceive a political and cultural subordination of Greece to Europe and the ambiguity in the way Greece's position has been shaped in history through hegemonic European discourses of modernity (Herzfeld 1987). These intimate and opposing forms of national identity are shaped by what Herzfeld (2002) calls 'cryptocolonialism', a form of colonialism that describes the way emergent nation states were allowed 'nominal independence' on the condition that they accept a foreign-derived definition of their national culture and interference in the systems of governance. This means that the Greek state was called upon by Western colonial powers from its birth, to justify its continuity with classical Greece as the European cultural heritage (Herzfeld 1987). This opposition is malleable as Herzfeld (1986) shows, mediated by relations that move across boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in different contexts. In a similar way, opposing acts of identification articulated in the local expressions 'our own' *('diki mas')* and 'strangers' *('xeni')* are flexible, and may include and exclude depending on the circumstances and forms of identification (Herzfeld 1986).

Another important contribution of this anthropological period to the question of intimacy concerns women's everyday practices of social reproduction, through which women pursue and achieve social goals that refer to the well-being of the family. These approaches rearrange perceptions of the intimate as a private realm distinct to the public sphere and restructure gendered associations between nature and culture. Here we come across the importance of women in responding to difficult moments in the household through the successful economic management of *nikokirio* and the provision of emotional support to family members (Caraveli 1986, Dimen 1986, Dubish 1986, Salamone and Stanton 1986).

For instance, ethnographic analysis of the family household, the *nikokirio*, shows that it is an intimate realm associated with intimate gender-based identities that spans the domestic and public realm (Salamone and Stanton 1986). The housewife, the *nikokira,* manages the economy of the *nikokirio* and gains prestige in public and a sense of entitlement (Salamone and Stanton 1986). Accounts on women's everyday practices

of care in the household, stress also how women nurture intimate relations by making the everyday liveable and providing refugee to family members from the harsh reality of work (Dimen 1986). These practices of social reproduction secure the daily 'renewal of the present' and mediate between the public and the private (Dimen 1986).

Ethnographies document also intimate relations emerging beyond the realm of the household. Kennedy's (1986) and Papataxiarchis' (1991) works show that women and men create same sex friendships that transcend kinship. These friendships, based on personal choice, construct intimacy through emotional understanding and support (Kennedy 1986, Papataxiarchis 1991). Women might create emotional and supportive friendships in the neighbourhood, which offer autonomy and a realm where they can freely express beyond familial obligations and household restrictions (Kennedy 1986). Men construct egalitarian and emotional friendships in the male-dominated coffee houses (*kafenia*), and through sharing and a state of pleasure (*kefi*) they transcend calculative modes of living and reciprocity norms (Papataxiarchis 1991).

In conclusion, a second wave of ethnographies about Greece has extended what might be included under the rubric 'intimacy'. They describe the way intimacy is not tied to the moral norms of kinship, but it is constructed in everyday practices and relations. It is shaped by gender performances, evaluations and negotiations which are also entangled with power and inequality. But it also reflects intimate forms of national identity shaped by Western colonial powers and recreated in the everyday across altering identifications and boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. We see also that intimacy changes vis a vis modern expectations and novel forms of residence and filtered by distinct ways of ethnographically seeing and analysing. Focusing on women's daily practices we see also how the intimate domestic realm extends into the public and how women's daily practices of social reproduction provide solutions to difficulties and secure daily life. In addition, we see non-kinship forms of intimacy based on friendship, but it seems that the domestic makings of intimacy, contingent to gender meanings and embedded in hierarchies of power which these meanings tend to naturalise, remains central.

Third chapter in the history of anthropology of Greece

In the third section we encounter further analysis of friendly intimacies and changes linked to modern discourses and local expressions, urban life, tourism, negotiations of gender meanings and identities, and forms of relatedness. For example, Just's (2000) ethnography documents changes (in demography, gender, infrastructure, and class) linked to emigration and remittances, seafaring and tourism, that express the change of Greece's economy from peasant to cash economy in the post-war modernization period.

A characteristic ethnographic theme of the period is modernity and the various ways local expressions of modern social life become intimate (Faubion 1993, Papagaroufali and Georges 1993, Paxson 2004). As ethnographies describe, locals constantly reposition themselves across the fluid boundaries of modernity and tradition (Sutton 1994, 1998, Paxson 2004). Modernity is often linked to Europe, to 'a loss of identity' and lack of sociability, while attachments to tradition express fears of being 'left behind' (Sutton 1994: 240). Modernity represents progress from backwardness but also decay and mechanisation from a life of grace (Sutton 1998). These dilemmas inform a wide range of aspects of intimate life, such as the biomedical services in Greece and the way women and men practice and understand parenting (Paxson 2004). The way this plays out in intimate terms can be 'paradoxical', as for example, when locals may exoticize the past as a source of national characteristics motivated by 'structural nostalgia', the logging for something lost for the 'good old days' when relations were more 'balanced' and not yet ruptured by modernity (Herzfeld 2005). While at the same time, they differentiate from Balkan and Ottoman traits (Herzfeld 2005). This as shown, depicts that the positions between "East" and "West", "Greek" and "European" constitute a 'moral issue' (Sutton 1994). While when faced with dilemmas between choice and rigid cultural givens, locals 'reveal, often quite consciously, fissures in the supposedly totalizing ideal of Western modernity (Paxson 2004: 33)'. However, besides the syncretic forms of local modernity, there are shifts in gender meanings and identities as women's socio-political position changes, more so with their increasing participation in the labor market (Boussiou 2008, Cowan 1990, Faubion 1993, Papagaroufali and Georges 1993, Paxson 2004, Vlahoutsikou 1998).

Kirtsoglou's (2004) ethnography, documents the way intimate friendly relations between women recreate gendered forms of identity (Kirtsoglou 2004). These relations, based on emotional affinity and homoeroticism, build a female company (*parea)* in a Greek provincial town (Kirtsoglou 2004). The realm of the parea allows women, who are also mothers and 'wives of men', to negotiate same sex desires in creative performances of a 'gender syncretic manner' that borrows from dominant gender idioms (ex. a masculine idiom of self-assertion and a feminine idiom of pain) (Kirtsoglou 2004). Yet, within the context of a Greek provincial town that favours stability and the ideal norm of a heterosexual family, the homoerotic relations are hidden from the inhabitants of the town and due to heteronormative perceptions, they pass also unnoticed (Kirtsoglou 2004).

The ideal of heteronormative family grounded on the family household, the *nikokirio*, orients sexuality in the direction of the opposite sex (Papataxiarchis 2006a). Although politics of homosexuality and feminism, that followed the fall of the Greek junta regime (1974) and modern discourses on equality and individual freedom introduced with Greece's accession in the EU (1981), challenged heteronormative values, women and men with same sex desires face invisibility and exclusion (Kantsa 2006, Kirtsoglou 2004, Faubion 1993, Yannakopoulos 2010).

According to the hegemony of the heteronormative household, the *nikokirio*, women are expected to be housewives (*nikokires*) (Kirtsoglou 2004, Faubion 1993), devoted wives (Kirtsoglou 2004) and mothers (Paxson 2004). While ethnographic characters of single women are labelled 'untypical' (Bousiou 2008), 'not normal' (Faubion 1993), and 'biopolitical others' (Athanasiou 2003). Women that decide not to have children are far from socially accepted, seen as noncomplete individuals that mismanage their health and negate Orthodox beliefs (Athanasiou 2003).

Motherhood is a powerful and culturally intimate symbol that is strongly associated to national ideology (Agelopoulos 2005, Athanasiou 2014, Halkia 2004, Karakasidou 1997). Ethnographic accounts show how the nation shapes and claims the gendered female body as national wealth (Agelopoulos 2005, Athanasiou 2014, Halkia 2004,

Karakasidou 1997). As Athanasiou's (2014) work describes, motherhood in Greece involves a biopolitical regime invested in narratives of population anxiety and a 'demographic logic of modernization' that make reproduction a social and national obligation and 'a regime of truth'. While Paxson's (2004) ethnographic research shows that 'modern' local cultural understandings of motherhood continue to be grounded on nature, namely on the idea that women by becoming mothers complete 'their nature'.

Closing notes on the anthropology of Greece

We can see, therefore, that in the anthropological research on Greece the family emerges as a dominant institution of intimacy. We can observe a movement from (A) the first monographs on rural Greece that emphasized the structural functionalist role of the family unit attached to gendered ideals of complementarity (Campbell 1964, Du Boulay 1979, Friedl 1962) to (B) a shift on gender performances that focus on relations of friendship and on women's practices of social reproduction, emphasizing the political aspect of the intimate domestic realm (Cowan 1990, Dubish 1986, Herzfeld 1985). This development in the literature is followed by recent urban studies documenting transformations in gender and syncretic changes linked to modernity (Kantsa 2006, Kirtsoglou 2004, Faubion 1993, Paxson 2004). Across the three sections of reviewed anthropological works on Greece the *nikokirio,* the dominant model of heteronormative conjugal household based on marriage and procreation, plays a central role in shaping intimacy. Yet, as ethnographies stress, we must also consider the negotiations with modernity and the way nonfamily intimate relations operate in the social and personal lives of locals.

What is important here, is how the conjugal family household, the *nikokirio*, absorbs alterations and regulates gendered makings of intimacy (Papataxiarchis 2006a, 2013). In the *nikokirio* kinship and gender are 'mixed metaphors of the self' (Papataxiarchis

2013). [31] The gendered model and identity of housewife, *nikokira*, is realm of action and relationality and evaluated by the local community as a mark of social status and personal achievement (Herzfeld 1985, Salamone and Stanton 1986). It is central in shaping the 'stereotypes' of what women should be like and define the 'myth' of the women, what women are like in relation to what men are like (Strathern 2016).

The *nIkokirio* is considered by state and administrative mechanisms as an autonomous socioeconomic family unit (Papataxiarchis 2013). In anthropological accounts is seen as a traditional structure that adapts to socioeconomic changes (Papataxiarchis 2013). For example, the creation of the modern family in Greece connected the *nikokirio* and ideas of motherhood to aspirations of 'progress' and the embracing of European ways (Sant Cassia and Bada 1992). At the same time, the *nikokirio* acts as a medium of homogenization that absorbs in its interior social changes (Kantsa 2006, Paxson 2004, Papataxiarchis 2013), and accommodates encounters with alterity (Rozakou 2006). It is not coincidental that Greece records an extremely high percentage in marriage and exceptionally low in divorces, and small numbers of non-marital and non-nuclear families, while state policies in support of these families are absent (Papataxiarchis 2013, Kantsa 2006). According to sociological data, the conjugal heteronormative family unit is the dominant statistical model in Greece, while in other European countries household and family arrangements are rapidly changing (Papataxiarchis 2013).

Although the *nikokirio* is an institution that spans the domestic and public realm (Salamone and Stanton 1986), it is an introverted scheme of relations and actions (Papataxiarchis 2013). And the introversion of *nikokirio*, is intricately linked to the way sociality is organized outside its realm. Past and recent ethnographies show that local sociality is shaped by antagonistic and competitive relations (Campbell 1964, Cowan 1990, Du Boulay 1979, Frield 1962, Herzfeld 1985, 2005). These can be transcended in intimate friendship and neighborly female relations, and events of commensality and

[31]There is a vast literature from the anthropology of women and later the anthropology of gender, that explores perceptions, expressions and performances of gender in relation to kinship. For some main arguments, see Collier and Yanagisako (1987) and Moore (1988).

practices of reciprocation, such as the invite (*kerasma*) and the state of pleasure (*kefi*), that involve sensorial exchanges, sharing and embodied enjoyments (Cowan 1990, Serematakis 1993, Papataxiarchis 1991).

Antagonistic relations are an aspect of the way sociality is organized by a segmentary logic, a local historical specificity linked to the Ottoman system of administration, the millet, that organized diverse populations according to religion and a non-essentialist understanding of difference and that as it appears, survived the 'ethnoromantic' vision of the nation state (Papataxiarchis 2006b). [32] This aspect of relations coexists with more exclusionary understandings of sociality in terms of ideas of cultural sameness and the construction of the Greek nation state based on an ethno-religious homogeneity (Papataxiarchis 2006a). What produces and regulates hierarchies and involves disregard and contempt towards forms of alterity and homogenizing trends (Papataxiarchis 2006a). Assimilationist state policies directed towards the linguistic and cultural multiplicities of the Ottoman heritage and later towards the immigrant population from the Balkan countries, countries of ex-USSR, Asia and Africa, evidence the politics of cultural homogenisation of the Greek state (Papataxiarchis 2006a). In Greek Macedonia specifically, where competitive ethnicities followed the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the vision of homogeneity took violent expressions (Karakasidou 1997), activating repressive mechanisms that have produced fragmentary expressions of cultural pluralisms under a hegemonic project of Hellenization (Cowan 2000), that involved a Eurocentric idea of Hellenism as ideal nationalism (Papataxiarchis 2006b).
The dominant ethnocentric homogenisation of the social sphere organises intimacy often in xenophobic terms (Papataxiarchis 2006a), while it is also projected on the heterosexual family unit as the main element of the nation (Athanasiou 2007). Hence, intimacy structured in these terms produces 'otherness' and exclusions not solely in terms of ethnicity and nationality, but also in respect to gender and sexuality

[32] For an analysis of the genealogy of segmentary logic in Greek ethnography, from the structuralist functionalist approaches to the dialectics of *dissemia* presented by Herzfeld, and to the unofficial and official levels of perception of difference linked to Ottoman inheritance, see Papataxiarchis (2006a, 2006b).

(Athanasiou 2003). [33] A refusal to reproduce this form of intimacy carries the stigma of 'otherness' that is attached to people who 'dare' to think and plan beyond dominant gender and family norms (Athanasiou 2003). While potentially subversive intimacies are restricted to a more 'private realm' by assimilationist strategies that aim at a visible public 'continuity' and homogeneity (Papataxiarchis 2006a).

Overall, forms of local social and cultural intimacy are defined by the family household attached to heterosexuality and nationalism. Intimacy acts in assimilating difference by 'transforming cultural identity into social relation' (Papataxiarchis 2006b) often in hierarchical terms and towards the creation of similarities (Papataxiarchis 2006a). The operations and the various forms of intimacy seem closely attached to dominant norms linked to the dominant model of the *nikokirio* and linked identities and roles and the way these are expressed and negotiated across gender, nationalist belonging, modernity and socio-political and economic changes.

[33] The other can also be 'the national other' in terms of political ideology (Papataxiarchis 2006b). For example, during the civil war the left opponent was perceived as the political other that threatened the stability of the nation. While the anticommunism politics organized a bureaucracy of national spirit that policed the public with the so called 'certificates of national spirit' (Papataxiarchis 2006b).

Chapter Three: Austerity Crisis

Crisis

'*Krisis*: judgement, choice, decision (Derrida 2002:71).'

It has been a decade now, the story goes, since the start of the global financial crisis (2008), which was followed by the European debt crisis with Greece at its center.[34] The notion of 'crisis' has become the rule of the present economy, it has imposed itself as a social and political reality. A dominant concept that discursively subsumes a range of experiences that structure our fundamental relationship with past, present and future.

Economic theories have developed diverse approaches on the etiology and answers to the crisis. Crisis and the various expressions of it, have been portrayed as inherent to financial capitalism, as a characteristic movement from stability to fragility (Minsky 2008/1986). Marxist political theorists perceive crisis as a violent expression of financial capitalism, linked to labor transformations (Marazzi 2009), and to temporary resolutions of the periodic capital crisis, representative of capitalism's limits and contradictions (Harvey 2010), or representative of a cycle of capitalisms' exhaustion of its own sources (Luxemburg 1951/ 2015).

Unsatisfied with experts' explanations of crisis (Roitman 2014), dominated by the linguistic opacity of financial capitalism that grants truth and knowledge to assumptions inaccessible to the non-experts, I will begin by moving backward to ask why crisis has become a central condition of contemporary social life by looking at the basis of the epistemological claim of the crisis. A claim that is mostly conceptualized in relation to other references, economy, environment and so on, and thus, a claim that takes manifold meanings as it becomes attached to various notions (Roitman

[34] Neo-Keynesian (Krugman 2012) and 'erratic Marxist' (Varoufakis 2011) economic theories have stressed the relation of the crisis in Greece with the 2008 crisis and EU's internal inequalities.

2014); which encourages us to question what does it mean to name a situation a crisis? (Roitman 2014).

I start from this question, following Roitman's (2014) call to critically re-approach claims of crisis and the basic assumptions inherent in narratives of proclaiming a situation a crisis. Roitman (2014), focuses on the narratives of the financial crisis and rejects Marxist, neo-Keynesian and neoliberal explanations, and attempts to denaturalise claims of crisis. Crisis is not a path to progress or to revolutionary potential for Roitman (2014), but a suspicious epistemological claim. Hence, she rejects the idea that crisis is inherent in a system, and considers crisis claims as political claims, that produce a self-referential meaning, a 'blind spot' (Roitman 2014). As she argues, crisis constitutes a narrative construction of teleology that elevates events to a historical status and invests the present in critical terms (Roitman 2014).

As a teleological and authoritative narrative that lay claims to knowledge, crisis thus, links to regimes of truth and relations of power (Foucault 1976/1998). In this sense, multiple operations and shifts in enunciations of truth and manifestations of power, constitute the discourse of crisis (Foucault 1976/1998). Crisis is thus a discursive formation that appears in its non-uniform function as an objective phenomenon, obscuring the constructed nature of discourses on crisis, the political and moral implications and consequences of the epistemology of the crisis (Roitman 2014).

A closer look on the genealogy of the concept of crisis, reveals how it links with academic critique. Crisis has been the locus of concerns over reason, positivism and knowledge (Husserl 1970/ 1954) and the dynamics of history and generation (Ortega y Gasset 1962). Concerns over the crisis of European modernity described crisis as a threshold of change in history (Ortega y Gasset 1962), and an alienation from the 'spirit' that could form the basis of critique of 'naturalism' and 'objectivism' and for a cultivation of a rationality rooted in forms of 'being in the world', a transcendental phenomenology (Husserl 1965). Also, the view of crisis as an opportunity for critique and transformation, has been expressed in relation to the 'crisis in anthropology'

(Gefou-Madianou 2011). It has been argued that anthropology perhaps must remain in crisis for the perpetuation of a critical transformation (Gefou-Madianou 2011).

Crisis has been linked also to moral tensions and political decisions, portrayed in the long historiography of the crisis along its medical, judicial, political and economic genealogy, and corresponding discursive forms (Koselleck and Richter 2006). Crisis signals a judgement and decision (Koselleck and Richter 2006). [35] A judgement that establishes moral standards and marks deviations as states of ailment and disorder (Roitman 2014). Thus, it is a normative standard that is founded on a priori negatively formulated questions such as, 'what went wrong' and that enables certain enunciations and routes of action and constrains others (Roitman 2014). Thus, prognosis and historical apprehension is part of crisis (Roitmnan 2014). Crisis serves as a 'transcendental placeholder' in explaining and providing a solution to a problem (Roitman 2014).

To proclaim a crisis means to proclaim a critical state, to mark a transition between past and future, marking out critical moments as moments of truth and points of transition (Koselleck and Richter 2006, Roitman 2014,). Such as the moment credit turns into debt and subprime mortgage bonds turn from assets to a liability, or when debts shift into toxic obligations that require bailouts and rescue packages (Roitman 2014). At the same time, while decision seems impossible amidst a crisis, the critical moments marked out generate a necessity and an anticipation for a decision and action for the future (Derrida 2002). Crisis is an attempt to save a world one no longer inhabits (Derrida 2002). Along these lines, crisis acts as a 'formula legitimating action' (Koselleck and Richter 2006: 368).

Crisis is judgement and decision and thus creation of an object of knowledge, of information and calculation (Derrida 2002). It appears to be 'exiled to the domain of the inexplicable' (Roitman and Mbembe 1995: 338), but it involves economization of

[35] Crisis as judgement and decision (*krisi*), was employed in the Hippocratic medicine and denoted a turning point and a critical phase (Kosseleck and Richter 2006).

a perceived threat: its limitation, domestication, and neutralization (Derrida 2002). The occlude, impossible and unthinkable becomes the object of knowledge and the basis for a program (Derrida 2002: 71). As Derrida (2002) argues, crisis is: 'competence, voluntarism, knowledge and know-how, mastery of a subject over present objects, productivism -in short, all of a techno-metaphysical modernity without which it would make no sense to speak of "crisis" (Derrida 2002: 72)'.[36]

Crisis can be seen as the techno-metaphysics of modernity (Derrida 2002), and a 'structural signature of modernity' as immanent critique, as characteristic of modern consciousness that is in a state of 'permanent crisis' (Koselleck and Richter 2006: 372). At the same time, it is a productive historic-philosophical frame that creates history (Koselleck and Richter 2006, Derrida 2002), and points to an eschatological horizon, an unknown future that is affectively organized by 'anxieties, fears and hope' (Koselleck and Richter 2006: 372). Hence, crisis is a powerful moral and political discourse, an affective and discursive formation that includes matrices of calculation, organization, control, centers of power and shifting points of critique and that is subject to reversals by the very nature of the processes that constitute its variations.

However, the political negotiations of the crisis locked crisis to the economic policies of austerity. In this context and following from the above we could say thus that the crisis legitimated interventions related to specific political agendas of austerity (Roitman 2014). Austerity measures were presented as the only solution to Greece's sovereign crisis and the discourse of the crisis was fixated, as we will see, through the power of the moralization of debt and orientalist tropes grounded on discourses of underdevelopment in Greece. Crisis thus, is entwined with the politics and ideologies of austerity.

[36] In a similar way Foucault (2007), has highlighted a shift characteristic of modernity in the way crisis are managed, in his analysis of "governmentality" and the "dispositifs of security", as responding at effective level in the regulation, and no longer repudiation, of phenomena of disorder.

Debt

> 'The only part of the so-called national wealth that actually enters into the collective possessions of modern peoples is- their national debt (Marx 1992/1867).'

At the center of present crisis is debt, the national debt. Debt, as shown, is central in the history of class struggles and an important idea with great moral power in human history (Graeber 2011). A recent exploration of the history of debt by Graeber (2011) depicts how moral obligations translate as debt, the way monetary debt becomes extremely moralized and the emergence of a commonsensical morality of repayment of debt that creates 'moral confusion' by justifying extreme forms of violence (Graeber 2011). As Graeber (2011) shows, a human economy of obligations was replaced through violence by a commercial economy of debt and money that devaluated human relations in favor of an impersonal calculus. Debt is essentially linked to money, to class struggles and exploitation and constitutes a political and moral battle and a language that permeates all political and religious spheres of life (Graeber 2011). There has always been a struggle over debt forgiveness which is a struggle and distribution of political power as some debts are never repaid and others become sacred obligations (Graeber 2011). Debtors revolts in ancient Greece (Graeber 2011), anti-debt movements in Latin America in the 1990s (Federici 2019: 69) and the recent Occupy movement which was organised on the basis of an increasing majority of indebted class, highlight the inequalities of debt. [37]

Debt economy has always been central in all realms of life (Mauss 1954/2002). As Marx's (1992/1867) quote above emphasizes, debt is a central force of primitive accumulation. Today it centers around financialized debt, a debt with an 'excessively extractive' character that is mediated by complex forms of calculation and objectification that disconnect irretrievable the debtor from the creditor (Bear and Knight 2017). The financialization of capital represents a new type of accumulation

[37] The Occupy movement represented the indebted class of 99% of the population against the 1% of creditors. The movement involved massive participation (by diverse social groups) in long-term occupation of public spaces in big cities around the world. Participants denounced austerity, political order and financial institutions, and engaged in direct democratic practices of decision making (Razsa and Andrej 2012, Juris 2012, Hickel 2012, Graeber 2013).

and the financialized debt a technique of governing (Marazzi 2009). Besides, as it has been stressed finance operates as a technique of power (Sotiropoulos et al 2013). Yet, debt is a present 'ethnographic fact' (High 2012). It is present in the new forms of individual debt as credit, student loans, mortgages and microfinance. It is evident in the increase of household debt and linked to the ideology for investment for social reproduction (Federici 2014, Marazzi 2009) and the intensification of financialization of daily life with the dismantling of the welfare state (Martin 2002). At the same time, the increase of public debt of states and municipalities since 1970s, as they are forced to turn to private financial markets, means that 'entire societies have become indebted (Lazzarato 2012: 8)'.

This new debt economy, linked to the neoliberal turn, shapes novel forms of subjectivity (Lazzarato 2012). As shown, the promise of debt repayment involves the formation of memory and the logic of calculation and guilt (Nietzsche 1998, Lazzarato 2012), and these constitute the subjective conditions for a collective promise of repayment (Lazzarato 2012, 2013). Through personal or national debt citizens become debtors and this means that they become subjects 'accountable and guilty before capital' in a debt system of inequality and control (Lazzarato 2012). In the same way that past redistributive practices meant that the common people were permanently indebted to the generosity of the lords that distributed bonuses. Therefore, what is important is not the repayment of debt but the condition of indebtedness and control, the imperialistic operations of debt and the intensification of processes of domination (Lazzarato 2012).

As shown, this involves not only the accumulation of wealth but the undermining of social solidarity and the destruction of attempts to build alternatives to capitalism (Federici 2019: 61). Relations between capital and labour and between workers themselves alter, 'placing exploitation on a more self-managed basis and turning the communities that people are building in search of mutual support into means of mutual enslavement (Federici 2019: 61)'. The hope that prosperity can be secured through debt that was destroyed with the 2008 financial crisis and the fact that banks were bailed out and not the working class debtors, made evident that debt is made in

such a way as to be part 'of working class existence', like the early phase of industrialisation but with destructive impacts for class solidarity (Federici 2019: 64).

Further analysis by Federici (1992, 2019) suggests that debt crisis is not catastrophic, as right and left economists argue (the Right for the threat it poses to the banking system and to creditor economies and the Left for the impediments to debtor's national development), but it is a productive crisis for capital. As she shows, the policies generated in indebted countries in the African continent reconstructed ideas of property and land as well as relations between people in favor of capital's demands (Federici 2019). Beyond left and right views of the crisis as a halt to development, debt crisis has been productive for national and international capital through the policies generated that have enabled the privatization of land, created cheap labour forces and reversed social expectations (Federici 2019: 39). What both left and right analysis fails to see is that the 'target of the debt crisis is not the official debtors' but the workers (Federici 2019: 48). Federici (2019:43) draws attention to the qualitative character of the debt crisis, the way it does not aim at lowering figures of debt but effectuate a chain of drastic changes. What is central is not to end debt but to manage the debt crisis (Federici 2019).

In Greece particularly, the debt rose during the management of the crisis through austerity: GDP decreased by 25%, and general government gross debt of GDP reached 179% in 2016 from 126.7% in 2009 (Eurostat). At the same time, Greece continues to hold the highest level of public debt among Eurozone member states (Greek Reporter 2019). This shows also, as argued, that austerity allows 'the empire of debt and accumulation in the financial system to continue (Bear and Knight 2017: 2)'.

Debt, modernity and European Union

As noted above, debt and the morality of repayment is intrinsically linked to the politics of shame and guilt (Graeber 2011, Lazzarato 2012, Federici 2019). An ethnography of shame was central in the negotiation and management of national debt in Greece and in the cultivation of a sense of collective guilt. This was based on

the reproduction of ideas and stereotypes according to an image of a Mediterranean moral economy of "excess" and "corruption". The derogatory acronym PIIGS (Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain) is characteristic of this stance towards South European countries unable to manage their sovereign debt (The Economist 2010). It strengthened further an essentialization of a division between European South and North. The politics of shame, as it seemed, were taken even further in the case of Greece; arguments of "lazy", "corrupt" and "irresponsible" Greeks recycled through media and international politics.

While European financial institutions were complicit in corruptive modes of hiding systemic economic mismanagement in Greece, accusations of corruption were redirected towards the citizens of the country. As shown, practices of corruption are an important but veiled part of the dealings of Western European politicians (Shore 2000). Hence, the accusations towards Greek citizens, as suggested, point to a moralization that must be viewed as an expression of power dynamics, of who has the power to make claims and accusations and disguise the way one is implicated in these (Herzfeld 2013).

Across the shaming aspects of the negotiation of debt crisis, Greece became the Other of Europe, a not fully developed or modernized Balkan country (Kaplani 2013). Such accusations were based discourses of underdevelopment that placed Greece as a deviation from an ideal modernity, of an 'ideal Weberian type' of state (Markantonaki 2012). Orientalizing discourses of modernity assumed deviations of the European peripheries from an ideal model of liberal democracy and turned clientelism and corruption into common sense explanations of the crisis (Kaplani 2013, Markantonaki 2012). This center periphery model that proposed theories of dependency and the view that Greece suffers from precapitalist clientelist forms of government perceive capitalism within a 'linear West European model of development (Kotouza 2019:16)'. In this context the assumed deviations of the peripheries from this model are explained away as indications of backwardness and not as distinct forms of state rationality shaped through local and international contexts and social, cultural and political histories (Kotouza 2019: 20). What is striking is that such moralizing

stereotyping representations shaped not only popular views but influenced policy and organized the politics of austerity (Krugman 2012, Varoufakis 2011).

Hence, the shaming involved in the management of the economic crisis brought back the discourse of problematic modernity (Kotouza 2019, Liakos and Kouki 2015, Triandafyllidou et al. 2013). Debt was linked to the specific period after the fall of dictatorship in 1974, known in Greece as *metapolitefsi,* that means a regime change (Liakos and Kouki 2015). This was a period largely associated with the social democratic transformations of the PASOK (Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima-Panhellenic Socialist Movement) (Kotouza 2019). A period that represents labour and student mobilisations, a welfare system based on public borrowing (a wider phenomenon in post war European countries), European integration, economic growth, credit expansion, upward social mobility and increased consumerism (Liakos and Kouki 2015). Thus, the debt crisis was linked to this period as marginal modernization and weak capitalist development, and a sign of cultural backwardness defined by corruption and clientelism (Kotouza 2019, Triandafyllidou et al. 2013). This reproduced hegemonic and dichotomous understandings of modernity, and reintroduced arguments about an "incomplete" previous modernization as one of the causes of the crisis (Kotouza 2019, Liakos and Kouki 2015, Triandafyllidou et al. 2013). In addition, the view of Greece's underdevelopment as an etiology of the crisis included the widespread idea that Greece's capitalist economy always depended on imperial West capitalist forces, a position of the communist party of Greece (KKE) and of Marxist scholars (Vergopoulos and Mouzelis 1985).

As it appears thus, during the crisis discourses of modernity acted as a retroactive examination of the present that brought back ideas and concerns on the cultural constitution of the marginal and ambivalent position of Greece in the West in history (Triandafyllidou et al. 2013). This has been a point of departure for anthropologists in the past to explore the transitions, numerous facets, multiple coexistent temporalities and ambivalences of modernity in Greece (Faubion 1993, Herzfeld 1992, 1987a, Panourgia 1995, Paxson 2004, Sutton 1994). As shown, the characteristic ambivalence of local forms of modernity links to diverse experiences of history and tradition and to

historical processes of constructing Greece as a marginally European state (Faubion 1993, Herzfeld 1987a). Powerful and dominant perceptions of the Greek nation state as backward and irrational, overburden by clientelism and influenced by Ottoman past, were combined with a strong link constructed between the modern Greek state and classical Greece as the source of European civilization (Herzfeld 1987a). This produced a specific image of Greece caught between tradition and modernity, East and West and reconstructed the binary opposition between the Orient and the West, between the backward East and the modern liberal West (Herzfeld 1987a). The sovereign debt crisis reconstructed this image of the backward East including South European countries as backward and incompletely modernised compared to the liberal democracies of Western Europe (Liakos and Kouki 2015). In this context, austerity was presented as an opportunity to reform and discipline the backward social body (Kotouza 2019, Liakos and Kouki 2015).

Amidst a proclaimed crisis it appears thus, that there is a certain inevitability in seeking in the past the causes of economic crisis. While social scientists, economists and historians look at phases and processes of modernization, ordinary people trace as a source of problems the 2001 Greece's entrance into the European Monetary Union. Marking this way, the adoption of euro as an important factor of household economy deterioration. Such arguments link household and state economy and combine consumer and sovereign debt, drawing attention to the similarities between sovereign debt and citizen's personal debt as discussed above (Placas 2011, Vetta 2018). They are usually accompanied by a critical discussion on Greece's increased financialization in the 1990s and the abundant availability of credit and banking sector deregulation [38]. As we will see in what follows, this period that follows the metapolitefsi, the regime change after the fall of the military junta, is marked by the introduction of neoliberal policies in Greece, a form of low intensity austerity (Kotouza 2019).

[38] It must be noted however, that the consumer private debt in Greece is one of the lowest in the Eurozone. Yet, the rate of increase has been intense and linked to the crisis (Vetta 2018).

What these opinions seem to suggest also, is an overall concern over the politics and economics of European Union. As Shore (2012) has pointed out, the current situation of economic crisis in the countries of Southern Europe destabilises the politics of integration and social cohesion of the European project and raises questions over the ideas and politics of European Monetary Union (EMU) (Shore 2012). It points to a political fragmentation in the economic unity of the European Union and reveals the pitfalls of the European agenda and of the project of a common road to development (Holmes 2014, Shore 2012). As Shore (2012) remarks, the EMU combines 'two very different rationales': a political rational that aims at cohesion based on a neo-Keynesian vision of growth, and an economic rational based on neoliberal policies (the idea of an independent central bank that will guarantee price stability and common inflation and ensure an integral single market). In this context, the euro during the current crisis represents a tension that divides Europe and strengthens 'European economic governance' with great costs for Europe's peripheral states (Shore 2012).

On the other hand, we must be cautious with interpretations that link the crisis in Greece with the joining of EU (Mavroudeas and Paitaridis 2014). These oversee, as noted, the contradictory effects of a rapid growth of peripheral economies with European integration, the increase of imports and the fall of competitiveness but also, the hegemony of the Greek economy in the Balkan region after 1990 (Kotouza 2019: 82). Lastly, as argued, the Marxist analysis that links the Greek crisis with the joining of the EU questions capitalism on the basis of exploitation through 'the relationship between different national capitals', associating labour interests with national economic success (Kotouza 2019: 83). A critique that fails to grasp the way international markets frame global competition and this way drive less competitive economies to restructuring through work reorganisation (Milios and Sotiropoulos 2009: 145-183).

However, a careful review of the development of an ordoliberal conception of free economy as a political project that influenced greatly the European community, shows that the neoliberal restructuring intensified through current austerity is part of the project of European integration (Kotouza 2019: 77-80). This is evident in the cases of

austerity-stricken Greece, Spain, Portugal and Ireland, in which fiscal discipline for the bailout was preferred than forcing the member state to leave the EU (Kotouza 2019: 77-80). While the project of European monetary integration (EMU) affects the way nation states internalise pressures (Bonefeld 2002: 132) and fiscal discipline applied (Sotiropoulos et al 2013). The impossibility of currency devaluation in the EMU and national debt create a 'vicious circle' as debt default is higher causing high interest rates (Kotouza 2019: 80). While the economic programme of austerity introduced, as we will see, generates a vicious circle of rising poverty and unemployment.

Austerity

> 'The weird logic of this economic program seemed to be that to restore life to the dying economy, every juice had first to be sapped out of the under- privileged majority of the citizens. The middle class rapidly disappeared, and the garbage heaps of the increasingly rich few became the food table of the multiplied population of abjectly poor (Fidelis Odun Balogun 1995: 79-80).'

As we saw, the euro crisis generated potent representations of national failure and states and citizens became subjects of moralization on the basis of debt. The debt crisis was presented as an outcome of backwardness and overspending, of living irresponsibly beyond one's means where national economy pictured as a large household was blamed for spending too much (Blyth 2015). This produced a twofold effect; on the one hand, austerity gained incentive as necessary solution to the crisis situation and to overspending, in moral terms of 'bad spending' and 'good austerity' (Blyth 2015), and on the other hand, blame saturated by guilt was directed to the national population while responsibility shifted from the banks to the state (Blyth 2015).

Austerity as a set of economic policies, was presumed to provide stability and solutions to the debt crisis. However, debts grew bigger and interest payments increased. Aggressive fiscal adjustments instantiated a double movement; one downwards, reducing salaries and state's and social services budget, and one

upwards, increasing taxes and privatizations. At the same time, the results accompanied great unemployment and the establishment of precarious labour, labour that is 'uncertain, unpredictable, and risky (Kalleberg 2009:2)'. Sociological indications of increase of racism, poverty, homelessness, and unemployment indicated that austerity is a 'dangerous idea' and a 'political problem of distribution' (Blyth 2015). Yet, while the measures of austerity continued against the disastrous consequences in social and political life, austerity was revealed as a 'failure' (Schui 2014) and an ideological construct (Blyth 2015). It became evident that austerity 'far from being an aberration, an occasional response to downturns, may well become the new reality for governments running public finances for the coming decades (Burton 2016: 208)'.

Austerity as it has been shown has a broad history and geography (Bear and Mathur 2015, Bear and Knight 2017, Federici 2019, Rakopoulos 2018). As the quote presented in the start of this section by Nigerian writer Fidelis Balogun (1995) describes, the imposition of the IMF structural adjustment programme, austerity in a different name, in the mid-80s was equal to a natural disaster. Debt crisis and structural adjustments shaped the realities of the Global South long before crisis and austerity become significant in the Global North (Federici 2019). Debt crisis, the modality of crisis in Greece and the Eurozone, formed the basis in the 80s and 90s for restructuring post-colonies and Third World countries, with massive institutional and social changes, that involved discipline, repression and control of people, economies, and resources (Bear 2015, Bear and Mathur 2015, Federici 2002, 2019, Rakopoulos 2018).

Hence, austerity as a response to the debt crisis reminds us the way IMF managed debt in developing countries, offering a bailout in return for the structural adjustment programme (Kotouza 2019, Federici 2019). In a similar way, it was 'preferable to honour Greece's obligations to investors in public debt via bailouts to Greece and effectively transfer losses to workers and devalued assets to the ECB, instead of allowing losses for those investors (Kotouza 2019: 79)'. This has been described as a form of 'new enclosures' that facilitates the advance of multinational capital and which has generated poverty and states of warfare in Africa (Federici 2019). The resulting collapse of local economies in the African continent with the imposition of

austerity and the intensification of resource extraction and export-oriented agriculture caused invisible deaths as 'invisible as the "invisible hand" of the capitalist market (Federici 2012: 84)'.

In Greece, three years after the implementation of austerity unemployment reached a peak of 27.5% in 2013 and youth unemployment of 60%. The number of people at risk of poverty increased from 27.6 in 2009 to 35.6 in 2016 (Eurostat 2017), and suicides grew from 391 in 2009 to 613 in 2015 (Hellenic Statistical Authority 2017). Whereas the rate of people experiencing homelessness increased by 25% from 2009 to 2011 (Feantsa 2017). All these make obvious that austerity has failed in economic terms (Lapavitsas 2012). Yet, it is important to mention that the disastrous effects of austerity are differentially distributed across income, gender, class, race, ethnicity (Alexandrakis 2015, Athanasiou 2012, Karamessini 2015). While some people are devastated by austerity there are citizens that have taken advantage of the catastrophic consequences of the imposed changes (Dalakoglou et al 2018). This is evident in the fact that income inequality has widened as the portion of income of the wealthiest 20% of the local population increased from 5.8 in 2005 to 6.6 times bigger than the portion of income of the poorest 20% of the population in 2015-2016 (Hellenic Statistical Authority 2017). Social structural factors determine who will be mostly affected by austerity changes with people relying more on state's services be greatly affected (Blyth 2015).

The austerity measures in Greece were implemented and supervised by the so-called Troika of institutions, the IMF (International Monetary Fund), the ECB (European Central Bank) and the EC (European Commission), under the Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) signed under rescue deals and in exchange for loans provided. The three austerity Memorandums signed involved financial assistance of 107.3 billion euros in May 2010, 130 billion euros in March 2012 and 88,5 billion euros in August 2015. The measures cut public spending and increased privatization of public assets. While they introduced reductions in health expenditure and education, cut of public personnel and the merging of municipalities, hospitals and schools. Work dismissals increased in the private sector as well, unemployment doubled, taxes increased and

new ones were introduced (property tax, solidarity tax and emergency tax), along great deduction of wages (up to 30%) and pensions (up to 40%). The minimum wage fell from 751 euros to 586 euros.

Labour market deregulation measures were implemented to enable labour market flexibility and internal devaluation. Labour reforms involved redundancies and a freezing hiring in public sector, wage cuts and an attack on legal rights and protections and limiting collective bargaining in the private sector. The flexibilization/feminization of employment allowed private sector firms to hire without security and reduce staff to cope with downturn (Karamessini and Rugery 2015).

Neoliberalism

What seems significant in this light, is that the dismantling of labour rights, the reduction of collective bargaining, the weakening of unions, and a paralysation of labour market towards greater "flexibility", took place against a background of a non-well-regulated market. It was the continuation of neoliberal policy reforms of labour flexibilization started in the 1990s in Greece, along the creation of a welfare system and great accessibility to cheap loans with euro adoption (Karamessini 2015, Kotouza 2019, Markantonaki 2012). Austerity is thus closely linked to neoliberalism's economic rationality, 'a theory of political economic practice, that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills, within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade (Harvey 2005: 2)'.

Neoliberal restructuring trends for increasing profit and allowing flexibilization of international markets through the disintegration of labour were slowly affecting Greece since joining the EEC in 1981 (Kotouza 1919: 52). They were fully adopted by the alternating PASOK and New Democracy (ND) governments from 1991 onwards under the prospect of participating in the common currency (Kotouza 1991).[39] They

[39] The *PASOK*- 'Panhellenic Socialist Party' is a social democratic party in Greece that exchanged government with its historical rival, the '*New Democracy'*, a center-right political party, since the fall of the military junta in 1974.

have been linked to the devaluation of local currency, the drachma, to the effects of the international oil crisis on the Greek capital and to the competing demands of the metapolitefsi: 'growth' and 'socialisation' (Kotouza 2019:52).

The neoliberal restructuring at the time, met resistance by social movements but was at the same time aided by the fall of socialism in Eastern Europe and the expansion of Greek capital there (banking, construction and industrial production) (Kotouza 1919: 53). The resulted cuts in social security, pensions and wages, the ongoing deindustrialisation and the privatizations continued further with the adoption of the euro while Greek capital was expanding into new markets and introducing new information technologies (Kotouza 1919: 54). The expansion of the Greek economy was largely based on precarious, law paid and flexible labour and resulted in the weakening of labour (Kotouza 1919: 54). While migrants from Eastern Europe and later from South Asia and Africa, provided cheap labour force for economic growth, and their exploitation was legitimated through daily expressions of racism but was followed by their marginalisation with the slowing down of the local economy (Kotouza 1919:55). At the same time, the expansion of easy cheap access to consumer loans filled the gaps of household income (Placas 2011, Vetta 2018). The increasing financialization of life during this first phase of neoliberalization, indicates the link between public and private debt (Placas 2011, Vetta 2018).

The exploitation and flexibilization of labour and the restructuring policies introduced 'redistributed social costs downwards (Kotouza 1919: 56)' combined with an 'upwards redistribution of profits (Kotouza 1919: 57)'. 'State spending was increasingly diverted away from welfare and towards infrastructural projects, carried out by state-supported private capital, as well as towards privatizations (of airports, ports, telecommunications banks, undeveloped public land including beaches and forest areas, etc) and the opening of state-monopolised markets to the private sector (health, college-level education, the radio and television industries) with beneficial terms and subsidies for the new owners and entrepreneurs (Kotouza 1919: 57)'. These neoliberal policies brought the dismantling of labour struggles and the emergence of a youth movement that opposed education reforms, part of the whole restructuring,

through strikes and school occupations (Kotouza 1919: 58-61). This massive movement anticipated the 2008 riots that followed the murder of a 16-year-old student by police in the highly politicised area of Exarchia in Athens (Kallianos 2013, Kotouza 1919). The revolt depicted youth's concerns for future prospects while facing a 700-euro wage, high youth unemployment and the repressive policing that aided the intensification of restructuring (Dalakoglou and Vradis 2011, Kotouza 1919: 62).

The above neoliberal reforms introduced before the 2009 imposition of austerity portray not a period of prosperity but of 'low-level austerity (Kotouza 1919: 57)'. 'Greece is thus not a state that suddenly awoke from its cosy socialist/Keynesian slumber in 2009 (Kotouza 1919: 67)'. Austerity programmes were applied after a period of neoliberal restructuring 'that synchronized Greece with international tendencies in the mode of accumulation' and that pushed capital towards 'increasing internationalisation and outsourcing' (Kotouza 1919: 68). These are characteristic changes of European states linked to the retreat of the welfare state and neoliberalism (Bourdieu 1998). They represent a period of neoliberal restructuring that was mostly felt by the lower classes including the migrant population. They were, however, different from the mass unemployment and huge cuts on wages and social security that followed with the present austerity implemented as a response to the crisis.

As shown, austerity and neoliberalism appear to be 'mutually reinforcing' and shape 'a discursive formation', austerity neoliberalism (Gill and De Benedictis 2016). Most importantly, the aims of austerity are similar to those of neoliberalism: to discipline through workforce flexibilization and wage and personnel cuts while promoting privatizations. As shown, neoliberalism can best be seen as a 'mobile technology' of governing in distinct political contexts, an assemblage with various emerging settings and not a fixed economic force or structure (Ong 2006). The case of Greece makes evident that austerity neoliberalism includes pre-existing arrangements of neoliberal assemblages (Ong 2006). These assemblages in time constitute a technology of governance of late capitalism, where market determined truths infiltrate politics (Bear 2015, Ong 2006). It is important thus to note that neoliberalism beyond an economic rationality is a political rationality, a process that neoliberalizes and changes societies

and creates new forms of subjectivity (Brown 2003, Foucault 2008, Muechlebach 2011, Ong 2006). As shown, it endangers democratic rights (Brown 2015) and tends to reconstruct subjectivities across entrepreneurial, calculating and 'responsibilised' logics (Brown 2003, Foucault 2008). While as scholars have shown, neoliberalization processes involve a humanitarianism that offers micro-social technologies as solutions to deeper structural problems (Johnson 2011, Muechlebach 2012). A noted intensification of humanitarian provision of assistance (Johnson 2011, Muechlebach 2012) depicts the affective and moral forms of neoliberalization and the development of 'neoliberal acts of feeling' based on the cultivation of compassion and sympathy (Muechlebach 2012). Hence, the economic and political changes implemented by neoliberal policies go hand in hand with constructions of a subject that is responsible and that volunteers and helps the community inspired by romantic and anti-capitalist ideas of reciprocity (Brown 2003, Muechlebach 2012).

Frames of crisis

In the above analysis I attempted to situate the current socio-political and economic condition in Greece within a broad historical and theoretical context. As shown, we must be careful what crisis means and consider the inherent assumptions and teleology of claims of crisis and the normative and affective matrices that condition responses to the crisis and organise reality. The epistemology and historiography of the crisis allow us to see the moral and political power of crisis narratives and their discursive operation. This way we can shift the problem of the crisis to the ideological and political aspect, where we can see how crisis legitimated austerity. As shown, the relation of austerity and crisis was mediated by the moralisation of debt and the orientalising discourses of modernity, while it conveyed a continuation of neoliberal reforms set in the 1990s in Greece. In this light, I suggest that we must see the current situation of austerity and crisis as a powerful moral and political frame.

I draw the notion of frame from Butler's (2009) analysis of frames of war. A notion that is based on Goffman's (1974) and Bateson's (1972) understanding of frame as a bounded set of images that communicate a situation. The frames are dynamic

structures that determine and convey a situation, an image, an event, a reality (Bateson 1972, Butler 2009, Goffman 1974). For Butler (2009) frames of 'intelligibility', describe historical constructions that mark areas of knowledge, and frames of 'recognizability' refer to the conditions for recognition to happen. Frames of intelligibility and recognizability define which life and social structure matter (Butler 2009). However, Butler (2009) doesn't seem to be concerned with structural classification of frames, as Goffman (1974) does (Denzin and Keller 1981), but with frames' weaknesses revealed in the daily social practices and embodied interactions that involve emotions, intentionality, and subjective meanings.

Framing a situation, a reality, a term, and so on, guides apprehension and interpretation and grounds these at an ontological level of understanding (Butler 2009). A selection of frames limits and demarcates reality by generating certain representations that are saturated by political power and that organise and regulate affect and ethics (Butler 2009). Frames are normative structures that survive by being reiterated and renewed in everyday life (Butler 2009). Yet, this temporal dimension and flexibility shows their internal limits and weaknesses (Butler 2009). It points to the inherent possibility of a frame breaking with itself and thus the possibility of critical intervention and subversion (Butler 2009). This describes that the rigidity and finality of frames can be cancelled and allow for agentive moments. These can bring into the light what frames exclude and define their content as the potential point of critique.

A crucial element in Butler's (2009) approach of the frame is the notion of reiteration that refers to the multiple gestures repeated in daily social life and the materialisations that shape habitual practices and constitute subjectivities. For Butler (2009), there is always a gap between the norms and ideals of frames and their everyday reiteration in the embodied materialisations. We could perhaps say that this corresponds to the gap between 'doxa', the structure that orders what is self-evident, and its materialisation in the daily dispositions (Bourdieu 2017/1977). This gap constitutes the potentiality for critical agencies and the frame is the borderline of structure and agency. It is delineation and fixity but also a site of negotiation, as it signals a potential transformation of established frames.

Hence, I consider the association of crisis and austerity as a powerful moral and political frame that organises affectively and discursively current experience. This does not describe a top down orchestrated "conspiracy". In contrast, it indicates the way austerity and crisis are powerful frames that are recreated in the everyday present reality. For instance, people greatly affected by austerity in Greece speak not of austerity (*litotita*) but of crisis, and it seems that they describe the present historical period that structures life, but also the daily crisis they experience in their lives that represents the changes incurred and the widespread precarity as outcomes of austerity. Hence when the people refer to the crisis, they refer to the violent materialisations of austerity in the everyday experience.

In this sense, we could say that when people refer to crisis, they describe their experiences of austerity as a form of daily crisis. I employ often throughout the following chapters the term austerity crisis to refer to a discursive synthesis based on participants' descriptions and experiences. Austerity crisis depicts the crisis as the consequence of austerity shifting emphasis from the idea that austerity is the response to a crisis. Austerity crisis stands thus, for the way people talk about the crisis in their daily representations to describe that austerity creates conditions of crisis and impoverishment. As pointed out, 'we need to salvage meaningful causality…the culprit in recession is austerity not an abstracted "crisis" (Powers and Rakopoulos 2019)'.

The discursive formation of crisis and austerity that I choose to approach through the concept of the frame have been aptly portrayed through Arendt's concept of 'dark times' (Pina Cabral 2018a), and Butler's concept of 'trouble' (Butler 1990, Papataxiarchis 2018). These concepts describe not a unique in history condition but stress the cyclicality and the perplexity of current experience. 'Dark times', Pina-Cabral (2018a) explains, signals a period of elusive meaning, confused communication and relations that always already escape our grasp but capture our suspicion. It is a period wherein an intense 'blinding' dark light spreads over the economy, the intellect, social and political life (Pina-Cabral 2018a). This has an estranged power over us, a heavy insistence that make us sway in an incorrectly dimly lighted darkness. While 'trouble', Papataxiarchis (2018) explains, is the 'cognitive disturbance' and social trauma present

in all spheres of life. Trouble points also, to a generalised condition that 'preceded the 'crisis'' and that turned into a political disorder and confusion of arrangements and representations (Papataxiarchis 2018).

Ethnographies of crisis in Greece

In what follows I will review the ethnographic realities generated by anthropologists who are "discovering" Greece and anthropologists who have returned to conduct study in Greece in the present, among whom some have retained a long association with a place and people, and thus, they are able to identify important changes.

As ethnographies show, media reporting and negotiations with financial institutions have generated ideas of exceptionality of the "Greek crisis" (Kalantzis 2015, Knight 2013). This was based on a moralised derogatory stereotyping that also referred to celebratory images of Greece as a place of resistance (Kalantzis 2015). While ideas of exceptionality qualified the "Greek crisis" as a recognizable 'political trope' for mobilisation, and a political trope of fear and change that spread uncertainty and promoted and justified the urgency for reforms (Knight 2013). Such portrayals that resemble a duality of 'pathologisation' and 'exotisation' (Theodossopoulos 2014b), create certain outlooks to which locals in Greece must conform (Kalantzis 2015). It seems important therefore, to move beyond ideas of exceptionality by attempting to trace how crisis attains its 'idiosyncratic character' in Greece (Papataxiarchis 2018). At this stage, this becomes possible by briefly reviewing the ethnographic material produced. Maybe we could alternate this way, ideas of the reductive exceptionality of the "Greek crisis" for the qualitative differences crisis describes in Greece and perhaps, still with caution, take the "Greek crisis" off the brackets.

The current condition of crisis in Greece experienced under austerity has come to generate a novel ethnographic production: the anthropology of the Greek crisis. Amidst uncertain and confused conditions, ethnographic analysis of the Greek crisis has been intense and plenty. Through diverse methodological and analytical tools, the ethnographies produced explore different realms, experiences and transitions, often

through a 'short term' or 'long-term' approach, that focuses on the radical change of the crisis, as a massive rupture, or on the long-term processes reconfiguring experience during the period of the crisis, respectively, or attempts to merge these two approaches (Papataxiarchis 2018).

The ethnographic material generated reveals how experience during the period of austerity crisis is aggregated in multiple layers of temporality (Streinzer 2016, Knight 2015) and historicity (Vournelis 2016, Knight 2015). Some ethnographic works emphasize the political aspect (Alexandrakis 2015, Athanasiou 2012, Bampilis 2018, Cabot 2016, Chatzidakis 2018, Dalakoglou 2015, Dalakoglou and Vradis 2011, Kalantzis 2015, Douzina-Bakalaki 2017, Kyriakopoulos 2011, Rakopoulos 2014, 2016, Rozakou 2016, Papataxiarchis 2014, 2018, Panourgia 2018, Knight and Stewart 2016, Theodossopoulos 2014a, 2015), or the ideological dimensions (Athanasiou 2012, Papataxiarchis 2018, Theodossopoulos 2016), or ontological features (Hirschon 2012), or the moral and ethical implications (Gkintidis 2018, Papataxiarchis 2018, Theodossopoulos 2016), or the metaphysical underpinnings (Bakalaki 2016, Yalouri 2016, Sutton 2018, Rakopoulos 2018) of present experiences of austerity crisis.

The qualitative differences of the crisis and the way these are revealed in the conflicts generated in the negotiations with institutional agents and creditors have been explained in terms of cultural mismatches (Herzfeld 2011) and basic ontological differences (Hirchon 2012). The latter refer to experiences of time, identity and authority, and the way these relate to different historical trajectories (Hirchon 2012). It was argued that ideas and perceptions of time and identity differ in Greece from countries of the European North, on the basis of absence of Industrial Revolution and Enlightenment in Greece (Hirchon 2012). [40] In a similar way, the cultural specificity of local practices of reciprocation was linked to the reciprocal relation of debt and

[40] Hirschon (2012) argues that Greek perceptions of time are cyclical and stress flexibility and seasonality, in contrast to linear understandings of time based on precision and punctuality of the Industrialized West. In a similar way, personal identity in Greece, conceived in relation to a cyclical notion of time is socially embedded and attached to the family, and different from perceptions of identity in industrial West (Hirschon 2012). Ideas of autonomy and local attitudes towards authority are shaped by the history of Ottoman rule, Nazi occupation and military junta (Hirschon 2012)

austerity negotiations (Herzfeld 2011). As shown, local perceptions of reciprocity as obligation *(ipohreosi)* that constantly change between giving and receiving, conflict with the one-dimensional reciprocity required in the negotiations of sovereign debt (Herzfeld 2011). The characteristic one-way indebtedness of austerity is contradictory to the local notion of *ipohreosi* where giver and receiver are positions infinitely alternating (Herzfeld 2011).

On the reciprocities related to the negotiations of sovereign debt and austerity, further anthropological work highlighted the moral underpinnings and assumptions involved (Gkintidis 2018). As shown, Greece's obligation to implement austerity and neoliberal reforms was seen by European bureaucrats as a form of reciprocation for the so called 'developmental funds' Greece received by EU since 1980s (Gkintidis 2018). Hence, it appears that reciprocities of austerity are woven with discourses of power in the politics of European integration (Gkintidis 2018). As Gkintidis (2018) explains, the funds offered to Greece are recognized by technocrats as disinterested 'gifts' that aided Greece to rise over its Balkan history and characteristics and become a developed European country. In this sense, the implementation of austerity was seen as a form of reciprocation by Greece and a gesture of gratitude in return for the help provided in the past on the basis of historically constructed moral expectations (Gkintidis 2018). This analysis describes the moral premises of what is supposed to be rational institutions and economic policies and the way they enhance European hegemony (Gkintidis 2018).

Further anthropological analysis on the Greek crisis, employs Foucault's term of neoliberal governmentality, that allows for a critical engagement with authoritative discourses and the way these play out in the daily life (Athanasiou, 2012). Here austerity and crisis as forms of governmentality refer to control and interventions, but also to the norms and principles of self-limitation, externally applied and internalised as the government of self by oneself (Athanasiou 2012). Austerity is seen as a way to distribute not only capital but also body politic, and body sentimentality, reshaping the boundaries of political possibilities and the social, by building specific arrangements of affect, wishes and aspirations (Athanasiou 2012).

Crucial in the governmentality of the crisis, is the production of top down representations of crisis in medical and national terms, as a national body in danger that must control, regulate and discipline ways of living and desiring, while dangerous bodies must be punished for the threat they represent to a naturalised homogenous national body (Athanasiou 2012). This signals the construction of a 'national intimacy' amidst and against the crisis (Athanasiou 2012). A dominant form of intimacy that represents a homogenous nation in danger and that cultivates a sense of 'collective responsibility' for the crisis and consent for austerity measures (Athanasiou 2012, Kyriakopoulos 2011).[41] The national intimacy was represented in narratives of salvation (Lynteris 2011) and meta-narratives to 'exit the crisis' that legitimised state interventions (Kallianos 2018) and state violence (Dalakoglou and Vradis 2011).

During the peak of the austerity crisis left and anti-authoritarian political opposition to austerity was framed in terms of anti-imperial anti-German struggle that resembled the far-right rhetoric (Kotouza 1919: 222). The enemy was identified as a German hegemony in the EU and opposition to austerity was framed in terms of national sovereignty, intensifying nationalist ideologies (Kotouza 2019).[42] Important in the construction of national intimacy is the understanding of the citizen based on the history and conceptions of the patriarchal household (Athanasiou 2012, Kotouza 2019). The construction of national intimacy involved thus, the intensification of conservative values, of the norm of patriarchal family as an extension of the nation state and of 'ethno-patriarchal mechanisms of border surveillance and routinization of exclusions (Athanasiou 2012: 30)'. This included the marginalisation and policing of bodies that are constructed as a threat to the patriarchal family household, such as the mass arrests of sex workers, their forced examination for HIV and their public castigation in Athens in 2011 as a declared by the government threat to 'the Greek family' (Athanasiou 2012), but also the violent arrests of trans women in Thessaloniki.

[41] In a similar way Douzinas (2013) talked about the way the politics of the crisis involved the construction of a 'metaphysical guilt' directed to citizens.

[42] As argued, political conflict between left and right in Greece has taken a specific form since WWII (when the workers' movement fully embraced nationalism and a strategy of national unity). The two sides compete 'over their patriotic credentials' and over conflicting strategies for workers (Kotouza 2019: 37).

[43] Hence, a constructed 'national intimacy' conceals and intensifies the violent and unequal impacts of austerity crisis, the marginalisation according to ethnicity, gender and class position (Athanasiou 2012). This is mirrored in the normalised sexism and misogynistic expressions in the everyday, in the increase of gendered and homophobic violence (Athanasiou 2012, Kotouza 2019). [44] In this sense, critical approaches that highlight the different ways through which austerity impacts on the lives of people, pushing people in the margins according to social markers and previous inequalities, attempt to destabilise the narrative of a homogenous nation in crisis (Alexandrakis 2013, Athanasiou 2012, Karamesini 2013). While it is important to emphasize that austerity crisis has benefited a part of the national population (Dalakoglou et al 2018).

Portrayals of crisis as a national issue also involved the increase of racism (Athanasiou 2012, Dalakoglou 2013, Herzfeld 2011, Theodossopoulos 2014a). As shown, racism is linked to the rise of xenophobia incited by the European policies on migration (Dalakoglou 2013, Green 2018) and expressed during the crisis in official rhetoric by politicians and the media (Dalakoglou 2013), in daily scapegoating practices for experienced difficulties (Herzfeld 2011) and in forms of 'polite racism' by both Left and Right (Theodossopoulos 2014a). [45] A national intimate public joined by common interests during the austerity crisis identified migrants as a burden to local economy (Kotouza 1919: 232). The conservative nationalist anti-austerity discourse and the rise of Golden Dawn (GD), the far-right formation that gained popularity by capitalising on anti-austerity sentiments and the fear and uncertainty of the conditions of austerity crisis and entered the parliament, claim the defence of Greek citizens against a foreign threat (Bampilis 2018, Kotouza 2019, Theodossopoulos 2014a). As shown, the daily presence of GD members in public spaces and the way they perform publicly the

[43] The names, pictures and medical information of the arrested women in Athens were made public, violating the law and breaching medical confidentiality (Athanasiou 2012). While the women, mostly of Greek origin, tested positive on HIV were charged with 'intentional grievous bodily harm' against 'family men' and detained for a year. In Thessaloniki there have been mass arrests of trans women in 2013 (Galanou 2013).

[44] There has been a noted increase in homophobic violence during the crisis (To Vima 2014b).

[45] It can also escalate into murderous attacks on the street, such as the hate crime of the Pakistani Shehzad Luqman in 2013 in Athens (HLHR 2014). But also into violent abuses, such as the abuse of strawberry pickers at Manolada who were injured and shot by the supervisors of the farm after demanding six months of salaries in 2013 (ekathimerini 2013b). The perpetrators only received suspended sentences while the workers were detained or deported (Tvxs 2014). Golden Dawn was criminalised with the killing of the anti-fascist Pavlos Fyssas by Roupakias, a GD member (The Guardian 2013).

construction of problems and generate ethnic differences and emotions of blaming the migrants, that often involves deadly pogroms against migrants, are ways to legitimise GD's political appearance and necessity (Bampilis 2018). [46] It seems therefore, that narratives of national intimacy entail a homophobic and misogynistic nationalism that is also xenophobic and racist and that mainly targets the immigrant population (Athanasiou 2012, Dalakoglou 2013, Herzfeld 2011, Theodossopoulos 2014a).

While racist and homophobic attacks on the street increased (map. crisis-scape. net), the policies of the previous government of conservative New Democracy (ND) supported homophobia and racism (Dalakoglou 2013). [47] Both GD and the government of ND sought to defend Greek people against constructed internal and external threats cultivating racism and homophobia that shifted the attention from the devastating impacts of austerity to a problem caused by assumed external threats that did not belong to Greek society (Bampilis 2018, Dalakoglou 2013, Kotouza 2019). This is linked to a historical strategy of the conservative party ND to incorporate far right members and ideologies. [48] While the genealogy of GD is depicted in the history of far right in Greece and its connection to the state from the mid-war period to Metaxas' dictatorship, civil war and the military junta to the anti-communist strategies of the cold war (Marketos 2006). [49] The genealogy of GD also involves its collaboration with police and the participation of its members in police operations against immigrants and social movements (Psaras 2012).

The eruption of racist attitudes in the public domain has been also explained as an outcome of the dissolution of assumed boundaries between the formal and informal spheres of politics that effected significant transformations in social and political life and changed local practices of hospitality that dealt with forms of alterity in daily life (Papataxiarchis 2014, 2018). This was triggered by generalised discontent with

[46] See Tvxs 2011 for a documented pogrom against immigrants.
[47] See The Guardian 2014 for an analysis of homophobic state policies.
[48] See To Vima 2014a
[49] It also involves the liberalization of television channels and the operation of private channels promoting far right xenophobia and antisemitism (Psaras 2012).

austerity and great dissatisfaction with official politics and generated what has been called ‘a crisis of political legitimacy’ that brought the collapse of the two-party political establishment (PASOK and ND) governing the country since the fall of dictatorship in 1974. As Papataxiarchis (2014) explains, the breaking of the boundary between the formal and the informal was a structural outcome that turned xenophobia into racism and recreated the sphere of intimacy from a refugee of forms of alterity into a source of racist expressions and violence towards anything representing deviation from the ethno-national “normal” (Papataxiarchis 2014). Xenophobic tendencies previously concealed and tolerated in the intimate sphere of social life turned into direct public expressions of racism and acquired formal overtly public presence (Papataxiarchis 2014). Historically documented repulsion by the locals towards any form of alterity, tolerated within the informal social realm and controlled by hospitality and the way it hierarchically assimilates difference, gained official presence and authorised discourse (Papataxiarchis 2014, 2018).

At the same time, novel forms of hospitality, anti-hierarchically oriented, and based on disinterestedness and solidarity emerged (Papataxiarchis 2014). Solidarity has been greatly analysed as a response to austerity, comprising multiple activities of giving, sharing and helping (Cabot 2016, Papataxiarchis 2018, Rakopoulos 2014, 2016, Rozakou 2016a, Theodossopoulos 2016). It constitutes a widely employed concept during the crisis in Greece with various meanings defined by different contexts of distinct and opposing socio-political projects and ideological positions (Papataxiarchis 2018). Yet, the ethnographic works centred around the prevailing manifestations of solidarity in left -wing and anarchist politics-based autonomous initiatives of support provision and political action.

Solidarity has been pictured as a significant ethical and political relation against forms of ‘acritical ethnonationalism’ (Athanasiou 2018). Ethnographic descriptions portray solidarity as a conceptual and ethical basis for a variety of political projects that offer material support: social clinics and pharmacies (Cabot 2016), support offered to refugees (Rozakou 2016, Papataxiarchis 2018), no middle-man markets that connect directly producer and consumer (Rakopoulos 2014, 2016, Agelopoulos 2018) and

networks of clothes and food distribution (Theodossopoulos 2016). All these different projects are based on a self-organisation of politics and social life and address immediate needs by providing material support (Cabot 2016, Rakopoulos 2014, Rozakou 2016a, Theodossopoulos 2016). Each project stresses different social and political aspects, such as the creation of forms of social engagement (Rakopoulos 2016), of practices of affective care (Cabot, 2016), of friendships (Rozakou 2016) and of forms of empowerment (Theodossopoulos 2016). An important dimension of solidarity as shown, is the novel configurations that emerge, such as, novel forms of sociality (Rakopoulos 2016, Rozakou 2016a), citizenship (Cabot 2016), and forms of generous giving (Rozakou 2016a). It appears also that practices of solidarity give way to syncretic formations that describe practices of anti-hierarchical hospitality (Papataxiarchis 2018), employment cooperatives based on activism (Rakopoulos 2014), and forms of humanitarian solidarity (Theodossopoulos 2016). Yet, as shown, one must not assume that practices that do not fall under the name of solidarity, such as daily food preparation by women at a church soup kitchen, are devoid of political character (Bakalaki-Douzina 2017). Instead, they describe forms of engagement with the present conditions that evoke political actions that recreate cultural formations such as the household (Bakalaki-Douzina 2017).

A key aspect in the understanding and analysis of solidarity is its relation to local cultural, social and political continuities. It is important, anthropologists emphasize, to link present observed novelties to the genealogy of ethnographic research in Greece (Herzfeld 2016, Papataxiarchis 2018). In this light, the initiatives of solidarity link to past top-down constructions of the 'volunteer' as a subject attached to aspirations of modernity (Rozakou 2016b), and to alterations of local perceptions and responses to alterity (Papataxiarchis 2016). On the other hand, solidarity, has been perceived as a characteristic shift of previously documented relations of antagonism and competition (Herzfeld 2016). These widely analysed modes of local sociality have been reshaped in such a way that antagonism was redirected externally towards the administrators of austerity, creditors and financial institutions (Herzfeld 2016). Generating at the same time, solidarity amidst the people that suffer the impacts of austerity (Herzfeld 2016).

At this point it is important to mention an edited volume that put together and contextualised older anthropological work within the present conditions of austerity crisis (Rozakou and Gkara, 2014). Two thematic unities organise the written pieces, that refer to positive and negative reciprocity (Sahlins 1972) as two different phenomena of the Greek social that inform the way the present is experienced and shaped. On the one hand the authors talk about volunteerism, support and help (whether in a formal or informal structure of organisation) and on the other hand they explore understandings, practices and form of sociality based on violence (in the media, in cultural practices, historical events and everyday encounters). The collection of articles offers an important historical context of the contradictory present between misogynistic, homophobic and racist acts of intense violence and widespread acts of solidarity.

It is important to consider also that solidarity is linked to grassroots anti-austerity politics, the indignant movement of the squares against austerity and the many autonomous neighbourhood-based collectives that emerged from the movement (Dalakolgou 2011). While solidarity and anti-austerity politics, as expressions of a generalised discontent, are partly outcomes of the 2008 revolt (Dalakoglou 2011, Papataxiarchis 2018) and past organised collective actions during the post-dictatorship period (Papataxiarchis 2018).[50]

Anthropologists have described the significance of the grassroots anti-austerity movements and the movement of the squares (Theodossopoulos 2013, Panourgia 2011, Dalakoglou 2011, Kallianos 2013, Papailia 2011). Emphasizing the importance of the heterogeneous encounters of people and values taking place, the novel forms of sociality that acted as political subversions of 'normalized and alienating sociality' (Kallianos 2013), and the re-socializations with the urban environment against desocializations of the 90s and 2000s caused by projects of urban redevelopment (Dalakoglou 2012). The grassroots mobilizations against austerity, as shown, gave way

[50] The 2008 uprising was triggered by the murder of a 15 years old student by police in the streets of Athens. It attracted the participation of students, union members, migrants and marginalized social groups that took to the streets to challenge police brutality, inequality, unemployment and exclusion (Kallianos 2013).

to new forms of engaged citizenship based on empathy and care, that were shaped by the emerged decentralized "new digital mediascape" networks of reporting and critiquing (Papailia 2011). Further analysis of anti-austerity indignation stresses the transformative potential of expressed outrage towards austerity as indirect resistance (Theodossopoulos 2014a).

The present condition of uncertainty and confusion during austerity crisis, as it was shown, plays out in metaphysical understandings of reality, which means a form of thinking that explores connections beyond habitual patterns of thought (Bakalaki 2016, Rakopoulos 2018a, Sutton 2018, Yalouri 2016). [51] Hence, interpretations of the current situation expand the boundaries of the intelligible and possible and search for meaning beyond given explanations (Bakalaki 2016, Rakopoulos 2018a, Sutton 2018, Yalouri 2016). These metaphysical interpretations, in their non-coherent mode of representation and operation, often compose a collage of differences (Yalouri 2016). Yet, it seems that they all search for a hidden meaning (Yalouri 2016, Bakalaki 2016), and wealth (Rakopoulos 2018a, Sutton 2018). The concern for a concealed level of reality (Bakalaki 2016, Rakopoulos 2018a, Sutton 2018), as much as produced prophetic narratives (Yalouri 2016), attempt to assure the possibility of revealing the "truth" and rediscover solutions (Bakalaki 2016, Rakopoulos 2018a, Sutton 2018).

Further ethnographic explorations employ the analytical frame of orientalism to show the operations of essentialisms and moralised stereotyping of dominant representations, such as portrayals of Greeks as lazy, corrupt, undisciplined and daring children that challenge the legal terms of the bailout agreement (Kalantzis 2015). Attention is drawn to the way such motifs operate in orientalising terms, engendering expectations that locals must conform to, while they become part of local self-representations as cultural celebrated traits of defiance and non-conformity to what is perceived as an internalised surveillance and subjugation to austerity measures

[51] There is a historical metaphysical emphasis in Greece (that involves a range of expressions, from the more folkloric to astrology). It has followed a one direction migration from the rural to the urban, following a change of perception of the metaphysical as irrationality and luck of education of rural life, to hegemonic adaptation by urban elite (Stewart 1993).

(Kalantzis 2015). At the same time, self-stereotyping can generate shared intimate idioms (Kalantzis 2015) and shared affective imaginaries of empowerment (Apostolidou 2018).[52] As noted before, the conversion of stereotypes attributed from the 'outside' into frames of self-recognition shows that alterity acts as resistance to hegemonic systems (Bakalaki 2006). This also points to a contradictory duality, that often morphs into the dyad of pathologization and exotisation (Theodossopoulos 2014b) backwardness and authenticity (Kalantzis 2015). However, as anthropologists depict, these dualities express spaces of ambivalence in rhetoric (Theodossopoulos 2014a, Streinzer 2018) and practices (Kalantzis 2015).

Ambivalence is a recurrent ethnographic theme of the present reality in Greece. It describes the way people invest (Streinzer 2018) and defy through embodied practices (Kalantzis 2015) and voiced articulations (Theodossopoulos 2014a), key moral and political representations of austerity. [53] Importance is given to the operationality of ambivalence; how it acts as an immediate emotional expression for people, through embodied, but not fully endorsed, practices of transgression of the rules of austerity (Kalantzis 2015). It is also depicted in the way hegemonic discourses are included in anti-hegemonically oriented critique of austerity (Theodossopoulos 2014a), revealing the historically invested knots of power and resistance. Particularly, how anti-hegemonic expressions of indignation with austerity (from both left and right political positions) are in compliance to the hegemonic European national project, namely the importance of ancient Greece as the cultural heritage of Europe (Theodossopoulos 2014a).[54] Here the ambivalence manifested in anti-austerity indignation links with tactics of interpretation and a search for accountability (Theodossopoulos 2014a).

[52] Here I refer to self-portrayals by locals of psychological disorder (Apostolidou 2018), and immaturity (Kalantzis 2015), as subversion (Apostolidou 2018) and non-conformity (Kalantzis 2015). Immaturity has been present in previous work in the anthropology of Greece. The Greek nation state was pictured often as an unruly child of Europe (Herzfeld 2005).

[53] In the anthropology of Greece ambivalence portrays the varieties that emerge from investing and resisting hegemonic frames in the everyday life. The way people don't wholly break from dominant discourses neither remain unaffected by them. It has been part of previous ethnographies in Greece related to interpretations of a situation, to gendered attitudes, and specifically with female sexuality, female embodied pleasures (Cowan 1990), and female consumption in public in relation to modernity and capitalism (Cowan 1990). Also, it has been portrayed as characteristic mode of local citizenship and national identity (Herzfeld 2005).

[54] As Theodossopoulos (2014a) argues, indignation to austerity reproduces ethno-national beliefs complicit to a European neoclassical model of Greece that takes ancient Greece as the cultural heritage of Western civilization.

Besides rhetorical expressions, it is also embodied in performances of defiance to austerity, such as in semi-endorsed sexualised joking targeting the main agents of managing the crisis that involves stereotyping north Europe (Kalantzis 2015). But ambivalence also unfolds in pro-austerity opinions expressed by people lamenting austerity's dire consequences (Streinzer 2018). Here it signals a critique of national politics and cultural dispositions, and an opportunity for reform (Streinzer 2018). All these contradictory and inconsistent expressions indicate that ambivalence is an outcome and a coping treatment of the present (Jovanovic 2016).

Expressions of ambivalence in attitudes protesting austerity are pictured as 'dissemic' transfers and relays (Theodossopoulos 2014a). This means tensions between inward and outward aspects of Greek self-presentations (Herzfeld 1987), that appear to emerge from the messy non-uniform sphere of cultural intimacy, where contradictory but compatible interpretations are the source of embarrassment and celebration, display and concealment (Herzfeld 2005). Ambivalence thus is associated with the cultural intimate sphere that provides a sense of collective identity while at the same time, it is a source of discomfort and embarrassment (Herzfeld 2005). For example, dominant representations of lazy Greeks are ambivalently endorsed and translated in cultural terms according to a local idea of life as a struggle *(agon)* (Theodossopoulos 2003, 2013).

Ethnographic analysis has employed also the central anthropological theme of memory to show that locals draw narratives from the past and from previous historical events, such as the Ottoman period, or the Axis occupation, or the great Famine, to address the present difficulties faced (Knight 2015). These 'culturally proximate' narratives of the past brought into the present, guide interpretation and action, and create hope for an eventual resolution (Knight 2015).[55] In a similar way, 'visualities' of nationhood recognizable for national heroism, such as heroic characters of the 'Greek

[55] The absence of civil war from Knight's scheme of cultural proximity has been brought into attention (Kyriakopoulos 2017), as an important omission of the significant role of a cultural and political enforcement of memory erasure of the history of civil war.

war of Independence' are turned into narratives of national agency of defiance and disobedience (Kalantzis 2016).

The staged ethnographic reality of the present austerity crisis in Greece inevitably forms part of the trend of 'dark ethnography' on the way it emphasizes the cruelties of life under neoliberal economic policies and effectuated inequalities (Ortner 2016). But the ethnographies reviewed do not foreclose reality, nor do they result in utterly negative accounts, but map diverse critical qualities and creative tensions that open up spaces for further exploration (Ortner 2016). In this light, several questions arise: How do the moral tones of austerity and local cultural and historical continuities in understanding indebtedness, reciprocation and national and gender identity mark people's interpretations and experiences of austerity crisis? In what ways does the governmentality of the crisis, the production and management of facts and truth, frames reality and arranges politically and affectively the everyday lives of people? How does it become internalised and/or critically opposed as an intimate part of peoples' lives? How do discourses of national intimacy emerge in the everyday and how do they shape lives in terms of national, gender, class and sexuality boundaries? What are the gender aspects of the current experience of austerity crisis? What are the culturally intimate spheres that emerge in the present amidst precarious situations? How are household, friendly and neighbourly intimate relations recreated or broken amidst present conditions? How does the production of precarity rearrange material and affective intimacies within a family household and amidst neighbours? What kind of intimacies are mobilised or take shape in survival projects in the household, in the neighbourhood and in solidarity initiatives? What are the intimate forms of living from which people draw to survive the present?

Concluding notes

I argued in this chapter that crisis and austerity constitute a political and moral frame with affective and discursive ratifications. A frame that grounds a field of expertise and sets in motion a series of interventions but also a frame that can bring critical and agentive moments, as the ethnographic works reviewed described. As we show, the

frame of crisis and austerity is attached to the circuits of debt, of moral confusion, inequality, violence and subjectification, that incite shame, blame and stereotyping. A frame linked to neoliberal policies and "shared" across time and space along non-linear temporal and cultural formations. In this sense, the analysis in this chapter of the entanglement of the moral power of debt, of orientalising discourses of modernity, of the project of European integration and neoliberalism did not attempt to identify the crisis with its supposed causes, but to unravel the implications of the political management of the debt crisis and to show that austerity and crisis is a rather dangerous frame that was based on intimate grounds. As I showed, it is a frame through which policies of austerity were imposed, policies that are proven to be catastrophic and harmful and that perhaps could not be implemented under normal conditions. The crisis mobilises certain decisions that privilege particular political and ideological agendas. The management of economic crisis as shown created greater injustice and inequality.

It has now been eight years since the introduction of austerity and people affected find themselves in a state of profound crisis. As suggested, people's experiences call for a necessary reframing of the present as austerity crisis, wherein crisis refers to the daily experiences that encompass the consequences of austerity in people's lives. In this sense, austerity crisis pulls different experiences of people affected by austerity together as a form of everyday crisis. Crisis thus, depicts the dire consequences of austerity, the way austerity impacts on every aspect of people's lives, in economy, politics, health, and social relations. As ethnographies portray, the deterioration of the quality of life is accompanied by violence but also by support and generosity to the other. The experience of austerity crisis cannot be but one of contradiction. For those mostly affected it is a struggle to survive in a perplexed historical moment.

The review of the ethnographies of austerity crisis in Greece depicts a critical analysis of the qualitative characteristics of crisis in Greece and the way the worldwide frame of austerity and crisis constitutes intimate local experiences. As the ethnographies show, austerity crisis impacts in multiple levels, material, affective and discursive. Austerity crisis produces a series of wave-like phenomena and experiences that are

linked to reconfigurations of previous dynamics. But the present experiences are neither a linear outgrowth of past tendencies. Austerity disrupts daily life in so many ways. As the ethnographic works reveal, the consequences of austerity involve multiple tensions and contradictions amidst people's attempts to make meaning and retain stability under insecurity and interruptions. The novel social and political situation of austerity, that is a form of intensification of policies introduced in the 90s, raises important questions and requires further analysis.

The chapter has paved the way for the ethnographic exploration that follows; this will address the experiences of austerity crisis on the ground, and how these are shaped in the daily practices and encounters in the household and in the studied low-income neighbourhood of Western Thessaloniki.

Chapter Four: Sacrifice

Introduction

This chapter explores the intimate ways austerity policies are experienced by women who are mothers and grandmothers and live in a low-income neighbourhood in Neapoli, Thessaloniki. The ethnography focuses on unexpected meetings between female neighbours during which they narrate daily practices of care they undertake for their families and claim overwork as a form of self-sacrifice. I describe such an impromptu neighbourly encounter, meeting for coffee in a kitchen, as an event that makes affectively apparent the precarity the women experience daily. This eventful affective encounter shapes forms of gendered intimacy between the women participating. It is grounded on shared experiences and claims to self-sacrifice for their families. The intimacy that affectively emerges between them represents an exercise of visibility and the ground for solidarity, in the sense that their stories describe forms of precarity and expose the inequalities of precarity and the taken for granted aspect of their work.

The women's meeting that forms the ethnographic focus of this chapter allow us to appreciate how felt transitions unfold within and against precarity leaving traces and rearising anew in the next encounter. Yet, the potentialities of the emergent intimacy seem to recoil upon the embodied intimacy of these women with local dominant notions of gender roles of mother and housewife. These notions are embedded in the habitual process of everyday life and shape discourses and stereotypes that generate and sustain various forms of inequality. They seem to mobilise practices of care for the family and form realms of being and belonging. As it appears thus, the women perform a critique and solidarity in the emergent forms of affective intimacy that are tangled with complicity with inequality and mechanisms of power that oppress them. While the demands of austerity on them to perform extra daily unwaged labour reinscribe these bonds of complicity. At the same time, their daily sacrifices for the

family as experiences of inequality undermine the ideological and homogenising discourses of sacrifice constructed from above as necessary patriotic acts.

In what follows I describe an unanticipated coffee meeting, which I attended with the main participant of this research: Mrs Roula. Mrs Roula's personal history and experience significantly shaped the ethnographic material of this research. Her life was greatly affected by austerity on multiple levels and was characteristic of a proletarian life under austerity that in order to survive exists and works in the shadow deprived of basic social rights. Mrs Roula was 67 years old when I got to know her. She had been unemployed for two years and survived through informal labour at the local open vegetable and fruit market-*laiki*, where she received food materials in exchange for work. She used these to cook for her family and to prepare marmalades, liquors and 'spoon sweets' (fruit-preserves) which she unofficially sold at the open market, local corner shops and to her neighbours in Neapoli. She also had to navigate the system of short term or occasional municipal programs of poverty alleviation, but as the help provided was limited, she was trying to make some money "off the books" by selling contraband tobacco in her neighborhood.

A coffee kitchen talk

A spring late morning, I visited with Mrs Roula her neighbor Mrs Maria. She lived on her own in a two-bedroom flat on the third floor of a five-story building located behind the main church of Neapoli and at a five minutes' walk from Mrs Roula's house. Mrs Maria and Mrs Roula were narrating their daily activities when a friend of Mrs Maria came for a brief visit and sat with us to have coffee and freshly baked cake offered by Mrs Maria. The newly arrived visitor, Mrs Keti, walked in with a limp and flung herself on the chair. She pointed to her swollen knee and explained she was suffering from a meniscus tear that was painful and debilitating. When Mrs Maria reprimanded her for ignoring the doctor's advice to rest the knee in order to avoid the surgery, Mrs Keti let out an exasperated sight. As she explained to us, it was impossible to avoid all the activities that aggravate the knee pain and change her daily routine of work. 'We sacrifice ourselves! We can't refuse help to the family', said Mrs Keti and the other women agreed.

During the conversation, the three women talked intensely for a while and narrated their stories of daily domestic overwork under difficult economic conditions, agreeing that it weighed on them as an unfair form of daily self-sacrifice. They recognized the unnegotiable aspect of their daily labor for their families, yet, they complained about the intensification of householding and caring. 'Why should the grandmother cover everything? It seems that we will never rest', Mrs Maria exclaimed, stressing how the present struggle to help her family has undermined her plans for an easy retirement after many years of intense paid and unpaid work.

I listened to their stories of daily forms of self-sacrifice, the great effort involved in the present in helping their families as an "outsider". I was a thirty-eight-year-old woman with no children under my care and, more importantly, I was not at the time facing the economic difficulties they faced. Yet, it seemed that I was not only indirectly included in the gendered pronouncements of their stories that attuned me affectively to the talk, but I also felt that the stories mattered to me more than a research object. In writing my fieldnotes later at night I thought of my mother who, although in better economic situation, struggled with a reduced pension to secure the daily reproduction of three households linked to her family in Athens, Greece, while my father was in debt. I thought how I could relate these gendered experiences of austerity to trajectories of feminist and critical scholarship and keep research open, allowing theory to emerge from ethnographic moments.

I carefully listened that day to the three women protesting overwork in their claims of self-sacrifice and felt angry at their outburst of anger. Their language hinged upon affect and emotions begot emotions. Their stories were heart-rending and made the precarity they experienced daily painfully apparent through the intensification of daily householding and the anguish to secure the everyday for themselves and their families. It was not that I had not taken notice of this before, but the sharing of their stories generated an affective space and a state of commotion. Precarity emerged as an agitated trouble and disruption registered in emotions. The affective interactions of the talk -the gestures, tones of voices- and the claims to self-sacrifice provided the affective language of what I had come to observe in their daily routines.

Daily household strategies

Up till then I had spent some time with Mrs Roula and Mrs Maria, lingering around their houses and talking with them while they were doing ordinary household work. I followed them in household routines, often completing several tasks at once, washing, cleaning, and cooking for their families. In between, they did the household shopping and often cared for their grandchildren. They performed these daily tasks as mundane practices that registered expressions of affection towards their families. The daily chores they performed seemed as repetitions that reactivated care daily and made little things that might appear outwardly as dull, to matter. For example, the way Mrs Roula prepared and packed the food in lunch boxes for her daughter's household, or the way Mrs Maria arranged the ironed clothes nicely in neat piles for her children's families. Ordinary activities shaped lyrical affective repetitions in daily routine through which the women cherished the relations with their loved ones.

The women helped their families who faced various economic problems daily, and this required altering and inventing ways of living. They found ways through kinship and non-kinship relations to gain a supplementary income and to be able to provide for their families through informal employment. For example, Mrs Roula mobilised links in the neighbourhood so that she could provide for her grandchildren and continue to cook for her family regularly. She sold contraband tobacco in the neighbourhood and worked unofficially at the open market in exchange for food materials which she turned into products sold to neighbours. Mrs Maria sometimes worked at her sister's pastry shop, earning a small undeclared income. While Mrs Keti could no longer afford cheap labour care for her bed sick mother, offered by migrant women from the former socialist countries, as well as from Asia and Africa, she started caring of her mother herself and receiving part of the latter's pension.

The three women economically supported the family households of their children and provided help in domestic tasks. Mrs Roula helped her daughter's household, composed of her daughter and her three grandchildren, daily with cleaning, cooking and grocery shopping as her daughter worked full time and suffered from persistent low back pain. Mrs Roula also cared for her son who was a wheelchair user after a

serious car accident. She cooked often for her family with supplies she received from nearby local open markets in exchange for work, while herself relied on soup kitchens and other forms of public assistance for survival. Mrs Keti provided regular help to her daughter who worked part time under precarious short-term contracts, with cooking, cleaning, shopping and caring for her grandson. Mrs Keti and her husband, both pensioners, also financially helped their daughter's household, which was mainly supported by the reduced income of their son-in-law, a security system installer. The pensioner couple also economically helped their son's four-member family household as their daughter-in-law had been dismissed from work and the family survived with difficulty even though the son worked overtime and double shifts at a large convenience store. Mrs Keti did the grocery shopping and economically supported the activities of her grandchildren. Lastly, Mrs Maria, who was a widow and a pensioner, had three children and seven grandchildren. She offered daily help to her children's families cooking for them and caring for her grandchildren while one of her grandsons often stayed with her. All her pension was spent in supporting the families of her children and provided food and grocery items regularly.

The morning before we met for coffee Mrs Maria woke up and did a pile of ironing for her daughter's family and cooked a big tray of a baked meat pasta dish for her children and grandchildren. Mrs Keti walked her grandson to school, cooked and came to care for her mother who lived next door to Mrs Maria. Mrs Roula, accustomed to waking up early, did some cleaning, cooked, prepared lunch boxes of food for her daughter to pick up after work and strolled around the cafeterias of the neighbourhood awhile to sell some tobacco. And it was not yet midday.

These strong household interconnections described by the daily activities of the three women are not a novel phenomenon. As we saw in the second chapter in the reviewed anthropological accounts, family households are not self-contained social units but connected to each other in dynamic and material ways in the context of relatedness (Campbell 1964, Dubish 1991, Papataxiarchis 2013). Faced with difficulties families turn to familial forms of intimacy and practices that strengthen such interconnections (Campbell 1964, Friedl 1967, Just 2000, Panourgia 1995). Recent accounts document

the model of 'functionally extended' urban family households: a conjugal household defined by 'the presence, the co-operation and the actual involvement of the couple's parents on a daily basis (Papataxiarchis 2013)'. However there have been also accounts on the critical role of the family in life stage transitions and the key role of grandmothers in providing care to their children's low-income families, allowing the participation of women in the waged labor market (Karamessini 2010). Although nuclear family households appear to be independent, there are flows of material and immaterial aid that show 'deeply intertwined household organizations', as Segalen (1984: 178) has stressed in her study of family households in Brittanie, France.

Present changes linked to austerity that led to drastic income reductions for private households demanded the increasing participation of older female family members in the daily survival of their children's households. Material and affective flows between family households and extended family house gatherings for entertainment increased. It appears that life under conditions of austerity tends to melt family household boundaries. This often depends on post-marital patterns of residence and gender forms of relatedness, as for example mothers tend to forge strong connections with their daughters' family households. For instance, Mrs Roula during a period she was three months behind with rent, spent a coupon of 150 euros for grocery shopping she received through a local NGO for her daughter's household. As she responded to my surprise, 'spending it for me or my daughter's household is the same'.

These changes caused new makings of relatedness, shifting power relations and triggering negotiations of cultural meanings and authority. Considering that the organization of material resources for the upbringing of children involves the organization of cultural resources for childbearing and that this differs across generations, there were many generational-based conflicts. For example, when Mrs Roula advised her twelve-year-old grandson to refrain from hoovering the house as a male household member, a big quarrel broke out with her daughter. At the same time, these tensions remained usually unresolved amidst the priorities of securing survival and the differences were hold together in the everyday, cross-fertilizing each other.

The event

Let us return to the coffee talk in Mrs Maria's kitchen. As we saw, occasioned by Mrs Keti's health condition, which was aggravated by the intensification of housework, the three women shared and protested their daily experiences of overwork in assisting their children's families under austerity as a form of self-sacrifice. As we saw in the second chapter in the reviewed ethnographic accounts of Greece, there are expressions of intimacy in relations of emotional and supportive friendship between women (Kennedy 1986, Kirtsoglou 2004). There are references to female neighbours and housewives who meet daily in late mornings, midday and evenings on the street or visit each other informally (Cowan 1990, Kennedy 1986). The coffee kitchen talk described here was an unplanned event that I happened to attend and to find myself absorbed in its affective interactions. As I accompanied Mrs Roula often around the neighbourhood similar events followed unexpectedly in kitchens, in the streets or in the open market and took a variety of forms according to the locus, people and temporalities involved. Each time female neighbours shared and protested overwork.

Hence, I approach the coffee talk as an event primarily affective characterised by feelings of indignation triggered by the discussion. The affectivity of the event does not preclude thought or prioritizes feeling but describes what Massumi (2015: 94) calls 'thinking-feeling'. The 'affective thinking-feeling', as he (2015: 94) explains, 'is not the thinking feeling of a particular object' but 'pertains more directly to the event', to the intensities 'passing between the individuals involved'. Hence, understanding the event as affective and thus relational (Brennan 2004), we can attend to women's stories without disregarding what took place in-between stories, tones of voices and bodily movements. This way we can grasp the affective emergence of gendered intimacy, the way it followed the affectivity and the stories shared amidst claims to self-sacrifice in this unexpected meeting.

As thinking-feeling unfolded in the discussion and intensities came together, moved and passed between gestures and worlds, forms of intimacy emerged. These retrospectively shaped contents of reflection and memories of the discussion. As Massumi (2015: 93-94) explains, thinking-feeling 'is so integral to the event's unfolding

that it can only retrospectively be owned, or owned up to, in memory and post facto reflection, as a content of an individualized experience' that involves 'a felt transition'. In this context, I treat the neighbourly female meeting event as a dynamic, specific and revealing instance. As it played itself out, it shaped a post facto reflection of the precarious situation of the three women. For example, 'events of conflict and contestation' that were central in the situational analysis of the Manchester school of anthropology, 'revealed what ordinary and routine social practices of a repeated, ongoing kind tend to obscure (Kapferer 2010: 3)' and an 'irreducible' 'plane of emergence' (Kapferer 2010: 12)'.

The understanding of the event as emergence, characteristic also of post-structuralist views inspired by the works of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), stresses the creative and generative aspects of the event that can open 'to new potentialities of social realities (Kapferer 2010: 1)'. In my view, this can help us comprehend the creative aspect of the female coffee kitchen talk and follow the way thinking-feeling gave way to a gendered form of intimacy that opened up, or not, new potentialities. How emergent intimacy between the three women was grounded on sacrifice claims and what it performed and actualised. Thus, I approach the coffee talk event as a generative instance of a gendered form of intimacy shaped by embodied affective interactions and driven by the rhetoric of self-sacrifice. Affect unfolded in the articulated narratives of self-sacrifice, as much as it activated these narratives. Affective and verbal aspects of the event were tailored by claims to self-sacrifice.

(In)visibility

First, let us take the claims to self-sacrifice seriously and begin with a brief reference of sacrifice in the anthropological ethnographic practice. In anthropological accounts sacrifice conveys a complex set of ideas; a communion between god and humans, a mediation between the sacred and the profane and a gift (Evans-Pritchard 1954; Hubert and Mauss 1964; Turner 1992/1969). The complexity of ideas linked to sacrifice is depicted in the variety of worlds to describe it: 'communion, gift, apotropaic rite, bargain, exchange, ransom, elimination, expulsion, purification,

expiation, propitiation, substitution, abnegation, homage, and others (Evans-Pritchard 1954: 29)'. These usually emphasize the symbolic force and the functional significance of sacrifice, tied to norms of exchange and reciprocity (Blanes 2014, Mayblin 2014). However, recent ethnographic descriptions have redirected the focus away from a symbolic and goal-oriented significance and towards the political and the non-economical aspect of sacrifice (Blanes 2014, Mayblin 2014).

For instance, Mayblin (2014) in a recent ethnographic exploration of ordinary acts of support by Brazilian women in Santa Lucia towards their families as forms of 'sacrifice' that become visible through narratives, poses a question: how is it possible to recognize sacrifice when 'it is neither displayed in the redness of blood, nor brought to consciousness by the dramatic force of its own irredeemableness? (Mayblin 2014: 345)'. She responds to her question by drawing our attention to 'quieter, less bloody' forms of sacrifice (Mayblin 2014).

As Mayblin (2014) describes, sacrifices performed in silence daily by Santa Lucian women become visible when the women 'expose' their practices through narration. Their accounts transform 'simply doing' into speech and silence into visibility (Mayblin 2014). But as she shows, the daily sacrifices women perform for their family are not intentional and pre-mediated and thus, they do not conform to the logic of economic rationality and exchange (Mayblin 2014). Sacrifices are simply performed, narrated and exposed by Santa Lucian women and involve Christian understandings of sacrifice (Mayblin 2014). Their narration is an acknowledgement of forms of self-giving as acts of sacrifice and does not compromise the disinterested aspect of the women's assistance and giving to their families, but 'interrupts' invisibility and the mundane work in silence (Mayblin 2014). Through narrations the Santa Lucian women attempt to rescue their actions 'from the amorphous swamp of day-to-day reality (Mayblin 2014: 345)'.[56]

[56] As Mayblin (2014) notes narration in the Christian context of sacrifice is very important as it is what distinguishes Jesu's execution from Jesu's sacrifice.

There is a set of irrefutable similarities between the exposed daily sacrifices of Santa Lucian women in Brazil and the narrated daily sacrifices of the Thessalonian women in austerity Greece. In both instances, women perform dutifully the daily chords of support for their families, but they interrupt the invisibility of their practices through eventful narrations. These narrations expose the work the women perform everyday as a form of self-sacrifice and reposition their practices from a realm of ongoing invisibility into a realm of visibility.

This aspect of eventful female narrations of daily work claimed as a form of self-sacrifice can guide our understandings of emergent intimacy during the talk event. We see that the emergent female intimacy here outlines an exercise of visibility as the three women attempt to make visible the invisibility of their daily labor but also the uneven burden placed on their shoulders during austerity. They exercise visibility by exposing their practices that are taken for granted but also by talking about and protesting the inequalities of the impact of austerity. This way they disrupt not only the taken for granted aspect of their work and 'the problem of the invisibility of women's work (Moore 1988: 83)', but also protest the way austerity is implemented off the back of unpaid everyday reproductive labor. In this exercise of visibility, the women draw attention to their everyday lives and the way these are shaped by forms of precarity experienced. Thus, it prompts further exploration of the way precarity takes shapes but also the way it is brought into view and protested.

Social reproduction and precarity

It seems that the daily practices of housework the three women perform and narrate refer to the question of social reproduction under austerity; 'the complex of activities and relations by which our life and labour are daily reconstituted (Federici 2012: 5)'. As feminist re-readings of Marxist categories have shown, domestic work involves the reproduction of labour power (Federici 2012: 93-100) and corresponds to 'a sphere of relations of production' that is important for capital accumulation (Federici 2012: 97).

[57] A series of historical changes that differentiated and devalued social reproduction from the economy as women's work, naturalised the sexual division of labour and enabled the exploitation of women's daily unpaid reproductive labour for capital accumulation (Federici 2004). This involved 'a major attack on the social power of women (Federici 2019: 18)'. Marxist feminist thought in anthropology has stressed the role of the family and of the sexual division of labor in undermining women's social power and has focused on the link between women's unpaid household labor and the reproduction of labor force (Leacock 1978, Ortner 1974, Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974, Sacks 1979, Young et al 1981). While critical and feminist thought has been largely mobilized by 'what seems one pervasive and near universal fact of life: the apparently persistent misrecognition of women's work as somehow less than work (Strathern 1998a: 133)'. Such views that deny the social value of women's daily work are dominant in the literature of the history of labour in Greece, in which women's labour becomes significant only when is market mediated and waged (Avdela 2006).

In this respect, feminist Marxist scholars argue that a perspective with an emphasis on relations of production can be universally applied, more so in contexts of privatized property (Leacock 1978). While the concept of social reproduction, as Laslett and Brenner (1989) emphasize, allows historical and dynamic explanations that consider both agency and social structure. 'Recognizing social reproduction as a domain of necessary social labour, and gender as a fundamental dimension around which it is organized, focuses attention on how the work of social reproduction is distributed between women and men within the family and between the family and other institutions (Laslett and Brenner 1989: 400)'. This way we can approach how gender and the organisation of social reproduction are shaped by and shape political and economic institutions (Laslett and Bremmer 1989).

[57] The monetary value of the unwaged labour of women corresponds to 10.8 trillion dollars per year (Oxfam 2020). At the same time, women are the ones mostly harmed by inequality due to the economic system that places them at the most badly paid and precarious employments (Oxfam 2020) while 42% of women worldwide can't find work because of the huge load of unwaged labour that they must provide.

However as anthropological critique of the Marxist feminist approach has highlighted, anthropological accounts of local gender ideologies based on forms of kinship and gender relations must be considered (Moore 1988, Strathern 1998). Anthropologists working in Greece have shown that the devaluation of women's social reproductive work resides in local views and assumptions that link women with domestic work and that persisted the changes that took place with women's participation in the waged labor market (Cowan 1990, Hirschon 1989).

In this instance, social reproduction, attached as we will see to local articulations of motherhood and being a housewife, describes the way the three women responded to the economic downturn of their low-income families and suffered the overburdening of daily extra work. It is this intensification of domestic work that the women made visible and protested in the eventful neighborly discussions. Their experiences and stories of daily overwork refer to a series of austerity induced changes in the organization of social reproduction: the cooking, cleaning, shopping, mending, caring necessary for the upbringing of the children and for 'servicing the wage earners' physically and emotionally day after day (Federicci 2012: 31).

Pension, wage and social provisioning cuts and labour reforms under austerity caused the reduction of household income and significant changes in the organisation of social reproduction that burdened women's daily unwaged labour. Firstly, less income for household appliances and products while taxes and costs of living grew, signalled the increase of women's work in the home and extra efforts to improvise for securing daily reproduction. It signified that the women had to compensate with extra work, adjusting and regulating daily factors to optimise the life of all family members and address everyone's needs. While the sharp decrease of income and the depletion of savings required extra efforts and skills for economization, calculations and for controlling daily expenses. At the same time, economic problems cancelled the organisation of reproductive work on a commercial basis, such as buying meals in restaurants and fast foods, which added to the burden of domestic work. Meantime, the priority to secure survival postponed indefinitely entertainment activities and redirected to the women the responsibility of making and keeping the family happy.

Lastly, the inability to afford day care centres, and thus sending children to preschool, or economically support the care service for the elderly, burdened the daily household practices of women.

The changes in the organization of social reproduction under austerity that caused intensification of domestic work for low-income households generates precarious conditions for women. This form of precarity demands that women, as those responsible for social reproduction support, their families with more work and less income. At the same time, they must absorb chains of precarity in the family: the unemployment, overemployment and underpayment of family members amidst wage and social provisioning cuts. Thus, they shoulder the anxious and insecure situations of the households of their children through practices of care. Even though they experience precarity, they must struggle to support their families, recreate the everyday in nurturing practices and resist in this way the dehumanizing effects of austerity-induced precarity. Their experiences show that much of austerity implemented reforms rest on the presupposition that women will provide extra unpaid labor.

In conclusion, austerity changes aggravated the lives of women from working class-backgrounds. It seems that women like Mrs Keti, Mrs Maria and Mrs Roula, unskilled workers and pensioners, had to pay for the debt crisis as austerity attacks their everyday lives and relations. The intimate ways austerity is felt in the everyday express not only that household survival is a kinship-based strategy that demands female unwaged labour but also that the cost of debt repayment calls women to work harder against exhaustion and injury. Ms Keti's story of continuing to work after an injury, as well as Mrs Roula's experience of keep working with a broken wrist after tripping on a pavement, make obvious that experiences of precarity under austerity are not forms of endurance and resilience amidst a crisis, but causes of physical exhaustion that risk the women's health.

The hard effects of economic crises on women are greatly discussed in a wider context (Manganara 2014, Seguino 2009, UNICRI 2014, Walby 2009) and in the context of crisis

in Greece (Athanasiou 2011, Avdela 2011, Kambouri 2013, Karamessini 2013, Vaiou 2014). Austerity's cruel impact on women is engraved in reports that document the increase of domestic violence suffered by women in Greece (Davaki 2013, Svarna 2014). Research also shows the harming effects of austerity on women's employment position making the female employment in Greece the lowest and female unemployment the highest in European Union (Karamessini 2015). Pension cuts and labour reforms ordered by austerity that involved not only wage cuts but also the reduction of legal rights and protections, had a negative impact on low-income women (Karamessini 2013). Also, luck of employment opportunities and cuts to public sector jobs implemented under austerity greatly affected women in Greece due to the high concentration of women in public sector and precarious jobs (Karamessini 2015). As shown, austerity policies had a regressive impact on previous increase of labour market integration of women, but also narrowed gender gaps due to the negative impact on men's employment (Karamessini 2015). All in all, the politics of gender equality in Greece did not counterbalance the decline of women's status caused by austerity (Karamessini 2015).

Further research on the impact of austerity on eight European countries (including Greece) and USA from the perspective of feminist economics shows that austerity reforms posed significant downward consequences on gender inequality (Karamessini and Rubery 2015). Austerity reversed progressive developments on defamiliarization of care, as elder care and childcare developments have been put on hold, while the decrease of child benefits that support child raising, affected women as responsible for social reproduction (Karamessini and Ruggery 2015). While austerity implemented in countries of the South as structural adjustment programmes, has been linked to wars that followed and that had devastating effects for women, causing massive displacements and the phenomenon of 'global care' (Federici 2012, Hochschild 2000). This, as argued, produces cheap mobile labour power for a capitalist market in crisis, and proves that austerity is an intensification of capital exploitation and accumulation (Federici 2012).

Female solidarity

The study of the narratives and experiences of the three women raises important biopolitical questions, questions linked to the powers that organise life and that value 'whose lives matter (Butler 2015: 196)'. Such questions stress the unequal distribution of precarity as a political situation of inequality (Butler 2004). In this case, they refer to the unequal social conditions exacerbated by austerity and depicted in the everyday struggles of the women to secure social reproduction and their protesting of the experienced precarity. They refer to the insecurity the women face for the future (Allison 2012), but also to the bodily exhaustion caused by the new reality of austerity (Berlant 2007). Biopolitical questions also describe the way social and political institutions of the state fail to restrain precarity and protect citizens, especially low-income women that struggle to support their families while facing extreme forms of material insecurity.

Yet, in the talk event during which the three women shared their daily experiences of precarity, they recognised the common states of embodied fatigue and vulnerability. This recognition shaped the intimacy between them and motivated their protesting of the unequal situation of precarity they experience. The gendered and affective forms of intimacy emergent in the female talk events arose amidst and against precarity. We see thus that intimacy depicts not solely an exercise of visibility of precarity but also a solidarity between them as they become aware that their personal experiences of overwork are common. This form of gender-based solidarity here happened and took shape in between the affective sharing of their stories. It was a felt transition amidst affective exchanges and expressed disappointment and indignation as they attended to each other's stories. And it brought them together against the individualization of their experiences that hides their needs and anguishes. Considering that the neoliberal rationality of austerity, as we saw in the previous chapter, is founded to a great extent on the responsibilization of citizens and the individualization of experienced precarity, such instances of social bonding are important.

These forms of solidarity remind us the consciousness raising groups that provided the political basis of the feminist movement and that operated in neighborhoods, working

places, kitchens, children's parks. These groups mobilized women to talk and reassess their experiences. Think for example Adrianne Rich's (1973:21) feminist poetics, such as a poem that describes women talking about their troubles in a kitchen:

She sits with one hand poised against her head, the
other turning an old ring to the light
for hours our talk has beaten
like rain against the screens
a sense of August and heat-lightning
I get up, go to make a tea, come back
we look at each other,
then she says (and this is what I live through
over and over)-she says: I do not know
if sex is an illusion

I do not know
who I was when I did those things
or who I said I was
or whether I willed to feel
what I had read about
or who in fact was there with me
or whether I knew, even then
that there was doubt about these things

As Vogler (2000: 79) suggests, 'it is time to think more about women's talk, especially about troubles talk, a kind of collective lament, the sort of talk one assumes beats "like rain against the screen"'. As she points out, what is important in female troubles talk for the participants, is not to find solutions to the problems discussed, but to immerse oneself into the conversation (Vogler 2000). This affective approach to the female troubles talks allows us to recognize a form of intimacy that is beyond 'an affair of the self', what she calls a 'depersonalizing intimacy' that describes a sort of intimacy that

allows one to 'to feel like the most personal things do not mark one off as unique (Vogler 2000: 81)'.

The coffee talk event explored here was such kind of female troubles talk described by Vogler (2010). There was no conclusion reached, the conversation did not arrive to any final answers. Nor did the women find solutions to their problems, but they did express their thoughts, doubts and feelings. These affective expressions shaped a kind of depersonalizing intimacy that I consider here as a form of solidarity. A gendered based solidarity as an openness and as a collective understanding of precarious experience during austerity crisis. This solidarity was enfolded in language in the articulation of a plural subject: 'we feel the crisis on our skin' ('*ti niothoume tin krisi sto petsi mas'*), Mrs Maria declared, and the other two women agreed. It seems to me that the skin evoked not only the way austerity crisis is inscribed in the senses or the symbolic, material and affective nods of precarity. It also voiced an acknowledgement of collectively inhabiting precarity. Skin emerged as a collaborative development of the common materiality and affectivity of their experiences of precarity and as the dimension of the solidarity between them against precarity.

The emergent solidarity is relational, as it springs from fields of affective interaction and recognition amidst resonating patterns of individual experiences. It is important to note that it is not grounded on a recognized feminist perspective. Each of the three women has rejected feminism in our discussions again and again. Such a rejection, as Psara (2010) has argued, points to women's attempts to secure a, difficulty achieved in the past, presence in the public sphere. There is though in the center of the city a feminist-based group called 'women's center'-'*Steki ginekon'*- created during the austerity crisis under the motto 'no woman alone in the crisis'. I am familiar with the solidarity initiative as I taught English classes for beginners there to young women who sought to develop their English language skills in order to increase employment opportunities, as well as to older women who sought to overcome language barriers in their communication with other feminist and labour based struggles around the world, or to fulfil long-time nurtured aspirations of learning the language. This solidarity space was based on leftist feminist politics but attempted to remain

ideologically open and create an open community of care for women of various class, age and ethnic backgrounds. In this solidarity group, which retained many characteristics of the solidarity movement developed during the crisis and widely discussed in the seventh chapter, precarity provided the basis for potential empowerment and for turning insecurity into issues of pride and self-determination. Women gathered at the '*steki ginekon'* to talk or celebrate important occasions, they organised events, legal, psychological and material support and hosted other struggles of women from around the world.

The solidarity initiative and the solidarity that emerged in the eventful female talks are not free of conflicts. In the initiative I observed many times differences between the women participants. Similarly, in the coffee talk event I witnessed tensions when Mrs Keti left for five minutes to check on her sick mother next door. In her absence, Mrs Maria and Ms Roula stressed to me that she receives part of her mother's pension, and 'that is why' she can provide important financial support to her children. I do not consider here these comments as acts of gossiping but attempts to stress significant differences in the emergent solidarity between them. For example, Mrs Roula's life depends on a fragile network of neighbours and the risky petty trade, while Mrs Maria's life is less insecure, as she receives a pension and depends on her sister's enterprise for extra cash. Mrs Keti's economic status is relatively better since she also receives a pension and part of her mother's pension in return for the care she provides. I also assume that my presence as a researcher played a big part in expressing these comments. One thing is for sure, that they made evident that the articulation of the 'we' I experienced earlier, with all its affective force, entailed important differences based on income and assistance received in managing households, differences that the women however tried to express and negotiate.

Complicity

The forms of gendered intimacy and solidarity that arose in the context of the affective narrations and claims to self-sacrifice convey a discontent with familial obligations. As the three women lamented overwork and expressed indignation with the extra work

demanded on them, they communicated their disappointment with family. Not with their children who struggled with various forms of precarity but with the family as a field of investment (Ahmed 2010), that demanded too much of them. Their protesting narratives demonstrated a refusal to silence their anger and to quietly "get along" with family obligations (Ahmed 2010). But we much see these manifestations of indignation in relation to other instances in the daily lives of the three women.

As I followed the lives of the three women and interviewed them about certain aspects of their everyday experiences, I came to realize how much they valued the two notions of housewife -'*nikokira'*- and motherhood. These notions defined their actions, views and values in many instances of my observation of their lives. They commented often on how good other women, relatives, friends and neighbors performed these notions and they sought themselves to be recognised in public as good housewives-*nikokires*- and mothers. And while they encouraged me, at the time an unmarried 38-year-old woman, to 'enjoy freedom and independence', they never doubted that I should be a good *nikokira* and mother eventually. On the contrary, on many occasions they wished me a 'good settlement' - '*apokatastasi'*-: a husband, kids and a *nikokirio*.

Mrs Keti, Mrs Roula and Mrs Maria and most of their female neighbors-friends and family members, greatly value the notion of motherhood. In tandem with the ethics of motherhood of a post-war generation of women in Greece, their motherly relations and practices are defined by 'a moral relationship of service' (Paxson 2004: 95) linked to local dominant ideas of altruistic 'maternal love' and 'maternal sacrifice' (Doumanis 1983, Paxson 2004). These ideas of motherhood are imbued with Christian beliefs and identifications with the image of Virgin Mary as a devoted mother, with whom they share the pain they experience as mothers (Du Boulay 1979, Dubish 1991, 1998, Rushton 1998). But the notion of motherhood is entwined with the notion of *nikokira*; being a good mother implies being a good *nikokira*. And *nikokira* means caring for the family and successfully reproducing household in managing economy and order (Salamone and Stanton 1986, Dimen 1986, Dubish 1986). Parental and conjugal aspects of women's relations and practices include the model of housewife-*nikokira*- (Strathern 2016). While acting these notions is fundamental in the gendered way the

women are (Butler 1990). It defines the significations of woman, what being a woman means in relation to a man, and shapes the 'myth' of women, what women should be like and behave like (Strathern 2016).

The everyday enactment of these two notions is regarded as a moral accomplishment and a source of social status as it is evaluated by oneself and others (Salamone and Stanton 1986). The three women, like the majority of women in the neighborhood, evaluate each other on the basis of these ideas. By being and showing to be good housewives-*nikokires* and good mothers they show 'how good at being women and at being good women are (Paxson 2004: 18)'. Perhaps their claims to self-sacrifice encompassed also a strive to be recognized as such, based on moral appraisals. The two notions are so tied to their lives as intimate embodied forms of living and relating that define their daily narratives and experiences. Most importantly, they shape their aspirations and desires and daily investments for inclusion and social belonging. Being and evaluated as a good *nikokira* and mother one confirms belonging and status in the community of the neighbourhood but also of the nation state. As we saw in the second chapter, the everyday language of kinship, such as core ideas of *nikokira* and mother, and the symbolic and normative universes they entail, sustain and are sustained by the representations and essentialisms of national ideologies (Herzfeld 2005).

Key in women's investments in collective belonging through performances of *nikokira* and housewife is the conjugal household based on heterosexuality and marriage, the *nikokirio* (Papataxiarchis 2013). The *nikokirio* as shown, is an institution that shapes gender ideologies and identities (Papataxiarchis 2013). Daily performances of *nikokira* and mother involve the reproduction of powerful gender discourses; a series of symbols, values, norms, roles and identities, the contexts of which are social institutions and cultural practices linked to the *nikokirio* (Cowan 1991, Dubish 1986, 1991, Loizos and Papataxiarchis 1991, Papataxiarchis 2013).

For example, the *nikokirio* provides the symbols of nationalism in popular culture, law and economy and defines modes of national belonging (Berlant and Warner 2000, Herzfeld 2005, Povinelli 2000, Stoler 2002). It shapes and regulates gender (Loizos and

Papataxiarchis 1991, Papataxiarchis 2013), and produces class, gender and nationalist based inequalities and exclusions for those that do not follow the links it sustains between dominant ideas about marriage, sexuality, class, gender, nationality (Berlant and Warner 2000, Povinelli 2000, Stoler 2002). The *nikokirio* is an 'institution of intimacy' and represents what Berlant and Warner (2000) call an ideal privatized realm of 'good life' in which principles of state social justice are replaced by an 'ethics of responsibility'. It involves as they explain, relations of 'normal intimacy' that operate in heteronormative ways, as a 'sense of rightness' that produces inequality even amidst 'straight society' (Berlant and Warner 2000). The *nikokirio* and linked dominant notions of motherhood and *nikokira,* constitute thus normative institutions and shape often relations of inequality and exclusion.

The gender normativity and inequalities of the *nikokirio* are naturalized through the link the *nikokirio* constructs between nation and kinship, as anthropologists have shown (Strathern 1992, Yanagisako and Delaney 1995). In the anthropology of Greece, emphasis has been given to the way nationalism draws from kinship and kinship generates and supports ideologies of nationalism (Herzfeld 1992a, Sutton 1998). While much has been written on the cultural significance of motherhood and the history and biopolitics of the way it is connected to national ideology (Agelopoulos 2005, Athanasiou 2003, 2014, Halkia 2004, Kantsa 2013, Karakasidou 1997). As local ethnographic accounts portray, motherhood is seen as a duty to God, the family and the nation (Georgiadi 2013), as a social obligation (Athanasiou 2003), while the nation constructs and claims the gendered female reproductive body as national wealth (Agelopoulos 2005, Athanasiou 2014, Halkia 2004, Karakasidou 1997). The women as responsible for the *nikokirio* are by extension considered responsible for the national order (Du Boulay 1979). This way women are linked to the reproduction of the nation and motherhood is valorized as women's contribution to the community. This patriotic aspect of motherhood is embraced by both left and right political spectrums and was reaffirmed with women's participation in the resistance during the civil war (Kotouza 2019: 25). While the temporary right to vote given to women in 1944 was based on the idea of patriotic motherhood (Kotouza 2019: 25).

As shown during periods of crisis, such as the crisis in the Balkans or conflicts over the Macedonia name, or during periods immigrants are seen as a threat or what was named as a 'demographic problem', the constructed link between motherhood and national ideology is strengthened (Athanasiou 2013, Papataxiarchis 2013). During the present crisis, a central framing narrative has been constructed on 'national intimacy' amidst and against the crisis that dominated state politics, emphasizing a national body in danger and responsible for indebtedness (Athanasiou 2012). The rhetoric of national intimacy is closely linked to the dominant model of *nikokirio* and the gendered identities of *nikokiris* (man of the household) and *nikokira* housewife and mother (Athanasiou 2012). But what is important, as we saw in the third chapter, is that the creation of national intimacy was accompanied by 'ethnopatriarchal mechanisms' based on the exclusionary cultures of patriarchy and ethnonationalism (Athanasiou 2012).

Such 'ethnopatriarchal mechanisms' were in place in police operations, such as the 2012 mass arrests of sex workers in Athens, their forced examination for HIV and their public castigation under what has been declared by the government 'a threat to the Greek family' (Athanasiou 2012, Kotouza 2019). The minister of health at the time, stated that the HIV is transmitted 'between the illegal immigrant to the Greek customer, to the Greek family' (Athanasiou 2012: 31). We must also consider the violent arrests of trans women in Thessaloniki in 2013 (Galanou 2013) and the mass anti-immigration street arrests ordered by the previous government (ND) and aided by vigilantes GD members (Dalakoglou 2013). While recorded reports of increasing homophobic violence accompanied homophobic policies endorsed by the ND government during the crisis (To Vima 2014b, The Guardian 2014). These modes of governing the crisis through the marginalisation and policing of bodies constructed as a threat to the patriarchal family and to what was reductively portrayed as the "Greek *nikokirio"* (Athanasiou 2012), emphasize the *nikokirio* as an ethno-homogenous and heteronormative domestic family unit and key aspect of national/normal intimacy against the crisis.

Yet, we must see these modes of governing during the crisis in relation to instances in daily life that activate and sustain certain stereotypes linked to gendered ideas of the *nikokirio*. For example, instances when Mrs Roula, Mrs Maria and Mrs Keti express the stereotype of the 'irresponsible' and 'promiscuous' woman when discussing about other female neighbours, commenting that the latter spend more time outdoors and less in the household. Besides the association of such stereotypes with a series of emotional elements, the history of their (re)production depends on the normative gendered discourses linked to the dominant model of the *nikokirio*. In this case, the stereotype articulated often by the three women, derives its force from dominant significations of *nikokira* and motherhood. It cannot be reduced to the activity of neighbourhood gossip but must be seen in terms of the gender ideologies it reanimates and the categorising and marginalising effects on its subjects. This reanimation is linked to the sexist trope of female promiscuity and a constructed binary opposition between an "irresponsible" woman and a "good mother and *nikokira*" that create forms of gender otherness and estrangement in the daily social life of the neighbourhood. We see thus that the notions of *nikokira* and motherhood anchor investments and identifications and shape gendered identities, performances and stereotypes which seem to promise belonging but generate also ongoing modes of exclusion. They do so by providing representations that translate attitudes and practices in ways that renew gender ideologies and categories that make inequalities possible.

The cultural recognition of a woman thus as a mother and *nikokira* is a way of affirming inclusion in the community (the neighbourhood, the nation) but it is entangled at the same time with certain stereotypes that can move into and through the regeneration of exclusionary forms. The issue thus here is how routinely exclusionary and affectively violent attachments to dominant significations of intimate notions, such as *nikokira* and motherhood, can become? Could we draw a strong connection between the discussed forms of stereotyping and stigmatising linked to such notions with the uneven precarity that builds up amidst the crisis and that is shaped by unequal structures of sexism, racism, homophobia and transphobia (Athanasiou 2012, Kotouza 2019)?

In contrast to such instances of experience that seem complicit with exclusionary mechanisms, ethnographic accounts of the crisis in the provincial town of Xanthi, show that gendered identities of *nikokira* and mother organise counter-actions to exclusions and inequalities created by austerity (Bakalaki-Douzina 2017). Specifically, they mobilise embodied knowledge and techniques of many women that volunteer in a church soup kitchen and prepare food for impoverished citizens (Bakalaki-Douzina 2017). *Nikokira* and motherhood become dimensions of 'civic responsibility' as they inspire 'modalities of engagement' with the crisis (Bakalaki-Douzina-2017). Indeed, as we saw in the first part of this chapter, the effects of the austerity programmes would have been far more disastrous if it weren't for the daily struggles of women to support their families as mothers and *nikokires*. The great moral value attached to these two interlinked gender identities motivate the strategies and practices of support through which the women secure the survival of their families. In the case of Mrs Roula, they enable her to develop strategies to make a small unofficial income. The sweet products she makes at her home and sells around the neighbourhood, such as the spoon sweets, liquor and marmalades associated with female undertakings and exchanges, are considered 'an emblem of the housewife's ability and skill', as Cowan (1998: 66) has pointed out on her ethnographic explorations of gendered hierarchies in a small town in northern Greece.

It is also true that the eventful solidarities we examined in female neighbourhood talk emerge out of the background activities of the women as housewives-*nikokires* and mothers. They are not fully determined by them but grounded in them. They depict however, novel forms of gender-based intimacy as affective emergence that carries subversive potentials in demonstrating and protesting the gendered inequalities and forms of precarity that go unnoticed during the crisis. These eventful expressions give a new twist to the intimate gender notions of *nikokira* and motherhood. Yet, it seems that the potential to disrupt invisibility and the uneven forms of precarity is captured by the exclusionary aspects of embodied continuities represented in these notions. By the exclusions produced in daily investments and identifications with the dominant meanings of *nikokira* and mother and the marginalisation of other women as "unruly" housewives and mothers, queers, unmarried and so on. This complicates things, as the

emergence of female intimacy and solidarity cannot be isolated by the embodied continuities complicit with structures of inequality that shape the uneven distribution of precarity during austerity. Emergence and continuity are therefore not opposites, but phases of what Herzfeld (2005) calls cultural intimacy, a shared realm of sociality that encompasses continuities and disruptions and defines belonging through the reproduction and disruption of essentializations and stereotypes (Herlzfeld 2005).

It is important to stress here that the distinct phases of cultural intimacy, gendered-based intimacy as emergence and embodied continuity, are reciprocally implicated with the demands of austerity and the cultures it produces that value traditional family values based on the heterosexual family and its ability to deal with difficulties, combined with the neoliberal ideas of personal choice and self-responsibility (Jensen 2013). Central here is the figure of the housewife that must make the right choices and invent ways to survive with spending less or nothing (Jensen 2013). Hence, intimacy as affective emergence and as embodied continuity is re-activated by the cultures of austerity that place uneven responsibility on citizens and justify the retreat of the social state (Jensen 2013).

National intimacy: sacrifice and patriotism

Going back to the question of sacrifice again we can now examine how it links with the cultures of austerity as these are articulated by national government institutions, and with the construction of a national intimacy, a unified national political body amidst and against the crisis. Sacrifice is key in producing what we named cultures of austerity characterized by a shift of responsibility from the state towards its citizens and particularly towards to traditional models of family domestic units. As it will be shown with concrete examples, the national political rhetoric of austerity employs the language of sacrifice ideologically to gain support for the implementation of policies of austerity. Citizens are called to make necessary sacrifices to secure the domestic and defend the nation state. This aspect invites us to attend to these calls for sacrifice aiming at securing support of austerity reforms and building a national intimacy during and against the crisis. Sacrifice here entails moral, disciplinary and national discourses

and describes the intimate operations of institutional powers during austerity. The way responsibilities and identifications with a constructed national intimacy are affectively and morally cultivated.

In what follows we can see examples of how the language of sacrifice was formulated within the Greek parliament by governments and shadow cabinets during austerity. The first call for sacrifice was made in 2010 in the announcements of the prime minister two months before he signed the first package of austerity measures: 'Greece won't go bankrupt', he said and 'sacrifices will be effectual, and we will return to development'.[58] Later in 2014, the prime minister at the time announced that 'the sacrifices of the people are effective' shortly after reaching an agreement with the troika of the Financial Institutions that managed austerity.[59] While in January 2018 the next prime minister addressed the Greek Parliament, just after the troika approved new austerity measures, and argued that Greece was approaching the final stages of the austerity program, saying that: 'this gives hope and courage to millions of our citizens, who all these years have made large sacrifices and now finally see light and a way out'.[60] There have been many more government and opposition announcements build on the rhetoric of sacrifice. For example, in 2011 the president of the main opposition claimed that 'the austerity measures aren't working; the sacrifices that are being made aren't paying off'.[61]

The ideological framework shaped by the above statements translates austerity as a necessary period of cruel but indispensable acts of sacrifice for the country in order to overcome the debt crisis. What in turn attempts to legitimise the introduced reforms and the negative impact these have on citizens' lives. In this sense, the state discourse of sacrifice signals what Athanasiou (2012) calls a 'political theology' that attempts to authorize and justify the suspension of fundamental rights and 'discipline the body politic' into "good citizens" that sacrifice wishes and needs for the national good (Athanasiou 2012). While the sacrifices of citizens are evaluated according to market

[58] The prime minister Papandreou at the time, was elected with *PASOK* (To Vima 2010).
[59] The prime minister Samaras at the time, was elected with the ND '*New Democracy*', (ekathimerini 2013a)
[60] The current prime minister Tsipras, was elected with *SYRIZA* (Ney York Times 2018)
[61] The Guardian 2011

estimates. For example, in May 2014, the minister of Finance announced that 'the sacrifices of the people are effective' and 'recognized globally', after the rating agency Fitch upgraded Greece's credit.[62] We can see thus how sacrifices demanded for fiscal outcomes are framed as 'patriotic acts' and 'ideas of common good' are shaped by credit rating agencies (Douzinas 2014).

These nationalized discourses of sacrifice thus, constitute an intrinsic part of frames of crisis and austerity. They involve a national intimacy constructed around necessary sacrificial practices to take the nation out of the crisis. But they also make evident the biopolitics of austerity and the governmentality of the crisis, the management of lives and bodies according to regimes of indebtedness (Athanasiou 2012). The assessment of lives worthy of protection and of lives that matter less, as not all citizens in Greece were called to make sacrifices during austerity and not in the same way (Athanasiou 2012, Dalakoglou et al 2018, Karamessini 2015).

Conclusion

This chapter examined emergent forms of gendered based intimacy brewing in daily interactions in an urban neighborhood greatly hit by austerity. I focused on a kitchen meeting between three female neighbors and myself. I chose to focus on this eventful encounter as an instance of a female troubles talk that develops unexpectedly when women meet in the neighborhood and share the difficulties they face under austerity. Central in the talk was the women's narratives of experienced physical exhaustion as a result of being overburdened with unpaid daily housework provided to the family, emphasized in their claims of self-sacrifice. As we saw, austerity negatively affects the lives of the three women and changes the organization of social reproduction. The severe family household income reduction and distinct forms of precarious employment that they and their families experience means that they, as those responsible for social reproduction, overwork and shoulder anxiety to secure survival and the well-being of the family. Their daily experiences provided concrete examples

[62] See Ta Nea (2014)

of the uneven and gendered distribution of the impact of austerity and how it shapes unequal forms of precarity. At the same time, we also saw how the women's daily practices of family support reshape family household boundaries and the dynamics of kinship amidst conflicts, co-operations and cross-pollinations of opinions across generational gaps.

Approaching the women's talk as an affective event allowed us to attend to the transitions and germinal stages that unfolded in the interface of body and language. This approach mapped the stakes of the intimacy that came into formation between the three women. Intimacy depicted an emergent property of sharing, bringing into the open and protesting silent and invisible sacrifices as forms of unequal precarity. It was characterized by an interruption created to the invisibilities of daily female unwaged labour (prior and during austerity) and to the limitations in recognising the gendered impact of austerity and its negative effect on the lives of low-income women (Avdela 2011, Vaiou 2014). In this sense, it made evident not only the strengthening of gender hierarchies but also the normalisation of gender during austerity (Athanasiou 2011, Avdela 2011).

This emergent intimacy, a kind of depersonalising intimacy in which the personal was thought in political terms, introduced a female solidarity between the three women against their experiences of precarity. A solidarity that emerged from and pertained to what was passing between the embodied and narrative exchanges and that played out as a critical reflection of experienced inequality. There were no feminist values as determining, as in the organization of a solidarity structure for women developed in Thessaloniki during the crisis, called center of women-*steki ginekon*. The emergent solidarity was not planned nor scheduled, it was an affective emergence, it arose and perished with the possibility of re-activation in the following unexpected female neighborly encounters (Massumi 2015).

On the other hand, seeing how central the language of sacrifice in ideological frames of austerity is, I am troubled by a question: what do the resonances between women's claims of sacrifice and government's rhetoric of sacrifice as national heroism tell us?

Government representatives managing the crisis have appealed to the rhetoric of sacrifice to legitimize the imposition and unequal effects of austerity policies, calling citizens to make sacrifices as heroic acts for the nation to overcome the sovereign debt crisis. Yet, women's claims to sacrifice unsettle such ideological frames of crisis and austerity by producing narratives of their cruel and unequal costs that weaken the hold of these frames on their consciousness. Their narrations expose affectively the inequality and violence through which the nation is secured during the crisis, disrupting the framing of crisis within a national intimacy discourse, a unified national body in crisis that must make sacrifices.

However, there is relay between the intimacy that emerges as a critical reflection of gendered experiences of inequality and the intimacy of women as an embodied continuity with local dominant significations linked to the notions of motherhood and housewife-*nikokira*, often complicit in sustaining oppression and social inequality. The two notions, important locus of identity and belonging for most women in the neighborhood, shape their investments and the background of activities from which expressions of intimacy as female solidarity and critical thought emerge between them in neighborly eventful encounters. In other instances of daily life, investments in these notions take the form of stereotypes directed to their female neighbors that reproduce gender significations complicit with the unequal structures they denounce.

The two notions of motherhood and housewife-*nikokira,* draw their significance from powerful discourses built around the dominant model of family household linked to heterosexuality and marriage, the *nikokirio*. The dominant model of *nikokirio*, a model that defines/disciplines gender and anchors ethnonationalist identity is, as shown, a key aspect of the construction of a national intimacy amidst an atmosphere of crisis that activates ethnopatriarchal mechanisms producing violent exclusions. We see therefore, how institutional structures of inequality, such as sexism, homophobia and racism operate from above as they resurface from below. In a situation of austerity, the continuities of the state with a national intimacy and the gendered continuities of *nikokira* and housewife are amplified and reinforced. The three women as we have seen, invest in, and strengthen attachments to, structures that oppress them as

austerity hits their daily lives and they readily settle into the identities of *nikokira* and mother as they struggle to secure the daily survival of their families. At the same time, this creates the conditions for the eventful intimacies and solidarities that emerge in unplanned meetings between women in the neighbourhood, which express critique and protest. The novel and eventful moments of intimacy as affective emergence and the embodied continuities of intimacy with dominant gender identities are mutually implicated, interlinked phases of the experience of austerity of women living in this low-income urban neighbourhood in northern Greece.

This complex crisscross of intimacy as an emergent relation of female solidarity against inequality and as embodied continuity complicit with systemic inequality introduces a set of questions. How can female neighbors support each other as austerity attacks the organization of social reproduction shifting responsibility onto overburdened grandmothers (and in other instances, onto mothers, daughters and sisters) while capital continues to make profit? How can the female solidarity that emerges when women meet unexpectedly in a low-income urban neighborhood and narrate their troubles become inclusive and sustained? Could a localized structure of female solidarity, such as the women's center-*steki ginekon*- operating in the city and bringing together similar experiences and different perspectives, provide the environment from which diverse expressions of solidarity can be acted out and maintained? Could they generate more collective empowering and inclusive experiences?

Fig. 3. Mrs Roula in her kitchen with packed lunch for her family.

Chapter Five: Return

Introduction

In this chapter we will see the production of experiences of precarity and some of the various forms it takes under current labor conditions. I will pay attention to how experiences of precarity are shaped and negotiated around understandings, experiences and discourses of modernity and family intimacy. The ethnography focuses once more on residents of the low-income area of Neapoli, though this time, I include young residents who have returned to live with their parents faced with extreme economic difficulties under austerity. We will see how intersecting lines of class and age structure precarity amidst present configurations of (precarious) labor during austerity in Greece.

The chapter provides a widow to see how austerity reforms impact on young people from working class backgrounds, generating conditions of extreme material precarity and insecurity for the future. I will highlight how the intensification of precarious labor regimes under austerity organizes—not solely labor—but household composition and the dynamics of family intimacy. A widely popular strategy for them is to return to the parental household, the *nikokirio*, and survive with the help of their parents while waiting, searching and hoping for a better future. This return burdens the daily unwaged labor of social reproduction produced by the mothers but minimizes the conditions of precarity for the young adults that return, as the household provides a temporal and material refugee and offers housing and food. However, concerning the experience of the young adults, it involves complex negotiations, conflicts and ambivalences. Although the return to parental household is mobilized by the uncompromised character of family intimacy, this is co-implicated with relations of authority and local engagements with neoliberal and modernity discourses.

In what follows, I provide an example of a young adult, Christina, who is 31 years old and returned to live at the parental household due to economic difficulties faced. It

begins with a meeting between me, Christina and her mother, Mrs Vicky, at their kitchen house. This case is given greater emphasis here, as it involves an indebted household that faces extreme economic difficulties and shows how the experience of return to parental household is entwined with multiple layers of precarity. It also provides us with a general image of the way indebted households are constructed and how a period of neoliberalization and financialization of economy that commenced before the onset of economic crisis, created the background of present experiences of austerity.

The construction of indebted household

Mrs Viki said she would call her husband, and she left the room cradling the phone on her shoulder. At once, Christina, got up from the kitchen chair and looked at me. She stood hesitating on the threshold of the door, and for a moment she wore a look of frustration. She voiced her irritation to me because her mother 'was overtaken once more by anger and the story of family bank debt'. She made sure that her mother was still on the phone and started talking to me about the previous night event we both attended, a fundraising gala dinner for the soup kitchen organized by the Municipality of Neapoli-Sykies where she worked as a cook and I volunteered at the time. Mounting in pleasure Christina told me that she stayed until five in the morning, dancing and drinking. When Mrs Viki entered the kitchen, she asked us whether we would like to serve us some food. She excused herself, looking at me, for having 'green peas, a poor man's meal'. 'Look how we ended up, all because of them (*kita pos mas katantisan*)', she exclaimed. Christina as if she had known all along what is going to follow, gave me a sidelong glance as if saying 'not again'. While Mrs Viki served us the food together with some local cheese pie -*bougatsa*- I had brought, she said to me that 'the banks and the state are the worst thieves'. Then she lighted a cigarette by the window and with a powerful and deep voice she exclaimed: 'it won't pass what they want'. Then she sat on the table and explained how a problem that almost drove her 'crazy' the previous days, was finally settled. 'It is as if the problems never end', she said, with a voice restrained by anguish. While Mrs Viki was telling me about the problem that upset her recently, that due to a bank's delay to provide validation of family debt she

almost missed a deadline for the district court, Christina retreated for a while to her room.

It is important to describe here the specific debt situation of the parental household of Christina. The household is under the 3869/2010 law for over-indebted households, known as *Katseli* Law (named after the former minister of Finance *Katseli*). The law introduced in 2010 is a kind of bankruptcy stature for people who could prove they could not repay their debts and protect, under certain criteria, the first residence against foreclosure. Its applicability increased during austerity, while on March 2017 the non-performing loans, the so called 'red loans' reached 49.1% of total loans.[63] The law concerns private indebtment (consumption and credit card debts and mortgages) and describes the rise of household debts during a period of growing financialization and accessibility to cheap credit and low interest rates after the adoption of Euro currency in 2002. The majority of household loans correspond to a period Greece's economy was showing signs of growth, as indicated in GDP rates, and represent consumption-led expansions and people's attempts to cover gaps generated by increased costs of living, employment precarity and unemployment rise (Vetta 2018, Placas 2011).[64] They reveal that while Greece was portraying a robust economy, regionally and globally "strong", with the climax of Olympic games in 2004, the rate of private debts was increasing.

The Katseli law is applied, under certain circumstances, to business loans as in Christina's parents' case who run a woodworking business from 1994 to 2011. Her mother unofficially organized orders and administration work, while her father, a cabinet maker, was designing and making wooden furniture. The family enterprise took the first loan in 2004 to support the business and then more loans followed, resulting into a spiral of debt. In 2011, a year after the first austerity package was implemented, the business closed under increasing accumulation of debt. While in 2012, a short period after the second austerity package, Christina's parents broke loan

[63] Bank of Greece 2014

[64] Between mid-1990s and mid-2000s Greece had one of the highest rates of economic growth in the European Union (Matsaganis and Leventi 2011)

repayments in order to finance increasing household expenses and their son's preparatory classes for University entry exams.[65] In 2014 the debts came under legal protection of *Katseli* law and was restructured and a monthly interest free re-payment was set, while they wait for a pending court verdict in 2021. In the meantime, to retain monthly household income below that set by the so called 'Reasonable Subsistence Costs' drawn by the Ministry of Finance (based on household surveys and data carried by the Greek Statistic Agency), and be able to support household expenses, Christina's father was doing 'off the book' jobs in remote villages and small towns in the nearby peninsula of Chalkidiki. While Mrs Viki was employed under different precarious short-term contract jobs, like all family members.

Based on her experience of managing the economy of both the family business and the household, Mrs Viki traced the spiral of debt back to 2002-euro switch when suddenly the costs of living increased (e.x. as she claims, 'within a day a bunch of parsley tripled from 50 drachmas to 50 cents (170.375 drachmas)'). But she also stressed the opening of IKEA in Thessaloniki in 2001, that along novel forms of marketing and consumption introduced, turned small family businesses dysfunctional (Herzfeld 2004). Small trades based more on a patronage system of relations, on networks of kinship and friendship and less on price competition, collapsed as they did not fit into the 'modern neoliberal economy' (Herzfeld 2004).[66] While the collapse of the local construction sector during austerity, that resulted in all attached professions losing business, stroke 'the final blow' to the family company.

This characteristic case of a small family business collapsing under the weight of debt depicts the continuities and changes between austerity and previous periods of neoliberal reforms and the embeddedness of local labor figurations and operations of finance capitalism in Greece, in certain sociocultural backgrounds. For example, Mrs

[65] In Greece it has become necessary to pay for private tuition to pass the University entry exams. This parallel education system (*frontistirio*) reproduces inequalities in the system of public University education. Students from low income families have limited possibilities to enter the University, while often low-income families invest all their economies to their children's class preparations for the University exams in an upward mobility strategy.

[66] This indicates a general shift from small business stores and producers, to retail chains and shopping malls that was strengthened during austerity, as an increasing number of small family owned operations faced with plunging profits and increased taxes, are closing.

Vicky has emphasized numerous times that the bank approved a business loan while she was the guarantor, an officially unemployed housewife. This makes evident, as she stressed, the way easy credit was given in the past and reveals the reckless profit-driven strategies of the banks.

'The never-ending problems with banks, this is what I experienced once more these last days', she said to me, while she was picking up the empty plates from the table. 'I remembered the constantly felt stress and a sense of having passed beyond my limits due to the threatening calls I received daily to repay debts', said referring to the period before the debts come under the legal protection of *Katseli* law. As she has explained to me the received calls from the debt collectors made her wish they take her house and leave her in peace. It was desperation presumably, as I found out that the house, a small two bedroom flat bought by her now diseased parents I assume as an unofficial form of a dowry, is highly significant to her. As she says, 'losing the house would mean betraying my parents'. The house has always hosted the family household (*nikokirio)* and embodies a realm of memories of family relations and children upbringing. The material life of the house and its symbolic significance shaped by the multiple connections between the house and its members and between its members (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995), was threatened by the destructive force of finance capitalism. While the history and continuity of its significance (Du Boulay 1979), important and valuable as it is for Christina and her family, made of stories of struggles and joys, depends on the future court settlement.

We see thus the double bind of the state during austerity; while it is held largely responsible for present misfortunes, it is at the same time the only rescue from financial emergency, as mediator between creditors and indebted households. Yet, young adults that face unemployment and various forms of precarious employment and deal with everyday impoverishment, like Christina, are taken care by the family and not by the state.

The return to the parental house

Christina returned to live at her parents' family household after not being able to keep up with bills and rent after months of unpaid salaries from the municipal soup kitchen she was working, a precarious employment under short term contracts renewed every six months. The return, from a small studio she rented to the parental household, was a survival strategy that offered her a temporal financial relief, and that even allowed her 'to regain her social life back and be able to enjoy a coffee and a drink with friends', as she described. In the beginning, the shelter and food provided by her mother enabled her to partly recover from experienced economic and affective strains and brought her to a position with less stressors. Yet, she continued to face job insecurity and long periods of unpaid salaries.

At the family household she was sharing a room with her younger brother who was studying at the University while working at a central bakery and receiving half of the tax and national insurance contributions for the hours worked. As Christina stressed to me, sharing a bedroom with her brother, although is familiar to her as they never had the luxury of another option when growing up, was difficult to make it work. Although the siblings shared common experiences of job insecurity and were caring between them, rivalries and fights often took place in the daily routine of sharing a room. But Christina mostly quarreled with her mother. She criticized her mother for the way she was dealing with the indebted household situation and believed that her mother 'had lost a sense of proportion of what is mostly important in life'. 'Instead of prioritizing health, she is consumed by anger and never stops talking about the debt and the Memorandum (austerity) situation', she complained often about her mother. She felt she could not 'listen to the same things over and over again, debt, crisis, Memorandums (austerity)', and thus she was trying to find ways out of debt and experienced crisis by spending most of her time outside the house. Thus, a while after the return, Christina felt frustrated, spent much time outside the house and longed to move out.

Christina's return to parental household was enmeshed in gender- and generation-based conflicts. These were implicated of course with the financial ruins of household

debt, with what Navaro-Yashin (2009) calls 'ruinations', the affects and materiality residing in space after trauma and disaster. Debt ruinations lingered in the daily life of the household shaping the affective exchanges and discussions between its members and the forms family intimacy took in the everyday. They re-composed in affective atmospheres unfolding and in household material objects, such as the furniture -the beds, sofas, tables in the flat made by Christina's father, traces left behind after the business closure.

Just before the end of my fieldwork, Christina quit her job at the municipal soup kitchen that was at the time in a process of reform with definite dismissals of staff pending. She started working as a cook in the seasonal touristic period at a Greek island. Her wish/need to move out of the parental household, as much as to avoid competing with her co-workers, some of whom were single mothers, and a growing tourist industry in Greece amidst the crisis became the catalysts of Christina's novel temporal job. The money saved from the summer island job period permitted her to rent while working part-time jobs available during the winter, till the following tourist season. This unstable and physically exhausting cycle of employment, punctuated by the increase of inbound tourism and the internationalization of tourism during the austerity crisis, was the only way through which Christina could regain independence from the parental household. The conflicting pressures she experienced and the desire to live independently of her parents made the irregular tourist seasonal job necessary.

There are many more other instances of young adults returning to live with parents during austerity. Although they might not have returned to an indebted household, they returned to a family household that faced various forms of precarity under wages and pension cuts, and they also faced precarious employment and experienced the return in conflicting ways. For example, Giannis, a research participant with whom I became friends and with who I collaborated in various actions supporting refugees arriving in Thessaloniki at the time, had also returned to the parental household. Thirty-two years old and having lived for a long time independently from his parents, Giannis saw this as a 'desperate strategy' after losing his business accountant job at a small accounting firm. When the company lost most of its customers, small retailers

and merchants, Giannis was dismissed from the job. After a long period of job hunting and unemployment he moved to his parents' house. At the time I met him, he was working part time at an industry located around ten miles away from Thessaloniki, earning just enough to be able to cover personal care and transportation expenses. While his long-term girlfriend also got fired from teaching at a private school because it lost most of its customers and their plans to marry were suspended.

Giannis also experienced conflicts linked to household intergenerational relations and authority and he tried to spend much time outside the house. For example, he often quarreled with his father because the later asked Giannis to accompany him in his ritual habit of drinking *tsipouro*-a strong local spirit- and eating smoked fish before lunch. Giannis at times was working from home and could not, and perhaps did not wish to, accompany his father in this masculine before lunch ritual, something that his father perceived as a rejection of a father-son bonding invitation. For many more reasons linked to generation and gender conflict and household authority, Giannis quarreled with his parents, but he navigated with humor, as he claimed, conflicts and disagreements.

Willing to avoid household tensions and spend time outside the house, he got involved in a political fraction affiliated with SYRIZA and participated in the municipal elections. Only to quit when the coalition government of SYRIZA and ANEL introduced further austerity, after the no vote in the public referendum of July 2015. Giannis participated also at a neighborhood autonomous initiative of solidarity, discussed in the seventh chapter, that provided support to people in need in the neighborhood and to refugees living at the newly built camps around the city or in houses in the municipal area of Neapoli-Sykies. We worked often together in refugee camps, organizing, preparing and offering tea and coffee preparation and distributing clothes in refugee camps. Giannis attended with loyalty the weekly assemblies of the neighborhood initiative in between his work and the Arabic language classes he was taking to communicate better and strengthen friendships built with Syrian refugees residing in the camps and in the area. It was his 'way out' of parental household conflicts and 'a way to extend the hours' he spent outside the house, as he said. He believed that most of extra-

domestic activities he undertook the couple of years he was living with his parents constituted the 'positive' outcome of the return.

Christina who shared the same urge to spend time out of the parental house and escape family tensions, became a loyal member of an association of local traditional dancing. She spent most of her free time performing, rehearsing and teaching dancing. She dressed in folklore costumes and performed in various events in Thessaloniki and around Greece, getting the opportunity this way to travel. The folklore costumes and dances provided the symbols to Christina to identify with a Greek Macedonia identity. During the 2018 negotiations for an agreement to resolve the conflict over the Macedonia name, she took part in protests in Thessaloniki against the use of the name Macedonia by the Republic of Macedonia. In accordance, she tattooed the Vergina sun, the symbol of the dispute between the Republic of Macedonia and Greece, on her hand.[67]

Christina met also often with her friends to sing and dance popular Greek songs (*laika*), known for lyrics of intense emotions of pain and burning desire (*kapsoura*) (Cowan, 1990, Kirtsoglou 2004). Songs of desire and pain *(kapsourotragouda)* became for her a medium to express her frustration and conflict experienced and dance her 'way out' of troubles. The performative aspects of dancing allowed her to transcend social limits and expectations (Cowan 1990, Kirtsoglou 2004) and escape feelings of insecurity linked to her precarious situation and to family indebtedness.

[67] Since the 1991 declaration of Macedonia as an independent state, the Greek state has refused to accept the employment of the name Macedonia. Most Thessalonians have passionately resisted the recognition of the name. Recent negotiations between the Greek government and the Macedonian government over a compound name resulted in the mutual acceptance of North Macedonia that recognises the Greek region of South Macedonia. The protests triggered against the agreement in Thessaloniki involved Macedonian flags, anthems, and repeated calls that "Macedonia is Greek" by the many people, amongst them many research participants, gathered at the White tower, a city's emblematic structure. The protests resulted in the vandalization by far-right groups of a holocaust monument and the burning of an occupied building that operated as a social centre and provided housing. The mayor of Thessaloniki, who supported the agreement was also attacked physically by far-right groups, while attending an event commemorating the Black Sea Greeks victims by the Turks in the First World War.

Both Christina and Giannis were seeking an ordinary life amidst the everyday crisis they experienced, and the parental household offered, though to an extend and under certain conditions and conflicts, a somewhat economic and affective stability. The yearning for something 'ordinary' and away from household drew Christina and Giannis to activities that could provide an emotional, political and creative reward and that could deliver what Berlant (2007:282) calls, an 'experience of unconflictedness and belonging' amidst the harsh realities of austerity capitalism. They organized their lives 'bargaining against defeat by the capitalist destruction of life (Berlant 2007: 282)', and this way, they were trying to generate their own cartographies of hope against austerity crisis, while searching for a life that could give a promise for the future.

There are many more similar cases of young adults who returned to parents' house under experiences of daily crisis of survival during austerity. Considering the limits set by time and geographical frames of fieldwork, I focused on three more cases; Anna who also works at the municipality's soup kitchen that moved back to her mother's rented flat, sharing a room with her daughter and sister, Katerina who lives between touristic seasonal jobs in Santorini island and the parental household in Thessaloniki, where she shares a room with her younger sister, and Kostas who moved to live with his father, taking responsibility of domestic work while working part time from home. Although each case emerged out of different situations and brought together different aspects of experienced precarity, they all depict young adults struggling to secure a livelihood amidst a survival and an employment crisis.

Precarious employment

In all the above cases, young adults moving back into their parents' home to live on their parents' income, face widespread unemployment and underemployment. They must navigate a dismal labor market after seven years of austerity in Greece and deal with employers who take advantage of the flexible labor relations to impose irregular working conditions. They often seek to increase job skills to accommodate to different jobs available as they switch from one short term contract to another or participate in the voucher training system introduced in 2014, that claims to combine training with

job experience and skills acquired, as a form of an internship with companies. This constant state of job insecurity and instability combined with increased costs of living generates a crisis of survival. Hence, a critical aspect of the daily crisis they experience is precarious employment, which seems to be the only option available in a situation that even having a precarious job is better than not having one.

What I mean by precarious labor here is 'employment that is uncertain, unpredictable, and risky from the point of view of the worker (Kalleberg 2009: 2)'. This term was used by most of the young adults, whose experiences and perceptions shape the content of this ethnographic analysis. In general in Thessaloniki, precarity has been an organizing political basis since 2006 that firstly appeared in the so called 'group for precarity'-'*omada gia tin episfalia'* and became visible in May Day protests and in public texts translated from the Italian Autonomia in a journal called Blackout and linked to the occupied social center Yfanet. The claims to precarity were rooted in the insecure working conditions many young people and students experienced at the time and represented a collective response by a classed generation that felt as a marginalized sector of the workforce. The politics of precarity were reactivated in the movements organized against austerity and were articulated in autonomous political groups organized around neighborhood life and everyday social reproduction, such as the neighborhood assemblies that were formed after the movement of the squares ('the indignants-*aganaktismeni'*). But precarity is also employed in the political struggles of autonomous labor collectives, such as the 'Association of Waiting cook staff', that organize legal actions and protests in support of workers' rights. Some of the young adults who participated in this research have taken part in organized local struggles against precarious labor and in collective responses against instances of mass layoffs.

Precarious labor depicts a cruel reality for an increasing number of people today in the context of neoliberal transformations documented in ethnographic accounts from distinct places from around the world (Cross 2010, Han 2012, Millar 2014, O'Neill 2014). Precarity has become synonymous with neoliberilization, the retreat of the welfare state and the deregulation of the labor market that regularizes exploitation

through precarious labor (Molé 2010, Ong 2006). Bourdieu's (1998) notion of précarité embodies the social concerns of this reality of contingency, insecurity, risk and uncertainty, characteristic of the neoliberal turn.

In Greece, like in other countries in Europe the great significance of precarity was shaped by the social state models in the face of neoliberal labor reforms (Neilson and Rossiter 2008). It marked the shift from a period of regular jobs with stable wages and secure benefits to forms of irregular, discontinuous and temporal labor and the increasing fragmentation of employment experience during past and present periods of neoliberal reforms of economy. In this context the view of precarity as a novel labor condition enabled common articulations between social movements, left political parties and trade unions (Neilson and Rossiter 2008).

In the first place we must not forget though, that the phenomenon of precarious employment has acquired significance in relation to the Keynesian and Fordist models of labor, although it has been the norm of labor markets rather than the exception to a Fordist norm. As many woks focusing on distinct places and historical moments in the global South describe, precarious labor is far from an exception (Das and Randeria 2015, Hewison and Kaleberg 2012, Millar 2014, Sanchez 2018, Schierup and Jorgensen 2016). But as also shown, precarity has been always a core experience for some people, such as women, immigrants and working classes, in the global North (Avdela 2009, Betti 2016, Lawrence 2005, Federici 2008, van der Linden 2014). While seen from a wider perspective, precarity constitutes a core experience of dependency of workers on wage under capitalism and thus it is the necessary condition for capitalism (Barchiesi 2012, Denning 2008).

The issue of precarious labor in Greece has acquired significance through various events, such as the 2008 attack with sulfuric acid on Kouneva, a trade unionist who was struggling for the rights and improvement of working conditions of cleaning staff in Athens (Avdela 2009). The importance of precarity in labor struggles in Greece depicts against the post-Fordist approach, how conditions of precarious labor which have always been part of the waged and unwaged labor of women and migrants, had

been extended to other sectors (Avdela 2009, Lawrence 2005). Especially under austerity, precarity has become a prevalent term in labor movements as it affects an ever-wider population and captures the increasing discontent and insecurity among a range of groups (Avdela 2009, Seymour 2012).

The current proliferation of temporary, irregular, informal and causal jobs, unpaid work, internship employment, subcontracting, and the normalization of layoffs and involuntary terminations of employment as basic restructuring strategies of reducing labor costs and increasing profit, demonstrate the extension and regularization of previous forms of irregular labor under austerity. This is a global phenomenon and linked to reforms imposed by International Financial Institutions, as for example shown in the increase of precarious employment with the reforms applied in many Arab countries in the 1980s (Lee and Kofman 2012). At the same time, employment schemes introduced in Greece to respond to the problems created by austerity and slow down unemployment, were 'temporary defensive' (Karamesini 2016), while as Christina's case also describes, waged work often involved long periods of unpaid salaries.

What is most important here is that labor precarity is greatly affecting young adults during austerity, diminishing employment prospects, lowering wages, and intensifying what critical sociological accounts analyze as 'generational precarity' (Means 2015). This corresponds to young people's ever-growing experience of struggling with economic insecurity today and is inextricably linked to class and 'the contradictory role of employment within an increasingly crisis-ridden global capitalism (Means 2015: 340)'. It makes evident the failures of global capitalism and of societies to provide meaningful solutions, support and alternatives to a generation that faces uncertainty and hardship (Means 2015). The issue as pointed out, is not 'an educational problem' nor of state policies, but the deep structural hierarchies that are creating 'surplus populations' of young workers that face degraded livelihoods under global capitalism (Means 2015).[68]

[68]As Means (2015) argues, neoliberal narratives based on human capital that portray generational precarity as 'educational problem' are ideological constructs that perpetuate and legitimize social hierarchies (Means 2015).

Social Precarity

Hence, precarious labor regimes defined the lives of young adults discussed here, as they were subjected to unemployment, short term contracts and unstable forms of labor, low-wage jobs, a risk of losing employment and luck of alternative employment opportunities. The problem of irregular employment seemed to overlap with affective states of social estrangement (Alisson 2012). Feeling 'isolated' and 'in desperation' under economic strain were prevailing feelings of all participants. For instance, Giannis explained to me once when looking introspectively back to the period he was renting a flat while he was dismissed from his job, that he 'was slowly becoming the slave and prisoner of the flat' and felt 'isolated' and beaten down in the situation of daily survival. Keeping up and covering daily expenses and rent was made impossible and at the expense of social interaction. Similarly, the other participants talked about a period devoid of socialization and characterized by specific feelings of 'loneliness', 'alienation' and 'despair'. Withdrawing from social life and feeling battered down by financial and psychological states.

The return to the parent's house thus, was an issue of survival. But we must think of survival here in an extended sense, referring to a life of more than food and shelter and immediately connected to an experience of precarity as a condition of material and existential insecurity (Alisson 2012). The experience of precarity in this case is shaped by precarious employment conditions as forms of economic exploitation, but cannot be isolated by a set of linked aspects, the material deprivation engendered and existential and social insecurity and psychological states of anxiety and uncertainty (Allison 2012, Butler 2011, Lazzarato 2004, Molé 2012). It pertains to daily necessities of life that are implicated in the way people perceive identity and belonging and search for worth (Allison 2012).

Education is proposed as means to acquire employment skills, but mostly as 'an ethical scene of subjectification whereby young people are to develop a habitus that submits to the rhythm of supposedly immutable economic laws and a new disciplinary regime of technologically-mediated, precarious living labour (Mean 2015: 345)'. In a similar way, neo-Keynesian views of 'generational precarity' overlook the importance of class relations and 'historical political conditions (balance of social, racial, gendered, and ideological forces in relation to the state and capital) (Means 2015: 348)', and emphasize the role of policy and the state.

Important here is Allisson's (2011, 2012) work on experiences of social precarity in modern Japan, in which amidst a range of sociological indicators, such as the growing rates of unemployment, suicide, homelessness and poverty, she traces the affective aspects of precarity. As she says, the way precarity 'is physically sensed, ordinarily experienced and physically embodied (Allisson 2012: 350)'. As she shows, precarity describes a condition of being and feeling insecure in life that extends to one's disconnectedness from a sense of social community (Allison 2012: 348-349). The young adults that retuned to live with parents under the strains of social precarity, stressed feelings of isolation and loneliness. They explained that the use of social media aggravated these feelings and often they blamed themselves, even though they were aware of inequality and the big impact of austerity on everyday life. The self-blame is intrinsically connected to previous expectations and the fact that although they became 'remote', they still lingered on their lives producing feelings of personal failure (Allison 2012: 350). While being in a state of loneliness, as it is not an everyday social value in Greece, is usually 'pitiable' and rejected (Stewart 2014: 14).

In this sense moving back to parental household offered a solution to material aspects of insecurity but also to felt seclusion, guilt and shame. It registered as a rejection of isolation and loneliness and thus, as an act of disobedience to the experience of social precarity produced by austerity reforms. In fact, the large movement of solidarity that emerged amidst austerity and the way it was based on a political motivation against loneliness and isolation manifested in the widely employed motto 'nobody alone in the crisis', reflects this widespread experience of social precarity. The support offered to austerity-stricken citizens by the solidarity collectives, proposed collective potential against social abandonment, solitude and withdrawal. Apparently, rethinking the collective emerged as a response to social precarity, driven by a social need to alleviate lonesomeness and put an end to the individualization of social problems. This is an aspect of the politics of solidarity organized by citizens, that is further explored on the seventh chapter.

It is important to mention at this point that in the cases examined, the young adults struggled with various layers of precarity but not one of them faced the insecurity of

homelessness, as the return to parental household was a viable possibility. Whereas in few cases with which I became familiar during fieldwork but which did not concern the area researched, young adults who could not economically support housing due to unemployment and job insecurity but whose lives did not fit the heteronormative pronouncements of the parental household, the *nikokirio*, as they have been rejected by parents because of sexuality and gender orientation, could not return and live with parents, or if they did, their returns did not last for more than a week. Extreme forms of social precarity are produced by the intersection of economic insecurity and the characteristic exclusion and invisibility in the lives of young adults who refuse to reproduce the heteronormative experience linked to the parental family household, the *nikokirio* (Yannakopoulos 2010, Kantsa 2006, 2010).

For those that can make the return to the parental household, they receive help to endure the social precarity experienced. The return though, is not the outcome of a decision as an act of individual will, but a decision that is constructed by the necessities of the particular situations the young adults found themselves in, and which they never wished or imagined. They had to 'adapt their expectations and their senses of entitlements (Schwaller 2017)' to the increasing precarity they were confronted with. This drew them to re-conceive how they encounter independence and family intimacy *vis a vis* ideas of modernity and neoliberalism. This was depicted in the transitions and conflicts they felt and often communicated with ambivalence.

The social poetics of return

All cases depict change in a past trend in which young adults were less dependent on the family due to education and social mobility. This previous trend also represented alterations in perceptions of the self, defined to a lesser extent by family relations and more by webs of non-family relations (Vlahoutsikou and Antonakopoulous 2013). In a similar way Hirschon (2012) describes a shift from communal perceptions of the self, exemplified in the primacy given locally to shared name day celebrations, towards more individual perceptions of the self, manifested in the superiority private birthdays as Western European forms of celebration gradually acquired. Being independent

from one's parents and related revisions of perceptions of self, were associated with modernist transitions (Vlahoutsikou and Antonakopoulou 2013). Yet, we cannot speak about a linear change that was reversed during austerity (Bakalaki 2015). Bakalaki (2015) for example, sees in present experiences of crisis a drawback of previous understandings of modernization as a temporal process of going forward towards a future that will be better than the past. Indeed, the uncertainty young adults experienced signaled the decline of economic and social expectations amidst the impossibility to secure a job, a status, a life and a future. These reflected to a great extend modernist expectations of a progressive improvement of social and economic status. However, the young adults that found themselves dependent for support upon their parents household and income, experienced ambivalent transitions and conflicts that cannot be easily contained within dual understandings, nor can we speak in terms of a reversal of a modernist trend. Their stories break down simple oppositions and call us to rethink the way locals in Greece encounter independence and modernity amidst present precarious experiences of capitalist austerity.

The return to parents' house and the conditions of social precarity under which it took place, complicates the idea of independence. The return, motivated by the economic difficulties and the effects of daily insecurity and uncertainty that made it extremely difficult and eventually impossible to support housing and secure survival, alleviated partly precarity by offering a stable but tenuous net of relative security. The parental households concerned here faced various forms of insecurity, such as indebtedness and drastic income reduction due to wages and pensions cuts. Thus, the security the parental household offered was relatively defined. However, it provided some sense of material and emotional temporal relief to the young adults. In this sense, the return signaled a form of liberation from a relentless subjection to the pressures of insecure employment and 'rent enslavement', as they all argued.

Thus, returning to the family home signified not only a change in experienced precarity but also a shift in perceptions and ideas of dependence and independence. Ideas that guided decisions to move out of the parental household in the past and renting a flat. As the independence and autonomy gained by living on their own was compromised

by the financial and emotional burdens experienced in maintaining this arrangement during austerity, independence from aggressive casualization of employment became more important. But this change in perceptions and social values was mined with ambivalences as it was mutually implicated with ideas and discourses of modernity, influenced by the hegemonic narrative of problematic modernity included in the political management of the crisis.

All of the young adults that returned to the family household expressed concerns over what kind of experience the return was in relation to what they pictured as 'European ways' between family members. For them, European ways suggest 'indifference' and 'lack of support' between family members but also 'progressive' and modern forms of family intimacy. Living with parents into adulthood was seen by them as a sign of family solidarity and collective responsibility, but also as a form of backwardness in relation to 'other European countries' where children move early out of their parents' house. These two opposing perceptions were co-implicated in the experience of return. All research participants talked about 'European modern' family relations and thought of them as cruel and condemned instances when parents in other European countries refuse to help their adult children. While living at one's parents' home into adulthood was sometimes criticized in psychoanalytic terms, as a form of 'unhealthy family relation'. The meanings of these opposing ideas enveloped other moral orientations of modern constructions of East and West. For example, strong bonds between family members were portrayed in few instances as backward and a thing of the 'East', linked to clientelism and irrationality. One of the female participants that has been a persistent critic of close family ties, has argued that 'the family is a thing of the East, representative of irrationality and emotion, and something that we need to change if we want to think rationally'. Although the way this ambivalence was expressed and the level of significance it communicated was contingent to one's political and ideological positions, all adults expressed worries over the family living arrangement experienced after returning to their parents' house.

The reality of this conflicting duality of appraisal and condemnation of living with parents into adulthood, reflects concerns over local experiences and discourses of

modernity and the relationship of Greece with Europe; the way the latter is often expressed in terms of a Greek exceptionalism that produces Greece as a difference in the interior of Europe (Papataxiarchis 2006b). The roots of this ambiguity are utterly cultural and are recognized in anthropological terms as the distinction between 'West and Other and the presumed superiority of the former over the later', attached to the never-ending project of modernity (Argyrou 2017). A project with hegemonic orders that elevates Western values and creates centers and peripheries, described by anthropologists of the Greek speaking world as 'colonized consciousness' (Argyrou 2002), and a form of 'cryptocolonialism' (Herzfeld 2002).[69]

The negotiations of crisis strengthened the idea of a backward social and political body incompletely modernized in relation to the liberal democracies of Western Europe, and in need of reform and discipline through austerity (Kotouza 2019, Liakos and Kouki 2015). As we saw in the third chapter, shaming aspects of the negotiation of the crisis included a discourse of problematic modernity and the idea of cultural backwardness in which representations of Greece as an incomplete and marginally modernized state were presented as one of the main causes of the crisis (Kotouza 2019, Triandafylidou et al 2013). These reproduced past discourses of underdevelopment and portrayals of Greece as deviation from an ideal modernized state and a model of liberal democracy (Kaplani 2013, Markantonaki 2012). While these hegemonic discourses of modernity shaped popular views and the policies of austerity (Krugman 2012, Varoufakis 2011), and reintroduced past concerns over the cultural constitution of a marginal position of Greece in the West through history (Triandafylidou et al 2013).

The concerns expressed by young adults must be seen within this larger moral order linked to the reanimation of ideas of cultural backwardness and discourses of marginal modernity during the management of the crisis. They echo what Herzfeld (2005) calls dissemia, an internalized dualism linked to historical processes of constructing Greece as a marginally European country, directly connected in an evolutionary way to

[69] 'Crypto-colonialism' is a term coined by Herzfeld (2002) to refer to countries that have never been in direct control by foreign powers but politically and culturally dependent on them. This often involves an aggressive shaping of a culture to fit foreign models (Herzfeld 2002).

classical Greece as the cradle of European culture, and to the 'polluted', backward and irrational Oriental traces of the histories of Ottoman Empire in the region (Herzfeld 1987a). This dualism represents the construction of Greece in popular imagination as a place caught between tradition and modernity, East and West, based on the moralized opposition between a backward East and the modern liberal West (Herzfeld 1987a). Hence, we need to consider the expressed concerns in terms of this historical and moral construction of oscillation between West and East and the way Greece is ambiguously suspended between the historically formulated ideological poles of European and Oriental (Herzfeld 1987a). As Bakalaki (1994: 77) argues, locals in Greece perceive themselves in the margins of Europe while having internalized a "European" identity that prompts them to see themselves as living 'in the same world as Europeans'. Thus, we must see the ambivalent positions and conflicting opinions concerning the return to parental household vis a vis 'European' and 'modern ways', as complex moral zones of identity and belonging intensified by the recently re-activated local anxieties on European belonging in the context of the crisis.

The experience of return to live with parents although it seems to entail a conflicting opposition, is more complicated than a simple dichotomy. I propose to examine the voiced concerns over family relations and living arrangements in terms of the ambivalence they express through the concept of social poetics. This is a concept introduced by Herzfeld (2005) that inevitably entails as he explains the 'residual binarism' of colonialist thought, but focuses on the syncretic forms that emerge from everyday interactions of people with hegemonic forms and official narratives (Herzfeld 2005: 46). Syncretism emerges as a key aspect of experiences of return as they are shaped by entanglements of reconfigured ideas and values of independence, experiences of social precarity, modernist expectations of progress and Orientalizing discourses of modernity.

Moreover, ethnographic accounts of experiences of modernity in Greece have stressed the ambivalent and syncretic aspect of local forms of modernity (Fuabion 1993, Herzfeld 1992, 1987a, Panourgia 1995, Paxson 2004, Sutton 1994). As much as created 'fissures in the supposedly totalizing ideal of Western modernity' (Paxson

2004: 33). As shown, locals in Greece constantly reposition themselves in relation to modernity and develop specific native synthesis of modern ideas and aspirations (Paxson 2004, Sutton 1994, 1998, Vlahoutsikou and Antonakopoulou 2013). Dualistic oppositions and dilemmas, such as ideas of modernity linked to Europe and a lack of sociability combined with expressed fears of being 'left behind', form part of syncretic modernities that emerge (Sutton 1994: 240). These characteristic dilemmas described in ambivalent ways, reveal that the positions between East and West, Greek and European, constitute a moral issue (Sutton 1994). In addition, the syncretisms, transitions and multiple facets of modernity documented cannot be isolated from the relational aspects of family relations, economic status, gender and ideology (Faubion 1993, Panourgia 1995, Paxson 2004, Sutton 1994).

Hence, the intricacies of return to the parental household during austerity reveal the entanglements of social precarity, renegotiations of values and aspirations, and moral, political and ideological hegemonic discourses of modernity. These complexities describe the social poetics of the experiences of return to one's parents' house, the 'social, cultural and political grounding (Herzfeld 2005: 26)' of these experiences. They describe the different sets of constrains and creative tensions in the way the young adults who deal with precarity and return to live with parents, adopt, defy and act on rigid and moral essentialist forms that are part of hegemonic discourses of modernity (Herzfeld 2005). Ambivalence emerges as a creative reformation of the confronted dilemmas and conflicts and an important way through which they cope with the reactivated subject of European belonging. Ambivalence is expressed in the multiple positions they occupy when they return to parents' house and is embodied in daily life. It unfolds in and out of the house, in embodied relations with their families and in modes of reflecting on their lives.

The social poetics of return, hence, show us that the experience of precarity for these young adults coming from working class backgrounds is intricately entangled with multiple renegotiations and shifts of values in relation to labour insecurity in austerity and discourses of modernity. Family intimacy is intrinsically connected to questions of power, as young adults revaluate forms of independency and negotiate valorised

forms of modern intimacy as progressive and less constrained by tradition (Povinelli 2006). As Povinelli (2006) shows in her ethnographic work in settler colonies in Australia, certain forms of intimacy are subject to recognition by bureaucracies and moral hegemonic pronouncements of modern legitimate forms of intimacy. In this sense, the ambivalent perceptions of young adults encapsulated in the social poetics, is more than a reconciliation of dualistic conflicts of belonging re-energized during the crisis, they encompass negotiations of the subjugating moral effects of hegemonic modernity.

In several instances the young adults employed irony through which they generated spaces for subversive mockery (Herzfeld, 1991). This was another dimension of the way they creatively deformed hegemonic and ideological discourses of modernization re-animated in the present with austerity (Herzfeld 1991, Kalantzis 2015). For example, taking a coffee at a neighborhood cafeteria with a research participant who had at the time returned to live with her parents, we heard a story about a mother who evicted her daughter's business from her property for not paying rent. This extreme story of family conflict prompted my company to comment ironically that, 'perhaps this means that we are now finally becoming European'. This comment expressed at a time when the Greek government emphasized the narrative of Greece slowly 'coming out' of austerity, appeared to critically link and deform hegemonies of modernity and austerity, and how they relate with forms of family intimacy.

For some research participants with mostly left leaning political views, the poetics of return encompassed renegotiations of values and re-articulations of family intimacy in relation to their ideas of neoliberal values. The way they understood neoliberal values of self-reliance and autonomy shaped their experiences of return to live with their parents. Again, here a form of independency as relief from precarity was valued more than an independency tied to individualistic notions. As discussed in the beginning of this section, the autonomy created through returning to the family household provided degrees of freedom compared to an independence subjected to intensified precarity. In this context, ideas and values of independence, but also of care and responsibility, were reshaped amidst what the participants perceived as a

general situation of neoliberalization. Family intimacy was recreated along the lines of care and accountability and as a weapon against social precarity and what they saw as a cruel neoliberal rationality of 'competition' and 'individualism'. Let us not forget Biehl's (2012) ethnographic account of 'zones of abandonment' in Brazil and the way neoliberal values shape stories of abandoning kin. In contrast, the cases of return to one's parents' house during austerity and the social dynamics examined here, demonstrate that family intimacy develops as a protection against precarity and social abandonment (Kofti 2018). Amidst precarity the ideology of a self-responsible 'neoliberal subject' (Parry 2018) and of 'financial transformation as serving the end of individual freedom ring hollow indeed (Chan 2013: 376)'.

The family household becomes a highly politicized realm amidst fast-paced processes of neoliberalization during austerity while meanings and values of family intimacy and solidarity are reformed. Family intimacy becomes a medium of renegotiation of the value of care and of 'the forms, obligations and rights attached to interpersonal ties (Zelizer 2005: 172)' vis a vis the values of austerity, neoliberal markets and hegemonic modernity. This does not imply a binary opposition between economy and intimacy (Constable 2009, Zelizer 2005), but depicts a form of care that involves economic support provided by parents in the context of return. The participants negotiate the 'economic conditions of care' and define meaningful social relations (Zelizer 2005: 207)', by stressing the collective dimension of family intimacy during austerity and its superiority over autonomy and neoliberal values of self-reliance.

The return as a synthesis

The everyday realities of daily cohabitation with parents were filled with conflicts and disagreements and most participants referred to feelings of 'frustration' within the household. While all participants stressed 'a feeling of being guests' at the parental household. Illustrating this I quote a comment expressed by Christina once we were sitting together at a café, her favorite place to hang out, and where some of her friends used to work. As she said, 'I spent more time here than I do in my house. My mother doesn't say so, but she actually hosts me at her house, and that is how I feel as well'.

Within a sentence Christina's parental household emerged as her house and as her mother's house where she is a guest. Similarly, most young adults that were living with their parents voiced with less or more emphasis, but all unbothered by contradictions, 'a feeling of being hosted' by their parents while they recognized the parental house as 'home'.

The contradictory expressions in these feelings portrayed the conflicting forms of household membership. 'It is not cohabitation but hospitality', another participant stressed to me often while she spoke of 'her home'. The parental house emerged as a home and a living arrangement conceived in terms of hospitality, and thus, in terms of hierarchy and suspension of alterity. These are the specific characteristics of relations between guests and hosts documented in ethnographic accounts placed in Greece (Papataxiarchis 2006a). There is undeniably a generosity performed by the host, but it entails usually, the suppression of the guest's wishes, opinions, and ways of doing, quite simply the suspension of alterity, as the guest must show gratitude and conform to the host's preferences (Cowan 1990, Herzfeld 1987, 1991, Papataxiarchis 1991, 2006a).[70] In this sense, the feelings of being guests matched participants' experiences of being in the 'margin' of the household, forced to conform to a context ordered and controlled by the parents-hosts (Papataxiarchis 2006a). Hospitality for them communicated the uneasy compliance to parental authority and a means by which they put under critical perspective the hierarchical qualities of household relations.

Living with one's parents into adulthood was a custom common among families of previous generations. Yet, the participants grew up with different aspirations, habits, and needs and living with parents into adulthood was not what they have anticipated. Thus, although there were contradictory aspects in the way they experienced daily life in the household, the framework of hospitality describes the anxieties generated by the uncertainty of household boundaries and the instability of roles caused by the

[70] As Papataxiarchis (2006a: 7) explains, hospitality in Greece is the actual 'triumph of identity over alterity', in the way it hierarchically reformulates difference and depreciates alterity.

return. The participants expressed through feelings of being a guest, their anguishes of not associating the return with the same and the past, but to an experience that differs from previous dwellings in the house and past cultural patterns of extended family households. A difference that acknowledges and affirms thus, cultural changes and transitions of self and family household relations. For the participants hospitality stresses also the temporality of present family cohabitation as a strategy of survival, a condition that will eventually change. It paints the family household as a threshold space and a transitional passage into a different situation. This is an aspirational view of present conditions that creates glimpses of hope in uncertainty. It encourages the potentiality for change and the possibility to take a next step in the near future. This is why we must see the return as a temporal synthesis of desires, needs and hopes shaped by experienced precarity, of reconfigurations of family intimacy, conflicting feelings and contradictory perceptions, and revaluations and renegotiations. But as we will see, a synthesis also of opposing aspects of the family household as a shelter and a blockage.

The family household as a shelter and blockage

But why would the impossibility to economically support housing implies the return to parental household? There are other living arrangements in Thessaloniki, mostly in the center of the city, in which friends cohabit in rented flats or rent for exceptionally low price previous industrial spaces that they convert into houses with many rooms.[71] These examples illustrate forms of experimentation with cohabitation that might of course fail, as sometimes do. But what seems important for this minority of young people is an attempt to face collectively the precarity they experience through which they develop novel webs of intimacy based on material and emotional support against the crisis. This collective response to precarity that takes such inventive and improvised forms of sharing, is organized around common problems, but also around common aspirations, views and desires by people of similar age. The significance of

[71] The are many empty industrial spaces in the center of the city, infrastructural remnants and reminders of the once flourishing, mostly tobacco and clothes, industry in Thessaloniki.

such creative and collaborative responses to precarity has not been investigated in the scope of this study, and I believe it merits separate ethnographic research.

Besides these limited non-family-based responses to housing and everyday survival, for most young adults that face economic uncertainty the answer lies in returning to live with their parents. This is considered by them as the most accessible and self-evident survival strategy, that seems meaningful to them in cultural terms. Here family intimacy emerges, once more, as a supreme form of intimacy that can endure the problems generated by the multiple layers of precarity experienced by household members.

'I would rather fight with my parents, than anyone else', a participant told me once when I asked her why she is not thinking to share a house with friends. She believed like other participants that cohabiting in periods of crisis entails conflicts and disagreements that can be tolerated within the environment of the family household, the *nikokirio*. This culturally specific understanding of the *nikokirio* as a core realm of intimacy and trust draws from the great value given to the institution of the family (Du Boulay 1979). It reflects the idea of *nikokirio* as an environment of solidarity distinct to a competitive social world outside its realm and captures the introverted aspect of relations and actions defined by the *nikokirio* (Papataxiarchis 2013). It implies that household intimacy can develop solely within the realm of *nikokirio*, the heteronormative family household.

Yet, the conflicting experiences of all the young adults that returned to their parents' house paint the *nikokirio* as a sanctuary space circumscribed by persistent attempts to defy the introverted effects of the *nikokirio* and the way it acts as a medium of homogenization (Papataxiarchis 2013). This was captured for instance, by the critical aspects of articulations of hospitality as we saw. While the intense everyday disputes between its members, linked to parental authority and the patriarchally defined household hierarches, and to the pervasive forms of precarity suffered by all family members, complicate the idea of family intimacy as the principle of solidarity. Young adults spoke often about feelings of 'frustration' and 'oppression' to describe the suppression of beliefs, opinions, and preferences that differed from those of parents,

or from those parents had imagined for their children. Family intimacy linked to the *nikokirio* acquires therefore, added political significance, given the entanglement of conflicting experiences shaped by cultural beliefs and precarious situations.

There is a recent 'cultural trend' in Greece that takes the family as its main theme and locus of critique, manifested in various cultural forms of theatre, cinema, literature, and essays (Papanikolaou 2018). Already apparent since the early 2000s, this trend describes family household relations amidst employment difficulties and family debts, and families in which the younger members are economically dependent by their parents (Papanikolaou 2018). The trend encompasses numerous cultural productions that often employ 'a self-referential irony' and exaggeration to emphasize that the heteronormative family household, the *nikokirio*, is not solely a realm of comfort and solace, but also of intense conflicts and tensions (Papanikolaou 2018). This image in turn, seems 'to develop into a novel stereotype, a landmark of Greek society in crisis: a family that screams a lot, that is trapped a lot, that is exhausted into a constant violence (Papanikolaou 2018: 18)'.

For example, the film 'Matchbox', filmed entirely within a family household in a low-income area in Athens, portrays a lower middle-class family anxious with economic problems that is collapsing from the inside, in tension, paranoia and conflict, while the members treat each other with extreme aggression and disrespect. Many more films centered around this image are becoming known to international audiences, and the image of 'a family short circuited' becomes the legible image of crisis in Greece (Papanikoalou 2018). This image shapes and establishes a cultural recognition that is further reproduced in popular representations (Papanikoalou 2018). At the same time it has marked 'the creative thought in the epoch of Memorandums (Papanikoalou 2018: 20)' and has opened a social dialogue over the future of the crisis, prompting the audiences 'to participate in a more essential social critique (Papanikoalou 2018: 20)'. The family as a blockage is not a novel creation of the crisis thus but represents an intense social critique and problematization of the links it establishes between gender, the heteronormative family household -the *nikokirio*-, nationalism and sexuality and reveals unresolved conflicts within the nikokirio that are strengthened

during the crisis (Papanikolaou 2018). These conflicts however are seen in the cultural trend discussed here, as a medium of change, as a necessary and productive step for bringing change or forwarding critique (Papankolaou 2013).

Intense conflicts and disagreements that might emerge in the everyday life of the family household, as often did emerge, can lead to hostility and to family intimacy falling apart rather than reconstructing. The ethics of caring and solidarity can be compromised by the blockage effect of family household relations. It often takes a great deal of attention to avoid unpredictable outbreaks of aggression and sometimes such disruptive instances rather than activating critique, they generate unbearable compromises that take many muted forms, as participants described. Such eventful occasions will play out differently each time of course, and in their repetition, they will create a new potential for critique. However, these depictions correspond to the lives of young adults whose gender identifications and sexuality preferences complied with the heteronormative orders of the family household, the *nikokirio*. What happens however, when the young adults cannot conform to the heteronormativities of the family household?

Conclusion

The study of the experience of return to parental household by young adults who face precarious employment and could not afford to pay rent and cover increased living costs, revealed to us forms of precarity across intersections of class and age during austerity. All cases referred to the neighborhood of Neapoli, a working-class area in the Western Thessaloniki and concerned low-income family households. I followed ethnographically an extreme aspect of family household precarity shaped by the precarity of debt (Ross 2013) in the construction of indebted household. The return to the family household involves thus, multiple layers of precarity, as the households operate under various constrains. These interlinked forms of precarity are shaped by austerity, but as the ethnography shows, we need to consider that the background of present experiences of precarity was set by past periods of employment precarization and household financialization.

The focus was given to the precarity produced in young adults' lives, how it is defined by precarious employment that affects an ever-wider population and by structural hierarchies that intensify a generational precarity under global capitalism. Experiences of precarity registered in feelings of loneliness, alienation and despair and revealed how these are key aspects of the social precarity produced under austerity. They also made evident that material precarity is entwined with existential and social insecurity and affective states of anxiety and uncertainty. These precarious situations created the necessities that constructed the decision of young adults to return to the parents' house guided by the cultural primacy given to the family institution. The return under this light emerged as an antidote and disobedience to the pervasive forms of social precarity generated by the imposed reforms.

There are of course significant gaps in the research of this phenomenon of return, as the nature of my relations to the young adults and the limited time of fieldwork did not allow me to attend to the experiences of parents' and the pressures and joys the return generated in their daily household lives. How the boundaries of household relations were negotiated on their part and what family intimacy signified for them. It became obvious to me that the return burdened the household income and the daily work of the mothers as they had an extra member to care for. But on a general basis, parents being more familiar with past forms of extended family households in Greece, thought 'natural' that their children's home is the family household (Vlahoutsikou and Antonakopoulou 2013).

As it appears, the family household protects to a certain extend young adults against austerity and the social precarity it produces. This makes evident that family relations shape and are shaped by the way austerity is experienced, but also that family household solidarities constitute a survival strategy in times of extreme economic uncertainty (Pine 2001). Besides the ordinary way family households act as structures of support investigated here, they operate also as 'a shock absorber of last resort' in financial terms. As an IMF (2005: 89) report describes, 'overall there has been a transfer of financial risk over a number of years, away from the banking sector to

nonbanking sectors. This dispersion of risk has made the financial system more resilient, not the least because the household sector is acting more as a shock absorber of last resort.'

Investigating further the experiences of returning to live with parents we saw how young adults adapt their expectations and reconceive how they encounter the idea of independence and family intimacy in relation to modern aspirations and discourses and neoliberal values. The precarity they face and the return to parental household lead them to rethink and negotiate ideas of independence, family intimacy, modernity and European belonging, neoliberal values of self-reliance, and past cultural forms of extended family households, in dynamic relation to each other. This was depicted in the transitions and conflicts they felt and expressed with ambivalence. Dependency on parents challenged self-conceptions and aspirations but in the face of experienced precarity it was reconfigured as a liberating arrangement from relentless subjection to job insecurity, and a relation of care and solidarity against the aggressive forms of capitalist austerity and processes of neoliberalization. Family intimacy emerges thus, as unification against neoliberal austerity, similarly to the way in past ethnographies depicts an alliance against the state (Just 1991, Herzfeld 1985).

The concept of social poetics was proposed to examine the social, cultural and political basis of the experience of return. Central aspects of the social poetics are irony and ambivalence that encapsulate the constrains and creative tensions of moral dilemmas the young adults face. Ambivalence is portrayed in the ethnographic enterprise of the crisis in Greece as a core aspect of embodied experience (Kalantzis 2015) and local narratives (Theodossopoulos 2014a) that acts as an immediate emotional expression (Kalantzis 2015) and a tactic of interpretation (Theodossopoulos 2014a). Moreover, the social poetics revealed syncretic forms in the way participants perceive and negotiate the entanglement of experienced precarity, the experience of living with parents into adulthood, the reconfiguration of values of family intimacy, dependency and modern expectations of progress, and anxieties linked to moral discourses of problematic modernity in Greece re-activated during the crisis. The return to one's parents' house and the family household acquire thus, political significance during a

period of crisis which is negotiated in terms of teleological developmental schemas of Greece as a backward European state that justified aggressive neoliberal reforms (Triandafylidou et al 2013, Varoufakis 2011).

Yet, the everyday reality of return involves conflicts between members as illustrated in the first scene at Christina's family household. This describes the family household as a realm of solidarity and care, but also a realm of intense hierarchies that creates vulnerabilities and intolerable compromises that can reproduce heteronormative and ethnonational attachments and naturalization of gender inequalities but can also give way to critical reevaluations. The family household thus, emerges as a shelter and a blockage at the same time. The return to parental household seen as an experience of hospitality is suggestive of the way the participants attempt to renegotiate the return amidst disputes in personal, familial and cultural terms. The marginal position of the guest that they believe they occupy, describes household hierarchies and the anxieties felt amidst the uncertainty of boundaries and instability of roles caused by the return. But it also reflects a critical way of recreating the return as difference to past patterns of extended family cohabitation. Hospitality offers the context to affirm changes and redraw the lines around family and cultural intimacy, but it also expresses the temporality of return and the way past, present and future play out amidst hopes for change. In this sense, the return is seen as an in-between experience, bound by the past and open to a future change. This understanding points to a vision of hope beyond ideas of success and failure. A hope as a form of endurance seen not in terms of having to eat and somewhere to sleep, but as a demand for more to life than resilience to precarity. Hence, I suggest that we must view the experience of return as a temporal synthesis of needs, hopes and desires shaped by precarious situations, conflicting feelings, ambivalent positions, compromises and critical reconsiderations.

Fig. 4. Christina before a dance performance.

Fig. 5. Giannis at the autonmous neighbrouhood intiative.

Chapter Six: Hostility and Kindness

Introduction

This chapter looks at ordinary experiences and relations of intimacy and the way they shape and are shaped by experiences of precarity in a neighbourhood in Neapoli, during the restructuring carried out by austerity reforms and what has been named as the 'European crisis of migration'. This is an area with high numbers of households living below the poverty line and viewed by many residents as lower working class. The wider neighbourhood was built by Minor Asia refugees after the 1922 exchange of population agreement. It has since received many internal and external migrants and recently refugees from Middle East, North Africa and Asia. The dynamics of intimacy draw attention to the social transformations taking place in this neighbourhood, with attention to urban austerity and the precarious circumstances of recent refugees.

The chapter also highlights how socialites based on neighbourly intimacy uphold the life projects and strategies of survival of impoverished residents, and how these are constantly being made by experiences of precarity structured by social inequalities. The dynamics of neighbourly intimacy show us the various ways the impoverished residents emerge as political actors, but also how loops of exclusion that intensify noted phenomena of xenophobia and racism are produced amidst desires for inclusion and social belonging. Such forms of negative reciprocity in the neighbourhood, linked to nationalist and racist discourses of the politics of crisis and austerity, often coexist and overlap with the ethics of generosity and kindness towards the precarity of others. The politics and affective unfolding of intimacy can limit or extend such ethical acts. As I argue, there is no simple way to disentangle the complex intimacies that are build amidst neighbourly proximities and everyday struggles against precarious situations.

A meeting in the neighbourhood

'I feel sad today', said Mrs Roula and explained that she 'woke up like that'. She told us, me and Mr Nikos who were sitting with her at a neighbourhood café, that she was coming from a nearby grocery store where she visited her friend who works there to give him the marmalades and liquor she had prepared for sale, and that he chose to play a song for her, called "a sadness", sang by a Greek singer named Alexiou. 'And I love this song', she said. Suddenly, amidst the noises of the crowded café, the jingle of words from the neighbouring smoking tables, the bellow of the old bus passing by and the uproar of a busy pavement, Mr Nikos sang the song's first lyrics. 'A sadness I have today, from my heart smoke comes out'. Looking at Mrs Roula with moist eyes and compassionate face. A grin flickered across Mrs Roula's face and held tight my hand placed at her shoulder.

The neighbourhood

Mr Nikos and Mrs Roula have known each other for a long time. They are neighbours and meet often in the streets of Neapoli where they both live, and at the area's open markets (*laikes)* where Mrs Roula offers help in exchange for products, but most often they meet at a local café called todaylicious. This is where the three of us met and took coffee that morning. This fast-growing Thessaloniki café franchise, that offers coffee, drinks, and a variety of grab-and-go food at extremely low prices is spreading all-around Thessaloniki (a small "Turkish coffee" costs 0.8 euros). In contrast to other cafes in the area that follow a gender and/or ethnic-based patterning of space, is frequented by all genders, age-groups and ethnicities. Perhaps this is due to its fast food structure and aesthetics, that makes it difficult to a single group to territorialise the space. Thus, it is a meeting place in the area for diverse-groups and it is where often neighbours meet, visiting for coffee or passing by. Most of my conversations and observations of the neighbourhood life and interactions took place at this café and at couple of nearby squares.

The café is located near to the main public fountain square, called 'square of peace' but known as 'clock' ('*roloi'),* from a tall clock raised at its centre. This square is the most popular meeting point and frequented by different age-groups. Old people meet and sit at benches to talk, children play around, and young students gather in groups, especially when the weather is good. Sometimes municipal and autonomous political and social events are organised in the square.[72] Half kilometre down the road from the main square there is a bigger square with an adjusted park and an abandoned canteen (green space indicated in the map 3).[73] The park, which is destined for redevelopment, is the hangout place by older and usually migrant population of the neighbourhood. During spring, summer and autumn, men usually gather there to play cards and table games, and women to chat, knit, and sometimes do housework, such as preparations for lunch (for ex, cleaning fresh green beans).

There are smaller squares scattered in the area of Neapoli, such as the small fountain square where Mrs Roula often spends time with some of her female neighbours. The square is close to her house and next to the area's main church of Saint George, near the café todaylicious and opposite a neighbourhood autonomous initiative named *APAN* that is explored in the next chapter.

The research focused on the low-income neighbourhoods around the main church of Neapoli (see map 4). The area of Neapoli, located to the West of the Byzantine walls of the city forms part of the "Western areas" of Thessaloniki, areas that have the highest numbers of households living below the poverty line that are widely viewed as lower working class. It is an area characterised by intense urbanization which has created a landscape of multiple-storeyed apartment blocks with one of the highest-density areas in Greece, where green spaces have disappeared under concrete.

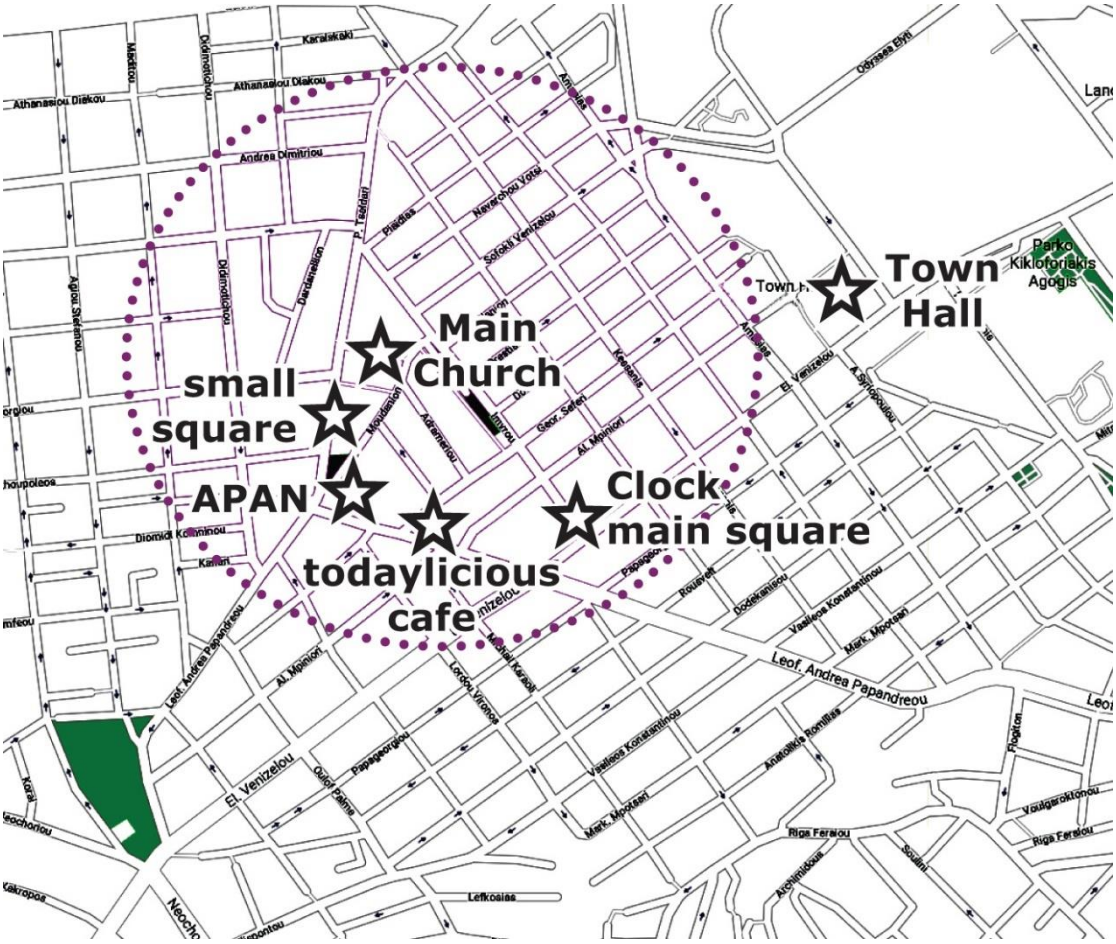
This is a neighbourhood of refugees, a neighbourhood where all residents or their families are migrants of some kind. Originally a refugee settlement, it was built after

[72]There have been various seasonal celebrations and charity events organized by the municipality and political events organized by various groups.

[73]It is called "Romanian park" as it was constructed on a cemetery for the Romanian population of Thessaloniki in the 19th century, that operated till 1941, and in 1964 it was turned into a park.

the 1922 migrations from Asia Minor when the city's Muslim resettled in Turkey and Greek Orthodox Christians from Minor Asia, of various cultural and linguistic backgrounds, came to Thessaloniki. This enforced displacement created many refugee neighbourhoods at the time (Hirschon 1989). Later the neighbourhood attracted rural-urban migrants, following the rapid post-civil war expansion of the 1950s. Afterwards, migrants from the Balkan and ex-USSR countries in the 1990s moved to the area. Recently, refugee families coming from the Middle East, North Africa and Asia have moved from camps in the Western outskirts of the city to rented flats in the area, under an accommodation scheme aiming at the integration of asylum seekers.

The spontaneity described in the way neighbours responded to Mrs Roula's sadness that day was defined by the precarious conditions all neighbours experience in some way. The grocery store employee that played a song for Mrs Roula, faced extreme economic problems under reduced wages while his wife was a long-term unemployed teacher. He often took small "off the books" decorating jobs in evenings for an extra income. Mr Nikos, a seventy years old widower, facing large pension cuts under austerity, tried to make some extra "cash in hand" money" by selling sesame breads (*koulouri*) to bus drivers at the city's main bus station daily, from 4 am to 8am. With the small extra income, he helped his daughter's family. Like Mrs Roula, they felt often sad as they experienced an insecure and precarious present. Their responses were thus, triggered by their own feelings and experiences of precarity. They were ethical improvisations that were nevertheless, far from surprising. My own response was motivated by an intimate relation built, by that time, with Mrs Roula, who had included me in her own ways of creating cycles of relatedness, by including me in her night prays for safety and health, performed for her family every night before going to bed.



Map 4. Map of the area-neighbourhoods researched located within the marked circle (source: by the author).

Fig. 6. The main square in Neapoli, the ‘clock’, at night.

Fig. 7. The todaylicious café in Neapoli.

Precarity and suffering

This neighbourhood of refugees is marked by impoverishment and precarity. Feelings of sadness describe an affective environment shared by most neighbours who struggle with extreme forms of social precarity, like Mrs Roula. Mrs Roula has many reasons to be sad, and her sadness is intrinsically connected with the social conditions that shape and define her life. Not long after the second package of austerity was introduced, she was dismissed from her job, as a production line worker at a clothing company that under introduced tax increases closed some of its industries to retain profit. Amidst a paralysed labour market and the impossibility to find a descent work, Mrs Roula was waiting to reach retirement age and be eligible for the basic state pension. In the meantime, she received occasional help from the municipality through various EU funded programs implemented to battle poverty during austerity, energy reductions applied to no or low-income households, and daily food from the main church's soup kitchen. Without a source of income, she was making some money "off the books" by selling untaxed tobacco to neighbours or exchanging it for products and services. She also produced, sold and exchanged liquor, jams and fruit preserves, made from materials she received from the area's vegetable and fruit open street markets in exchange for few hours work.

Mrs Roula's strong determination to secure daily survival and be able to offer help to her family, is so much more and so much less personal. Her life history shows us how experienced precarity and ways of responding to it, are defined by pervasive forms of structural inequality. Her stories communicate the political aspect of social precarity and exclusion. Now, at the age of sixty-four, Mrs Roula has lived a 'whole lifetime of difficulties too long to bring out', as she says. She was born into a poor peasant family with seven more siblings at a nearby village, half an hour drive from Thessaloniki. She takes pride in having been the 'most daring child' because she provided for her family from an early age. She used to take absence from school and collect weeds from the fields and sell to neighbours (boiled weeds are a staple in Greek cuisine). At the age of fifteen she was married, against her will, to a much older man because 'he didn't request a dowry', as she claims. After the birth of her twin children and a hard-fought, but won, battle to separate from her husband, she was sent by her family to Germany

to live with her uncle. A strategy of survival it was, as she worked hard to send money to her family for subsistence and for her siblings' marriages. But it was triggered at the same time, by feelings of 'shame' her parents claimed the divorce brought to the family, which 'could impede the marriage of her siblings'.[74] After few years, she returned to Greece and settled in Neapoli. Since then, she has done many different jobs, such as a taxi driver, cook, industrial worker, and work at small bars known locally as 'bars of consumption'('*consomation'*), that involved keeping company and encouraging men to consume drinks. Before her last employment at the clothes company, she run for few years her own little restaurant at the area of Neapoli.

Amidst present widespread unemployment, Mrs Roula, like many of her neighbours, has been pushed to informal inventive ways of making some income 'off the books'. [75] Like many of her neighbours, employed in the informal economy, men that do 'day work' (*merokamato*) in construction buildings, or women that provide in-home senior care, or do house-cleaning and child care jobs, she has an irregular source of income. Sometimes she earns enough to be able to cover rent and expenses and support her family, but other times, she earns so little that she can be four months arears rent payment. Like many of her neighbours she faces impoverishment and the lack of adequate housing, as she lives in a house without available heating. This extremely unstable, vulnerable and irregular condition that causes her a constant anguish and emotional distress over eventualities is how social precarity registers in her life, and in many of her neighbours' lives that face similar situations of material insecurity.

It is important to stress that social precarity is not equated with job informality. Amidst an extremely low-payed cleaning job option and working 'off the books', Mrs Roula had opted for the second. 'I don't want to be exploited' she stressed as the main criteria for her choice, emphasizing the resistive politics of informal work to the degrading aspects of low-payed wage work (Bourgois 1995). But also, by doing such

[74] For ethnographic portrayals of the moral notion of shame and ideas on female chastity in Greece, see Campbell (1964), Du Boulay (1979), Cowan (1990), Friedl (1962), Herzfeld (1985), Hirchon (1978).
[75] See Hart (1985) for an analysis of informal economy, Berardi (2009) for a similar theory on 'extra economic networks of survival, Roitmnan's (2004) analysis of 'productivity in the margins', and Narotzsky and Besnier (2014) for an analysis of the unregulated economic practices that include affective relations.

off-the books jobs, she could find time to support the household work of her family as we saw in the fourth chapter. Wageless work denotes a last-resort option (Denning 2010), but also the complex tensions experienced in precarious situations (Millar 2014). As Millar (2014) has shown in her work on the life projects of recycle garbage collectors in Rio's dumps, wageless work captures conflicting desires and needs between the status of a regular formal employment and 'the fragile conditions of urban poverty in Rio de Janeiro'. Informal work is 'a source of suffering', Millar (2014) explains, but also a place that affords a 'relational autonomy', a 'relative degree of control over work activities and time' that enables informal workers to 'sustain relationships, fulfil social obligations, and pursue life projects in an uncertain everyday'.

Mrs Roula's and many of her neighbours' lives of similar age, were defined by labour informality and marginalisation, as they could not granted rights based on their labor. Like Mrs Roula, many suffer from chronic diseases, obesity, diabetes, cancer, and heart conditions.[76] Mrs Roula was diagnosed in 2014 with a heart disease. She suffers from pain, discomfort and sleeping problems. As it appears the heart problems she faces coupled with daily anxiety, build a spiral of suffering. A suffering caused by social precarity as much by the symptoms of heart disease. In this light, Mrs Roula's illness is an 'everyday affliction' linked to 'a political economy of everyday life (Das 2015: 25)'. It communicates the interlocking of social precarity and suffering, constructed and conditioned by social settings (Wilkinson and Kleinman 2016) defined in this case, by the political economy of austerity (Athanasiou 2012) and contexts of inequality and historical circumstances of impoverishment (Bourdieu 2016/1999).

Mrs Roula and her neighbours that participated in the research faced severe economic hardship and often relied on various forms of institutional support, such as municipal structures of 'poverty alleviation' introduced during austerity. This usually involved massive bureaucratic obstacles and long periods of waiting, such as waiting for the

[76] For the relation of asuterity and a 'humanitarian crisis' that impacts on mental, physical and public health, see Kentikeleni et all (2014). For an analysis of the austerity's impact on access to health care for people of lower socio-economic status, see Rotarou and Sakellariou (2017)

decision on applications for financial assistance towards rent, or waiting in lines of monthly food provision, and for some, waiting for retirement age amidst widespread unemployment. The support received and the various modes of waiting endured, were experienced as forms of dependence that shaped a 'strange feeling of 'being obliged' *('ipohreomeni (-os)')*, as they described.

To be obliged *(ipohreomeni(os))* describes a situation of being 'grateful' but in a state of a recognized 'inequality' and 'weakness' (Campbell 1962). It is an aspect of the local notion of obligation (*ipohreosi*), albeit a passive mode that suspends the dynamism and plasticity entailed in obligation (*ipohreosi*). The indigenous notion of obligation (*ipohreosi*) encapsulates the gift giving norms and practices (Mauss 1990), the need and obligation to reciprocate (Campbell 1962, Herzfeld 1985, Hirschon 2008, Rozakou 2016a). Obligation keeps relations going, as an 'ongoing exchange' that constantly overturns structural balances and hierarchies, necessary for sustaining sociality by provoking endless structural renewals. It describes the importance locals ascribe to an 'ethos of egalitarianism', 'independence' and 'autonomy' (Hirschon 2008).

Hence, being in a position of receiving without reciprocating signals a compromise of autonomy, characteristic of experiences of precarity in this neighbourhood. In this instance, it indicates that institutional support does not provide any structural solution but contributes to the suffering it seeks to remedy (Kravva 2014). But it also shows that the various projects the urban poor of this neighbourhood undertake, are ways through which they attempt to ameliorate precarity and claim autonomy. They constitute political struggles against precarity and assert an active position in the way one relates and lives, but at the same time can be sources of further suffering. For example, when Mrs Roula works at the open market, she carries weight as she moves the heavy boxes of fruits and vegetables which aggravates her health. But she also performs strength when she shouts announcing the prices of products for sale. It seems as if she also shouts against precarity and exclusion. Her loud voice demands a space in the social and claims an active independent social position.

Neighbourly intimacies

The strategies of survival are largely enabled by relations of intimacy neighbours have developed. Mrs Roula's project of survival is based on the intimacy she has built for example, with the owner of the open market stall and the grocery store employee. The network of clients that buy cigarettes from her, is also based on neighbourly intimacy. While responses to the precarious situation of a neighbour are also shaped by relations of intimacy as we saw in the described scene at the cafeteria. Hence, I propose to look at experiences of precarity and the struggles against it as shaped by sociality in this urban neighbourhood, through the lens of intimacy. In turn, we can see how sociality is transformed amidst the recreation of intimate sites between daily survival and affective and material reciprocity between neighbours. This way we can also see how the recreation of intimate sites across precarious situations, includes and excludes in modes of dwelling and belonging. The dynamics of intimacy in the neighbourhood, thus, draw attention to the social transformations that come into view in this neighbourhood marked by urban austerity and the present precarious realities of refugees crossing into Europe.

I suggest approaching the neighbourhood then as a form of intimate dwelling. Such affective relation of intimacy is a form of recognition embodied in space and expresses shared realms of sociality directly associated to the structures of power (Berlant 2000, Herzfeld 2005). Intimacy is employed here as a 'zone of familiarity' (Berlant 2000) and as a zone that includes and excludes in the way constellations of people, opinions and practices become part of one's everyday life. It enables as mentioned, 'relationships of practical expedience' (Du Boulay 1979) that allow survival projects, but it would be less than true to say that intimacy has solely a functional role. Instead, intimacy develops in complex and contradictory forms, that are shaped in affective encounters between neighbours in time and space. These refer to the ordinary affects that unfold when neighbours meet and interact in the public and which can give birth to transitions and small passages of threshold (Stewart 2007). Such passages were for example, described in the eventful meetings between female neighbours in the fourth chapter.

This public and affective aspect of neighbourly intimacy is defined by the spatial proximity of the households and a local public space culture aided by Mediterranean climate conditions and social and legal institutions. Neighbourhood invites the people into the public, in co-creating public space and (re)making intimacy in daily affective encounters. For example, intimate sites are built at the open street market, at the todaylicious café, at the corner shop, at the public squares, at the Sunday church liturgy, but also during neighbours' household visits and dialogues across neighbourly small apartment balconies. These sites are terrains on which solidarity, caring but also hostile relations emerge, evolve and transform and shape forms of belonging. Sites than can generate ethical responses in which one can support a neighbour or exclude and even threaten the other. Thus, the notion of intimacy in its neighbourly dimension indicates ways through which one helps the other, but also ways one refuses to accept the other. These involve, as we will see, complex particularities and contradictions across a dynamic and malleable matrix of relations that encompasses histories and eventful affective encounters that recreate boundaries of belonging.

Thus, the affective interaction between Mrs Roula and Mr Nikos I witnessed at the café, describes an ethical and affective aspect of neighbourly intimacy. Mrs Roula's feeling of sadness that morning incited chains of affect and ethical articulations, between Mrs Roula, the employee at the nearby grocery store, Mr Nikos and myself. Intimacy shaped and was shaped by the way Mr Nikos acknowledged Mrs Roula's state and responded to her sadness by simply witnessing and singing to her, that had an affective potential to change in subtle ways feelings, thoughts and modes of being.

But as stressed, these rather spontaneous neighbourly encounters of intimacy do not operate in a single manner, nor do they always bring forth spaces of recognition and friendly interactions. They could lay bare conflicts and hostilities between neighbours that might in turn transfigure in future alliances. Over time and the way time works on relations (Das 2007), hostilities might develop into amity. Neighbourly intimacy often twists and turns and changes from hostility to amity and all the way back. For example, Mrs Roula and Mr Nikos quarrelled and made peace again after a strong conflict linked to a secret confided and betrayed. Another example is provided by the

conflict that emerged between Mrs Roula and her neighbour Mrs Maria, with who she shared often eventful coffee meetings as we saw in chapter four. At some point during my fieldwork, Mrs Roula accused Mrs Maria for letting know the priest and the staff at the church soup kitchen where she received food, about her opinion that the food offered was from materials gone bad and that good quality food materials offered for the impoverished recipients were taken by the priest. According to Mrs Roula, the priest in return informed the police that she sells contraband tobacco, which led to her arrest. Mrs Roula started receiving food from the municipality's soup kitchen the following year and hostilities with Mrs Maria were eventually forgotten. During the time the quarrel lasted, they inquired after each other.

The relations of intimacy show us that shared familiarities between neighbours built in forms of coexistence and are recognised as neighbourhood *(gitonia),* corresponding to a geography of closely located households. The area of Neapoli includes many different neighbourhoods, but often its residents, called Neapolites/tises, perceive the area as one big neighbourhood. This is depicted in expressed opinions such as: 'It is nice that Neapoli is a neighbourhood, we are not afraid that our kids play outdoors'. In this sense, the neighbourhood expresses a characteristic element of sociality and approach towards relating that is indicative of an area likely to be friendly to its residents. Yet, this is refuted at the same time by expressed claims that the area is becoming increasingly dangerous since the 2016 closure of Neapoli's police station and transfer into the neighbouring area of Sykies (following the unification of the administrative units of Neapoli and Sykies implemented under austerity in 2015).

There are occasions that long-term intimacies grow into friendships and build forms of relatedness that run through the gaps of lost and broken relations of kinship, such as the relation of Katerina's (chapter fifth) mother with her long-term neighbour, both of whom live close to Ms Roula and buy cigarettes and handmade marmalades from her. Neighbourly intimacy thus, depicts affective realms of familiarity that can shape friendships and forms of relatedness but also hostilities amidst precarity. In this sense, they describe contradictory and messy everyday zones of familiarity. This becomes complicated once we focus on relations between neighbours of different origin.

Neighbourly intimacies and racism

The neighbourhoods that were the focus of this research but also the whole zone of Neapoli, are highly diverse areas populated by various nationalities and ethnicities. A large part of the population are migrants from the neighbouring country of Albania, and Pontic Greeks that were 'repatriated' from Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Kazakhstan and other former USSR Republics, driven by political changes in the 80s and the 90s (Voutira 1991).[77] Recently new neighbours, mainly from Syria, arrived in the area through a relocation project of refugees from surrounding camps. The project was an EU funded accommodation program, implemented by municipal authorities. Based on my observations of daily neighbourhood conversations and opinions expressed on a Facebook group called 'Residents of Neapoli', the program was largely disapproved by residents.

The new neighbours that moved in produced diverse responses amongst residents. Besides the gestures of welcoming that we will discuss later in this chapter, there have been many tensions, as long-term neighbours - some of which have previously experienced enduring marginality and degrading working conditions as migrant workers- raised complaints. Some refused to accept the newcomers as their new neighbours, and often objected against the school participation of refugee children. The complains did not produce direct confrontations, except from one anonymous attack against a refugee family house. Yet, they were voiced in public conversations in neighbourly encounters and in the social media. The objections nevertheless spawned resentment which was affectively coded in everyday embodied behaviours in the public life of the neighbourhood. Digital connectivity helped spreading feelings of hostility towards the newcomers.

In the everyday intimate sites of the neighbourhood it was often difficult to unknot racism from ordinary interactions. Racism was often manifested violently, not as a physical threat but as a form of pre-operation that makes itself felt affectively, as a

[77] The Greek Pontiacs that migrated to Greece are often called 'homecomers' ('*palinostountes'*), an ideologically laden term employed by the Greek state.

threat that is looming and makes 'ingress' (Massumi 2017).[78] For instance, it was expressed in one's tone of voice, or look, in plain sight and directly felt within the neighbourly intimate. Such racist expressions of muted violence though, sheltered the potentiality of physical threat, as documented in the increase of physical racist attacks during the crisis.[79]

The morning I met for coffee with Mrs Roula and Mr Nikos, they complained to me once more, that 'one cannot listen Greek spoken anymore in the neighbourhood', and that 'the state helps the strangers (*ksenous*), while our own (*diki mas*) search in the garbage for food'. 'They do it again with the Syrian refugees, like they have done in the past with the Albanians', Mr Nikos said. 'What shall we do? change religion so that they notice us?', Mrs Roula complained.[80]

Densely compacted views that are included in this short dialogue portray xenophobic and racist pronouncements that were not unusual. During my fieldwork I heard often similar complains that emphasized a disapproval of increasing migrant population in the area and of the help and support given to refugees instead of the local population who struggled with poverty. Such xenophobic reactions were encouraged by populist politicians and extreme right-wing groups (Aggelopoulos 2000) and were largely influenced by the unapologetically racist rhetoric of local media during the crisis (Dalakoglou 2013) and media visualities of violence, often reproduced in daily life (Papailias 2013). Mrs Roula's and Mr Nikos' opinion that the state privileges refugees and migrants at the expense of Greek citizens, were inspired by controversial news and rumours circulating at the time, that foreclosed houses will be given to refugees recently migrated to Greece, that reductively they translated it as 'the houses of Greeks will be given to refugees'.

[78] Hirchon (2008) has argued that social life in Greece is marked by threats expressed which are most often 'unexecuted', and this describes a 'cultural pattern of elasticity' and an important distinction between 'statements of intention' and 'statements of affect' that confer emotions.

[79] For a map of documented incidents of attacks to migrants in Athens, see http://map.crisis-scape.net/

[80] It is important to note that Mrs Roula and Mr Nikos refuse to change identity cards, because as of the law of protection of personal data introduced in 2000, religion was removed from identity cards.

Firstly, we need to emphasize that Mrs Roula's and Mr Niko's opinions that the state has helped the migrants in the past at the expense of the local population, refute the documented reality of experienced marginality and exclusion by migrants in Greece (King et al. 1998, Lawrence 2005). The intense labour exploitation of migrants in the country linked to cultural changes and broader socio-economic and political processes (Lawrence 2005), has established an illegal migrant exploitation labour market that creates further problems to the bureaucratic obstacles of procedures of legalisation that require legal employment as a precondition (King et al. 1998). Migrants in Greece, apart from Pontic Greeks who were recognised as Greek nationals by the state and acquired citizenship, are denied political, social and cultural rights and struggle under an illegal status (King et al. 1998, Voutira 2006), against present precarious conditions of austerity.

Central in neighbours' complaints against the migrants and refugees, often dyed in racism, were the violent consequences of austerity. Most residents, as we saw, face precarity and various forms of suffering and exclusion. In this context, refugees but also previously migrated populations were seen as a threat to living opportunities and as an impediment to access humanitarian help and provision. This was a period when impoverished neighbours complained daily that 'everything was done for the refugees', while media, academic and humanitarian attention shifted from the austerity-stricken Greeks to the refugees that were crossing Europe escaping the violence of economy and war. Autonomous and humanitarian organisations in Thessaloniki, were mobilised by the reality of the dire living conditions of refugees in the camps and in the streets. Like other places in Greece, there was a great provision of help organised towards the newcomers (Rozakou 2016a, Papataxiarchis 2018).

At the same time, we need to think these complaints within the larger frame of various institutional and ordinary expressions of racism towards migrant citizens documented in anthropological studies on crisis (Athanasiou 2012, Bampilis 2018, Dalakoglou 2013, Herzfeld 2011, Kalantzis 2015, Theodossopoulos 2014a). We need to situate them in a social and political landscape in which citizens' support of the fascist formation Golden Dawn increased to the extent that it became the third parliamentary elected

party in the 2015 elections. But also, within a context set by the previous government of ND ('New Democracy') that gave particular emphasis on immigration and 'directed attention away from the burdens and social disintegration caused by austerity, and projected these problems outward to an 'external' element, one that did not 'belong' to Greek society, and which if eradicated would solve the problem (Kotouza 2019: 215)'. Both the fascist formation of Golden dawn and the state of ND sought to defend the Greek people against constructed internal and external threats that portrayed immigrants as a burden to the local economy (Kotouza 2019: 232). These scapegoating practices were mutually cultivated by the state and citizens (Herzfeld 2011). While a nationalist anti-austerity rhetoric, in which the left opposition resembled the far-right arguments on 'national interest', encouraged a defensive nationalism (Kotouza 2019: 222). [81]

What is striking is that precarity changed the social dynamics of racism. While racist opinions in the past were mainly expressed by a growing middle class (Kandylis and Kavoulakos 2011), during the present crisis unemployed proletarians who recognise migrants as a threat to wages and jobs, have engaged racist discourses (Kotouza 2019). This is illustrated in electoral results that depict urban working-class neighbourhoods as strong concentrations of GD votes. It was seen in the opinions expressed by Mrs Roula and Mr Nikos at the café, that demarcated the opposing positions of 'strangers', the refugees and the previously migrated population, and 'our own', the Greeks defined by a Christian Orthodox identity (that showed the historical significance of conflicts between a Muslim and a Christian identity in the region, re-activated during present migrations of Muslim refugees).

This division between 'strangers' and 'our own', has been widely documented and analysed in previous anthropological works on Greece (Cowan 1990, Herzfeld 1980, 1985, 1987a, 1987b, Papataxiarchis 2006a). As shown, it defines ways through which people form and break alliances, and depicts changing forms of relations (Cowan 1990,

[81] Defensive nationalism depicts the fears of decline and disappearance of the nation that separate the world according to those that are against, and thus a threat, or in support of national interests (Papataxiarchis 2006b).

Herzfeld 1985, 1987, Papataxiarchis 2006a). However here, it is articulated in rather rigid and reductive forms, portraying Greeks as a homogenous group that suffer the consequences of austerity crisis, denying class and gender, and within a context defined by an ethnoreligious homogenous Greek national identity (Papataxiarchis 2006a). It is a direct expression of the framing of crisis in terms of a national intimacy constructed during the crisis, the idea of a homogenous social body in danger and united amidst and against the crisis, discussed in the third and fourth chapters.

The division between 'strangers' and 'our own' describes here the internal segregation of the precarious population in the neighbourhood on the basis of a (hegemonic) national identity, the way the native neighbours felt in material terms that must be protected by the dangerous migrants. As it appears, national identity that provided security and meaning to neighbours dealing with daily impoverishment and increased precarity in their lives, divided neighbours and generated competition and racism (Bourdieu 2016/1999). This links directly to the widespread sense of national intimacy in the crisis but also to the social consequences of the production of precarity, that produce divisions such as those expressed by my two interlocutors that often extend to the native population in the neighbourhood. As shown, the production of precarity is a powerful means to generate competition between workers and nurture beliefs that they have contradictory interests (James 1975). During the recent global crisis of capitalism, we have seen the intensification of such beliefs, depicted in the electoral results of Brexit in the UK and of Trump in the USA. They reflect a strategy of economic recovery that depends on a national sovereignty that will promote the interests of a nationally defined working class (Kotouza 2019).

The racist climax observed in the dynamics of neighbourly intimacy thus, which is also observed in many parts of the word, communicated a perceived threat at both a material and ideological level and made evident the entwinement of racism, defensive nationalism and social precarity (Kalantzis 2015, Theodossopoulos 2014a). It manifests in the hostile divisions amongst neighbours experiencing social precarity and their complaints that perceive the previously migrated population and the new arrivals of refugees in the neighbourhood as a threatening invasion (Bakalaki 2003).

Neighbourly intimacies and solidarity

While many Neapoli residents voiced discontent and hostility towards the refugees that arrived in Greece at the time, there was a notable participation in mobilizations and actions of support and food and clothes distribution to newly arrived refugees. Many neighbours facing severe hardship were not able to offer material donations but offered occasionally voluntary work in food kitchens at the makeshift camp of Idomeni at the border with North Macedonia, organised by the neighbourhood autonomous initiative *Apan*. Participation was often motivated by acknowledgement of shared precarious situations between impoverished neighbours and the refugees stranded at the borders and camps. For instance, during the journey to Idomeni camp, Mrs Roula forced the car driver to stop and distribute packaged food she was carrying with her which she had collected from shops in the neighbourhood, in the sight of many refugees walking on main roads and across vast fields. While we worked in the kitchen, she overfilled the packages of food disregarding instructions and stressing to other volunteers that she knows 'what it means to suffer and feel hungry'. Other residents amongst whom few struggling with deteriorating living conditions, shared material provisions with their new neighbours and with other refugees living at the camps around the city of Thessaloniki. These acts of caring and sharing comprised strategic acts of welcoming and including refugees in the neighbourhood and the city.

They form part of the documented 'celebrations' of informal giving (Rozakou 2016a) and its 'diversification' (Theodossopoulos 2016) in austerity Greece, during what has been called the 'European crisis of migration'. This has been encouraged, as shown, by the new SYRIZA government that applauded and supported anti-racist actions and grassroots mobilisations of solidarity towards the refugees, creating a narrative of 'patriotic solidarity' as a form of patriotic but cosmopolitan duty (Papataxiarchis 2016). The temporary character of the new arrivals and the absence of long-term demands was also an important dimension of such responses of support to refugees. But acts of support are also part of a long history of local values of neighbourhood sharing driven by the significance of care and assistance in the local Orthodox Christian communities (Hirschon 1989). Therefore, there is a continuity in these moments of sustaining common life amidst precarity in the neighbourhood.

Some of the long-term residents welcomed the newcomers as they see in them their families' histories of uprooting and displacement and associate the refugees' losses and difficulties with those of their parents and grandparents. They recognise in the lives of the refugees arriving in Greece, in the city of Thessaloniki and the neighbourhood, the struggles of their relatives in the past to construct a novel life against institutional abandonment and the negative and ambivalent ways they were received by the locals. In this context, historical memory is a facet of neighbourhood intimacy and formed the basis of political struggles towards inclusion in the neighbourhood. For instance, when the anonymous petrol bomb attack against a neighbourly house of a refugee family occurred, a protest was organised by local autonomous political initiatives and participants reclaimed a racism-free neighbourhood and sprayed graffiti in the area's central square declaring 'a neighbourhood of refugees'.

The act of welcoming and including the newcomers in this neighbourhood of refugees and migrants, was exhibited in a public event organised in April 2016 at the central square of the area, the clock (*to roloi*), by the neighbourhood autonomous political initiative named Apan, a group discussed in the following chapter. The event titled 'Immigrants and refugees: Neapoli has a space for all of us, refugees welcome', included talks by some members of the group, academics, and a priest. However, the participation of residents was exceptionally low, as only around fifty people gathered in the square that evening and many neighbours stopped only briefly, and mainly out of curiosity, to listen to the talks. Whereas there was a greater participation by neighbours at another event organised on July 2017, by a nationalist political group formed during austerity called 'Assembly of Greeks' (by a self-proclaimed billionaire that alleged he could help the country 'exit the crisis', called Soras, not to be confused with George Soros). This image is characteristic of the dominance of nationalist views of the crisis and xenophobic attitudes towards the migrant and refugee population in the area.

At the first event, while I was sitting in the back row of chairs arranged at the square with Mrs Roula, many of her neighbours stopped by on their regular walk to the main

square and around, to ask about the event. Many saluted Mrs Roula and disappeared with expressed disapproval, while couple of her neighbours sat next to us, curious to listen to speeches, especially since one was made by a local priest. They raised several accusations towards the refugees and left after a few minutes. Mrs Roula's position and attitude here is important to understand how the dynamics of neighbourly intimacy are much more complex than a simple opposition between racism and solidarity, across experiences of precarity.

Complex neighbourly intimacies

Whereas Mrs Roula expressed often racist opinions, participated at the whole event organised in support of refugees and migrants in the neighbourhood and at the kitchen at the Idomeni camp. The initiative that organised the event and the voluntary work at the kitchen, was a core realm in Mrs Roula's life. She attended the weekly Sunday meals organised by the initiative and helped with cooking and cleaning. She perceived sometimes herself as a member of the group and hold intimate relations with its long-term members who were also her neighbours. Hence, on the one hand she demonstrated her devotion to the group by being present during the whole event, while she approved the complaints against migrants and refugees expressed by her other neighbours that stopped by and sat briefly with her.

The everyday politics of inclusion and belonging amidst experienced precarity seem to complicate the dynamics of neighbourly intimacy and demand an approach that moves beyond the antithesis of xenophobia and solidarity, and demarcated fields of negative and positive reciprocity (Rozakou and Gkara 2013). This is demonstrated in Mrs Roula's daily struggle for survival amidst precarity, a struggle to secure the material resources but also a struggle to be recognized. This means to exist within schemes of recognizability in the context of a neighbourly intimacy defined largely by a nationalist and xenophobic belonging. Illustrating this I present the following occasions that took place during my fieldwork.

Once we were sitting at the todaylicious café with Mrs Roula and couple of her "Greek neighbours", Mrs Roula started talking with her neighbour Mrs Vanta, originally from Albania, who was sitting at the next table. Mrs Vanta was inquiring about the food distributed at the neighbourhood autonomous initiative and Mrs Roula gave her a brusque reply that 'there was no food left'. Mrs Vanta with a noted irritation said to her that 'you say this because I am not Greek'. Mrs Roula's attitude and tone of voice showed the way racism was affectively folded and openly disguised into an apparent sensible communication. It was not so much what she said, the worlds she used, but the tone and gesture that marked an insistence on drawing lines of inclusion and exclusion and arranging the priorities of needs amidst precarity across boundaries of national identities.

But couple of weeks after when I met Mrs Roula at the same café, she was having an intimate conversation with Mrs Vanta sharing stories and exchanging advises about difficulties they both face in the present. The atmosphere was extremely friendly between them. This made me think about the apparent difference between the two meetings. On the one hand, the more private one to one interaction between Mrs Roula and Mrs Vanta was affectionate, whereas the previous interaction in front of others, was an example of expressed racism as a structure of affect and neighbourly intimacy.

The different modes of relating revealed that perhaps the previous café meeting expressed a performance Mrs Roula gave in public. A performance that sought the approval and recognition of her Greek neighbours. It seemed as if Mrs Roula was trying to prove to others that she defends a nationalist based neighbourly intimacy. As if she was performing a patriotic identity in front of her Greek neighbours that was at the same time a racist performance structured in affect. A performance that was displayed in public and sought recognition of "how good at being a patriot" she was in the presence of others to gain inclusion and admiration. A performance that resembles the male agonistic performances described by Herzfeld (1985), in which masculinity is defined by 'being good at being a man' in public.

We need to think such performances of hostility that contradict the friendly terms neighbourly intimacy manifests in other moments, in relation to present and past life histories. For example, we must situate Mrs Roula's desire for inclusion that embraces a xenophobic nationalist identity within the historical conditions of assimilation under the violence entailed in the construction of a homogenous cultural nationalism in the area of Greek Macedonia. The construction of ethnic homogeneity included state policies of assimilation destined to root out a 'linguistic and culturally complex Ottoman heritage (Cowan 1997: 164)', population exchanges and the creation of a narrative of Greek superiority over the "barbarian" Balkan neighbours as central in the imaginary of Greek nationalism and fortified each time Greece's position in Europe is questioned (Calotychos 2013). Slav speakers were not only discouraged to speak their language under a 'hegemonic project of linguistic Hellenization (Cowan 1997: 159)', but they faced violent forces of assimilation (Danforth 1997, Karakasidou 1997). Poor, peasant and Slav speakers, as Mrs Roula's father, were treated with contempt and called, in derogatory terms, 'Bulgarians'. According to Mrs Roula, her father was called as such because he was a 'true Macedonian', identifying a Macedonian identity with a Greek nationalist identity (Green 2005) and making evident the conditions under which her father and herself, embraced with eagerness Greek nationalism amidst the contradictory identities and blurred boundaries of post-Ottoman coexistence (Bryant 2016). The politics of inclusion and national belonging under the weight of precarity in the present, are thus complexly entwined with history and the creation of ethnic homogeneity in the area. Belonging and the desire for inclusion act in many ways in the present crisis of austerity as we will see, cultivating a form of racist and misogynist nationalism that matches the normative and exclusionary terms under which the crisis was politically managed (Athanasiou 2012).

As illustrated in the fourth chapter, female neighbours develop forms of intimacy and solidarity between them on the basis of shared burdens suffered by the increase of social reproduction work. Yet, they are also complicit with inequalities and exclusions by reproducing patriarchal discourses associated with the heteronormative institution of the family household, *the nikokirio*, and attached roles of mother and housewife. Couple of Greek women in the neighbourhood, one the owner of a local café, have

insinuated for example, that Mrs Roula's present precarious situation was all her fault because she failed to make sensible financial management in the past according to the model of a good housewife and mother. They also accused her of spending money recklessly in what they considered as anti-domestic practices, celebrating with boyfriends at Greek night-clubs (*mpouzoukia*). Similarly, a close friend and neighbour of Mrs Roula, who provided caregiving to an old bedridden man in the neighbourhood, without receiving payments for four months as his family claimed financial problems, was accused by other female neighbours of being lazy and not good enough for her job. Both women, being accused of gender indiscipline and failing their obligations as caregivers, housewives and mothers, seemed to remain indifferent to these claims, but they also seemed to engage with greater strength the patriarchal and nationalist ideology that marginalized them and individualised the social and political conditions of their experiences of precarity. In the period following the negative rumours, they fortified a patriarchal nationalist identity evident in their opinions and practices, as what seemed to be a response to marginality guided by a desire of inclusion in the neighbourhood groups that opposed immigration. This is characteristic of the way a misogynist and racist nationalism is mutually cultivated in the present across multiple levels of precarity, creating loops of exclusion. It is as if being included to the national intimacy against the crisis and austerity, compels citizens to comply with acts and norms that govern dominant forms of recognition and perpetuate forms of racism and misogynism.

On the other hand, the struggle to secure daily survival by employing neighbourhood networks, signified that Mr Roula befriended her Albanian neighbours, even though she often blamed them for criminal activities in the area. During severe cold days, she refused to stay at her daughter's central heating equipped flat in fear that 'Albanians might break into her house' during her absence. These expressions of 'Albanophobia', widely shared by many of her neighbours that attempt to re-establish an assumed Greek superiority (Agelopoulos 2000, Bakalaki 2003), were combined with praising Albanians 'for helping each other in the neighbourhood'. While Greeks were accused for refusing help to each other typified in a popular expression 'The neighbour's goat must die' ('*Na pethani I katsika tou gitona'*). The goat, in this metaphor of malicious

intentionality behind actions and relations between Greeks, stands for what the neighbour has: status, job, material possessions.

For all her professed xenophobia, Mrs Roula visits daily the neighbourhood's Albanian male dominated coffee shop (*kafenio*) to sell tobacco. While she has built a friendly relation with her Albanian neighbour living in the flat downstairs. It was she and not her Greek neighbour at the opposite balcony, who helped her when she fell and hurt one day, Mrs Roula has explained to me, stressing which are the neighbourly relations that failed to support her and which ones that they do.

The complexities of intimacy in the daily life of the neighbourhood reflects specific changes during austerity but also certain forms that survived. On the one hand, 'the crisis of political legitimacy' during austerity signified a general devaluation of central politics and changed how people perceive and deal with alterity in the intimate spheres of daily life, turning xenophobia into racism and violence (Papataxiarchis 2018). On the other hand, previous forms (based on the segmentary logic inherited by the Ottoman period) of assimilating alterity by turning 'cultural identity into social relation' subsisted (Papataxiarchis 2006b: 454).

However, the austerity reforms produced not solely socio-political changes that ruptured a long-term bipartite political system but also politico-ideological confusions, across the anti-austerity struggles (Kotouza 2019, Theodossopoulos 2013). [82] In the anti-austerity context, the fascist formation GD entered the parliament advocating such a clear racist and anti-austerity policy. Meanwhile, small left and (ultra) right political party coalitions were formed based on anti-austerity politics. This political scene in which opposed political and ideological positions appeared to fight a common struggle against austerity, was reflected in citizen's muddled political and ideological positions. Mrs Roula for instance, claimed two different votes in the 2015 elections; a vote to *Golden Dawn*, because 'they resist' and because candidates in Thessaloniki

[82] The bipartite political system refers to the post-dictatorial democratic rule, wherein the two parties of ND (New Democracy) and PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement) exchanged government since the fall of the military Junta, in 1974.

'are not like the violent Athenian ones', and a vote to a deputy candidate of *Antarsia*, a coalition of radical left groups. Both *Golden Dawn* and *Antarsia* have a clear anti-austerity stance, but with a clear opposing politico-ideological basis.

Fig. 8. The Albanian coffee shop in Neapoli.

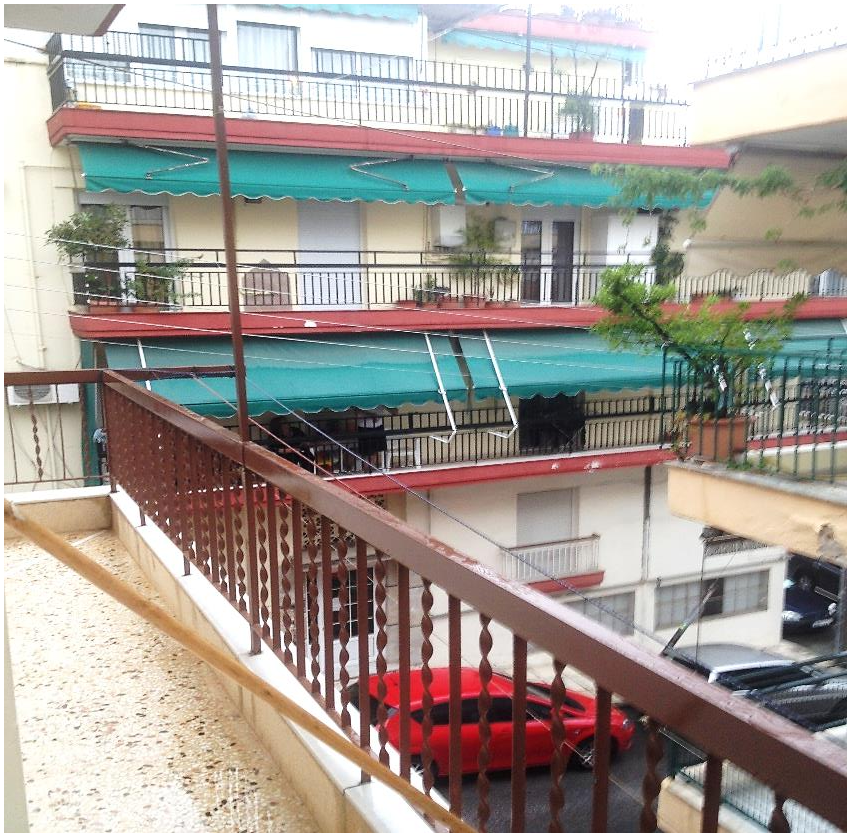


Fig. 9. Mrs Roula's balcony.

Fig. 10. Mrs Roula with the owner of the stall she works at the open market.

The affective complexities

Besides the discussed complexities in the way intimacy and precarity interlinking is perceived and managed between neighbours of different nationality, the majority of articulated opinions show that most Greek residents in Neapoli act with xenophobic and racist sentiments towards their migrant and refugees' neighbours. Yet, at the same time, neighbourly intimacy means that neighbours of different origin meet, talk and interact in the everyday. The public meetings nurture an immanent potentiality of transformation in the way intimacy is organised across intersections of precarious situations. A few examples that follow demonstrate that daily encounters between neighbours involve thresholds and repositions that can only be approached through the affective aspect of neighbourly intimacy that qualitatively changes a situation. Sometimes affective interactions and intersections of precarity overtake the politics of inclusion and recognition according to a nationally based intimacy and break free from loops of exclusion.

For example, as mentioned Mrs Roula spends time at the local Albanian coffee shop (*kafenion*) through which she creates and sustains a network of "clients" for selling tobacco and her handmade products. Yet, during her visits she drinks coffee or a local spirit (*tsipouro*) through which she engages in modes of reciprocation and invitation *(kerasma)* and relates with her Albanian neighbours in non-hierarchical modes and on the basis of 'emotional alliances' built in commensality (Papataxiarchis 1991). The coffee shop (*kafenio*), is a space marked by culture and nationality manifested in the big Albanian flag hanging on the centre. When Mrs Roula and (Greek) frequenters visit the place, the hierarchies of nationally based neighbourly intimacy reconfigure. These daily intimate neighbourly encounters and reciprocations linked to shared practices of consumption in the coffee shop (*kafenio)*, create a social microcosmos that changes the way neighbourly intimacy is organised. In Mrs Roula's case, it blurs the boundaries between strategic act and pleasure and opens a whole new relational field of intimacy as she enjoys the company of the coffee shop's regulars and proudly claims that 'Albanians love' her.

The way affective interactions unfold amidst residents' actions of surviving precarity, generate complex relations of intimacy in the neighbourhood and manifold points of convergence that contest the homogeneity and hierarchies of neighbourly intimacy. Another example is provided by the complex sites of intimacy between newly arrived and long-term female neighbours and their link to a gender aspect of neighbourly intimacy, and specifically the way women share practices of social reproduction in the everyday. These forms of intimacy are based on 'unpredictable chance encounters' and come as a 'surprise' in 'the habitual estrangement of everyday life (Boym 2000: 229)'.

They became possible through random neighbourhood encounters and unexpected affective reciprocities, surges of kindness in daily activities. For instance, once a long-term female resident coming out of the corner store offered to repair her new neighbour's baby stroller which had just been broken. Although this woman, a single mother that struggled amidst extreme precarity to support her disabled daughter, had opposed the new arrivals fiercely, she developed over time common strategies of social reproduction with her Iraqi new neighbour in the caring of the children and securing survival. Likewise, Mrs Roula and another of her female neighbour who were strong opponents of the presence of refugees in the area and complained often about the donations offered to them, started to regularly donate to their female refugee neighbours vegetables and fruits from the local open market they worked at, despite the objections of the stall owner.

These acts seem to derive their force from a gender aspect of neighbourhood intimacy, the everyday labour of unpaid social reproduction that is performed by both long-term and newly arrived female residents. Practices of offering and supporting that develop between these women can be seen as common forms of survival against precarity and attempts to share social reproduction, the amalgam of activities and relations that 'reconstitute' life daily discussed in the fourth chapter (Federici 2012). As argued, these practices of organizing common forms of social reproduction through

which women share their struggles as unpaid laborers, evince 'revolutionary' ways of living and organizing the future (Fedirici 2012). [83]

In this case, they describe ways through which female neighbours improve material conditions amidst experienced precarity while they undo divisions and prevailing hierarchies and change the dynamics of neighbourly intimacy. They make evident that acts of generosity 'cannot be read in terms of individual agents and intentions, but rather in terms of an ethics of proximity that resides within everyday life (Han 2018: 339)' in neighbourly intimate spaces. As Han's (2012) work on a low-income neighbourhood in neoliberal Chile shows, neighbourly attention unravels a whole universe of ethical acts of care based on the precarious temporalities and embodied relationalities between neighbours. In our case here, the ethics of proximity refer not to national identities but rather to fluid subject positions that move even ambiguously between thresholds of generosity and understanding as they emerge in the intimate spaces in the neighbourhood. Static positions exist and prevail in discourse as we saw, but they can become quivering states as neighbourly and affective intimate spaces unfold in the everyday. These spaces shape the ways neighbours meet, talk and depend on each other, the way they share experiences of precarity. The more relationally attuned experiences turn out to be, the more plastic, collective and inclusive they become.

There is a characteristic local expression that manifests the plasticity of relations and the connections drawn between distinct experiences of precarity. The local saying 'we boil in the same pot' ('*sto idio kazani vrazoume'*), describes shared troubles among people and shared precarious positions and vulnerabilities. Who is in the pot (*kazani*) that boils, and is the source of suffering, varies per context and positions. Who boils in the same pot with who, shows how distinct experiences can converge following recognitions of the pain and problems of the other. It was articulated by neighbours few times to describe how they, Greeks, 'boil in the same pot' with the refugees.

[83] Federici's (2012) autonomist politics approach stressed specifically the revolutionary potential of non-market ways of organizing collective experiments of sharing social reproduction.

Conclusion

In this chapter I explored relations of intimacy and present experiences of social precarity, and the way they shape each other in a low-income urban neighbourhood in Thessaloniki. This is a neighbourhood of refugees built by Minor Asia refugees after the 1922 exchange of populations. Since the area has received many internal and external migrants and recently refugees from Middle East and Africa. We saw the way precarity registers in this low-income neighbourhood in affective atmospheres and how it is structured by contexts of inequality, precarious labour, historical circumstances of impoverishment and various forms of marginalisation. The production of precarity under austerity registers in suffering and health problems. It includes experienced vulnerabilities and compromises of autonomy produced by the effects of institutional support provided during the crisis. The strategies of survival residents undertake as responses to precarity and passivity, are largely based on neighbourly intimacy and the networks of relations it builds. They describe the way residents emerge as 'political actors' and how their survival struggles are political, seen in the efforts to 'bring about a different kind of everyday (Das and Randeria 2015: S4)'.

From the perspective of intimacy, we explored the different ways the neighbourhood emerges through the dynamics of sociality and how these are shaped by and shape experiences of precarity. Intimacy appears to be 'antagonistic' (Sing 2011), messy and paradoxical, as it extends simultaneously to hostility but also, to understanding and assistance. In this sense, intimacy describes a form of 'moral relatedness between potentially hostile neighbours' (Singh 2011). Neighbours that might be hostile in one threshold share common aspirations and experiences on another threshold (Singh 2011). Amidst overriding modes of sociality demarcated by competition and suspicion, intimacy shapes friendships and even webs of relatedness but it also gives way to enmities. [84]

[84] Ethnographies that have focused on small communities in Greece, emphasize the way extra-domestic sociality is defined by mistrust and competition (Campbell 1964, Cowan 1990, Du Boulay 1979, Friedl 1962, Herzfeld 1985).

Hence, certain expressions of neighbourly intimacy signal the reproduction of normative attitudes and relations, of boundaries and hierarchies that often reproduce loops of exclusion and cruelties. These are seen in everyday neighbourhood scenes of recognition that involve threats and promises of belonging, scenes of 'intimate publicity' (Stewart 2000). But intimacy can develop also into forms of engaging with and responding to the precarious situation of the other, the neighbour. Its dynamic operation and way of unfolding and changing in time and affective spaces created, harbours the possibility of transformation of neighbourhood sociality and of dealing with forms of alterity.

The ethnography revealed distinct forms of neighbourly intimacy amidst precarious situations. On the one hand, some long-term residents try to make the neighbourhood a community founded on the interiority of belonging and on a kind of hierarchical intimacy that denies the precarity of the others and produces hostility, and that seems to lay the ground for xenophobia and racism. On the other hand, the neighbourhood emerges as an inclusive realm of belonging, as the product of a kind of intimacy organised around collective memory of past experiences of migration and sharing and caring practices in everyday life. Yet, these distinct registers seem to overlap and to generate complex forms of intimacy. Neighbours that act in xenophobic ways and even express racism in public, develop at the same time friendly and caring relations with their migrant and refugee neighbours. These complex intimacies are linked as much to surviving precarity and the desire to be included in schemes of recognisability and social belonging, as much to emergent acts of generosity and kindness in affective encounters. Complex affective intimacies built in daily encounters renegotiate the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion (Faier 2009) and entail acts of generosity that exceed the dialectics of xenophobia and solidarity and surpass individual agency. Yet, they tend to make up relationships that remain unrecognised in discourse, while xenophobia increases.

Nevertheless, such ethical acts are valuable, since, as it appears, racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia are so normalised in the everyday that hostility and violence looms over certain bodies (Athanasiou 2012). In the case of this

neighbourhood, we saw how targeted categories were assigned a specific label, such as criminality for the migrants and immorality for single mothers that justified aggression and indifference towards social precarity. These everyday forms of neighbourhood life circulate an 'affective economy of hostility' that shapes an effect which assumes as its driving force (Carastathis 2015). This is important here as the neighbourhood can be the basis of organisation of great racism. In Athens, the violent attacks towards immigrants were organised by the fascist formation Golden Dawn at the level of the neighbourhood and based on national intimacy during the crisis. This underlines the significance of the political implications of neighbourly intimacy and as we will see in the following chapter, it reveals how valuable can be intimate relations between neighbours that grow into organised political forms of sharing between people, irrespective of nationality, gender and race.

Chapter Seven: Sharing

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore how a political initiative called *Apan* organised at the level of the neighbourhood and linked to the emergent movement of solidarity during the crisis, develops political forms of sharing and inclusive forms of intimate relations. The focus is on the weekly commensal events organised and enabled by a rhizomatic formation of people that help and participate in *Apan*. The sharing of food, emotions, memories and experiences in these events draw attention to the pleasures and politics of sharing that are practiced by this neighbourhood-based initiative. It reveals how the space of the initiative develops as an urban threshold of change and a collectivity open to all residents and citizens of the city who choose to participate. The openness develops in accord with the initiative's politics against exclusion and loneliness that mark the precarious situations produced in these neighbourhoods under austerity. In this sense, the political commensal events interrupt the production of precarity and enable the collectivization of individual experiences making evident how these are political and social experiences. Central here are emergent affective atmospheres in space and across bodies and stories shared, and how can these make citizens feel safe. But also, the intimacies created that can make people move beyond stereotypes and hostilities. The aesthetic, ethical and affective basis of the politics of sharing, the quality of food, the way it is served and shared, are key non-compromising aspects of the politics of Apan, but also a locus for constant reconsideration and re-affirmation over what constitutes the political and how it should be enacted. These aspects shape a politics practiced with affirmation and intimate care by members of Apan and are intrinsically connected to the history of the group as a big company of friends. Apan is a prime exemplar of the politics of precarity organised around common neighbourhood-based concerns and through forms of embodied knowledge.

Sunday meals at the autonomous initiative in the neighbourhood

Everything is a lie
A breath, a sigh
Like a flower, some hand
One dawn will cut us down

'Like this it is!' murmured Mrs Roula before the song ended. [85] 'We are all going to die. Be buried in graves. What is the difference?', said looking at me with her big emerald green eyes, while preparing the bowls of salad. It was the weekly Sunday lunch at the autonomous initiative in the neighbourhood called *Apan* (*Aftonomi paremvasi Neapoliton)*- (Autonomous Intervention of Neapolites). Mr Pavlos was setting up the tables while I was filling red copper aluminium jugs with wine, and Mara, a long-term member of *Apan*, was placing glasses at the tables. We had arrived earlier to prepare everything for the meal and when we finished with the preparations, members of *Apan* who had offered to cook that day, delivered massive trays of freshly baked food, beef with potatoes.

People arrived and exchanged smiles, hugs and kisses, while the music was slowly covered by voices and laughs. A sense of conviviality, of being together, forced me to plunge into the moment. It seemed as if all the disputes and rivalries of neighbourhood daily life were resolved. As if the wall of hostilities and oppositions that emerges between neighbours during the week collapsed. There, in the bellow the stairs space of *Apan*, with the interior stone walls, the small bar surrounded by high chairs, the scattered in space long-adjusted tables and the smaller corner ones, under the low ceiling and with the pleasant enthusiasm of a novel meal just about to begin, people seemed to transgress enmities and conflicts.

Guests and members of the initiative of *Apan* sat on the tables together.[86] There were six members and about sixty-two guests. At the table I sat, everyone seemed to enjoy

[85] The song is called 'life has two doors' and was sung by Sotiria Bellou, a famous Greek singer of rebetiko music.
[86] The people that participate in the meals are called by members of *Apan* 'guests'.

a sense of commensal sharing and there were common plates of salad, dips and cheese in the middle. I listened Mrs Georgia, a sixty years old woman from Georgia, praising the taste of the beef while she explained to other people on the table that her husband was absent because he fell ill by yesterday's day construction labor. On the other side of the table, Mrs Zoe had turned silent and looked as if she was absorbed in her thoughts and feelings.

Suddenly, Mara came to our table looking for volunteers for the preparations of the following Sunday meal. She looked at Mrs Zoe and commented to her that, 'Zoitsa, your hair looks nice'. [87] The sound in Mara's voice instilled tenderness in the worlds spoken and heard, and Mrs Zoe seemed overwhelmed. She stood straight at the chair and smiled, covering her mouth with her hand, embarrassed to show her missing teeth. Then she begun to talk about the day's food and her village. She talked fast as if she was trying to fill past moments of silence.

After seconds and dessert were served and the food left was distributed into plastic to go containers, people started living. Few guests stayed chatting and drinking with couple of *Apan* members. Lefteris, a long-term member and one of the day's cookers, was moping the floor while listening carefully to Mrs Roula's instructions on how to get grease off his cooking tray. Mr Pavlos was taking turns with me and Lena in hand washing and drying the dishes, glasses, and cutlery, while Mrs Zoe was putting them away in the cupboards. It was now playing a *Kazantzidis* song, a popular folk music Greek singer that sung the pains of past Greek diaspora. While Mr Pavlos was narrating stories of working as a kitchen porter and cook assistant when he lived in Germany in the past. Later we went for coffee at the todaylicious café with Mrs Roula, Mrs Soula and Mr Panayotis and talked about the Apan meals. All three of them agreed that they enjoyed them as 'something social, sharing nice food with friends' and Mrs Roula stressed 'how kind' Apan members are and wished for 'God to keep them all safe'.

[87] The employment of diminutives endings for names, such as *Zoitsa* (instead of Zoe), or *Maraki* (instead of Maria), can be a form of affectionate address.

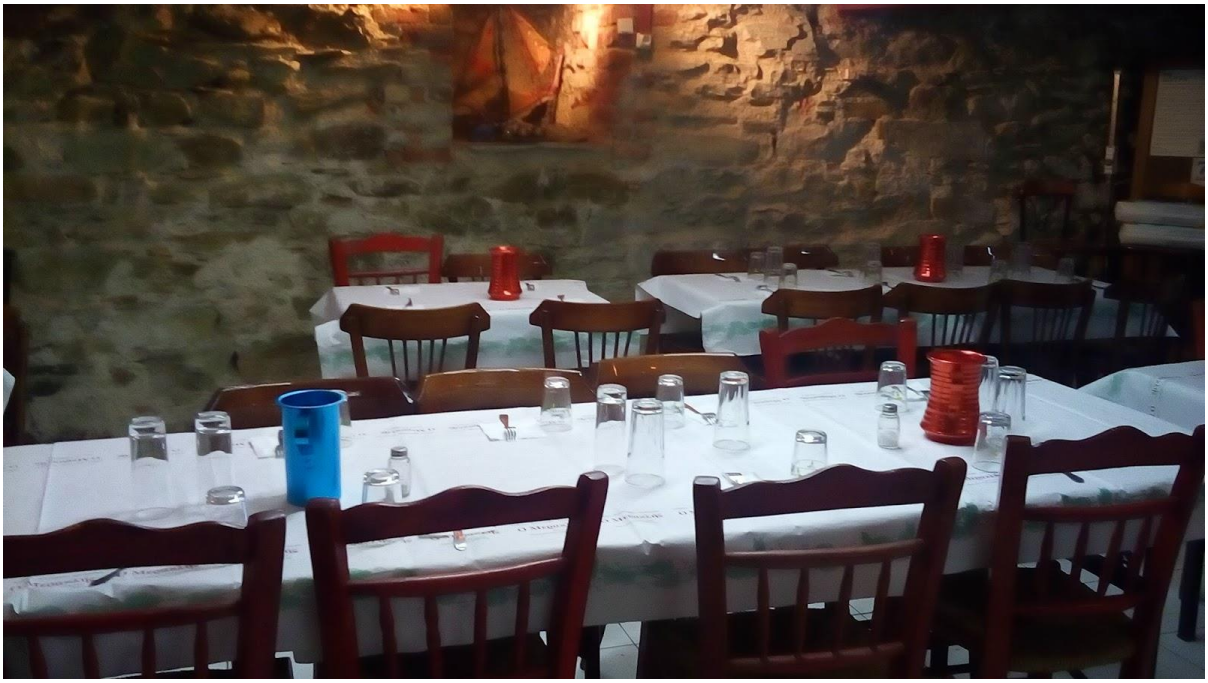


Fig. 11. The Sunday meal preparation at Apan.

Fig. 12. Mrs Soula and Mr Panayotis after the meal.

Notions of solidarity

The Sunday meals at *Apan* started in 2015. Members and sometimes their friends and family, take turns to cook each Sunday at their houses and bring the freshly prepared food at *Apan*, just before the meal starts at 1,30 pm. During the week, there are coffee and cake meetings organized for all neighbours. The organized coffee and meal events are part of the initiative's 'actions of solidarity' with the neighbours that experience daily hardship. In this sense, they form part of the emergent solidarity actions in Greece as responses to austerity (Cabot 2016, Rakopoulos, 2016, Rozakou 2016a, Theodossopoulos 2016).

Solidarity as a response to austerity in Greece, includes various and often opposing, political projects and ideological approaches that assign different shades of meaning (Papataxiarchis 2018). From the "only for Greeks" food distributions organized by the fascist formation Golden Dawn, to the solidarity campaigns organized by local corporate media networks, the introduced during austerity "solidarity taxes" and the emergent solidarity grassroots autonomous initiatives, in every case, solidarity acquires distinct ideological and political meaning. Anthropological attention has focused on the prevailing left and anarchist-politics based autonomous grassroots structures of solidarity to citizens (with or without papers). In this framework, solidarity has been ethnographically examined as an ethical and political idea and a motivational force for action: for giving and sharing in times of crisis. As shown, solidarity forms the basis for various projects of: anti-middleman food markets (Agelopoulos 2018, Rakopoulos 2016), social clinics and pharmacies (Cabot 2016), networks of food and clothes distribution (Theodossopoulos 2016), support to refugees (Rozakou 2016a), and social kitchens for refugees (Papataxiarchis 2018).

The main points emphasized in the rich ethnographic analysis concern the important ways solidarity acts in replacing hierarchical relations, linked to local practices of hospitality (Papataxiarchis 2018, Rozakou 2016a). But also, the various ways it reinvents citizenship (Cabot 2016) and sociality along inclusivity and mutuality (Cabot 2016, Rakopoulos 2016, Rozakou 2016a), and re-signifies the 'gift taboo' by expanding

generous sharing and celebrating giving (Rozakou 2016a).[88] At the same time solidarity emerges not as a Greek 'paradox' (Rozakou 2016b), but a historical outcome and reconfiguration of local socio-political formations and practices (Dalakoglou, 2012, Herzfeld, 2016, Rozakou 2016b, Papataxiarchis 2014, 2018).[89]

The meal events at *Apan*, as we will see in what follows, manifest the idea of solidarity documented in recent anthropological research. At the same time, they entail the conflicting expressions of solidarity under austerity, as they involve the envisions and materializations of alternative views and practices while being entangled in moralities of neoliberalization (Cabot 2016, Muechlebach 2012).[90] Hence, the meal events at *Apan* can be understood in relation to the ethnographic background of solidarity. Yet, as we will see, the meals at *Apan* and the life and history of the initiative, cannot be described as a neat political project. But as shown, neither solidarity is homogenous and uniform as it crosses boundaries of practices and ideas. For example, it can be recreated across overlaps of humanitarianism and solidarity (Theodossopoulos 2016) and activism and employment (Rakopoulos 2018). Similarly, the *Apan* collective involves multiple intersections, diversely motivated offerings, and various multiplicities that cannot easily fall under a single ideological and political "banner", nor do members wish that they do.

Rhizomes of help

The Sunday meals at *Apan* are celebratory and mundane at the same time. They are ordinary meals in terms of the way participants share food in the way they would have

[88] As Rozakou (2016: 197) notes, present forms of one direction giving dis-associate from local perceptions of 'the malevolent carriers of *ipohreosi* (obligation) since the burden of *hreos* (debt) affects Greek society to an unprecedented extend'.

[89] Solidarity has been linked to top down regulations of public sociality and promoted volunteerism under processes of modernization and Europeanization of Greece (Rozakou 2016b). It has also been viewed as a continuation of a history of local grassroots mobilizations (Dalakoglou 2012) and a reconfiguration of the dominant local segmentary logic linked to local cultural responses to alterity (Papataxiarchis 2018) and to a constantly changing pattern of forming alliances between outsiders and insiders (Herzfeld 2016). As noted, during austerity, antagonism and hostility are re-directed towards a common perceived threat, the European and International Institutions that manage austerity, generating solidarity between locals (Herzfeld 2016).

[90] This refers to the 'new cultures of volunteerism', the moral and affective economies seen by the state as socially beneficial that describe the various way citizens take responsibility for their own welfare while the state retreats from its obligations and provisions towards its citizens (Muehlebach 2012).

shared food with family and/or friends at home or at a restaurant on a Sunday. As a Sunday meal is a 'major event' as it is the 'climax' of the week's lunches and as it usually includes meat (Douglas 2003/1966).[91] From another angle the meals constitute "political celebrations", as we will see, in terms of the repositions and interruptions created in the production of precarity.

The meals at *Apan* usually involve plenty of freshly well prepared and tasty food. This requires of course, large offerings of time and resources, and thus, many volunteers to prepare and clean the meals every Sunday. One could mention many relations that contribute to the organization every Sunday. First the relatives of members: sisters, wives, husbands, mothers, fathers, aunts and so on. Secondly, the friends, colleagues and neighbours of members. These relations shape ceaseless connections that make up the "army" of volunteers for the meal events, and produce a rhizomatic scheme of provision of help, called by *Apan* members: 'friends of *Apan'*.

Usually four to six people are needed to prepare the whole meal: around seventy portions of the same dish and dessert. Most of the people that offer to cook for the meal events are ethically and politically motivated and driven by the idea of solidarity. Yet, sometimes motivations are guided by, or combined with, different individual incentives. For example, once, a whole Sunday meal was prepared by a single 'friend of *Apan'* and her husband in commemoration of her father's death anniversary.

It has been widely acknowledged that experiences of precarity during austerity saturate practices of solidarity (Cabot 2016, Rakopoulos 2016, Rozakou 2016a, Theodossopoulos 2016). Similarly, solidarity driven help provision in *Apan* is motivated by personal experiences of deterioration of living conditions. People that offer to cook are experiencing economic difficulties which they link to guests' experiences of poverty and exclusion. But people who offer support might be motivated by precarity experienced in the past. For example, a member of *Apan* that migrated to Greece few years ago from Afghanistan, prepares a whole meal of Afghan

[91] For Orthodox Greeks, Sunday is an important day that symbolizes the resurrection of Christ, and many of the participants at *Apan* meals visit the church for the Divine Liturgy on Sunday mornings.

cuisine, once every month or two months. Despite earning considerably less by working as a plumber, he saves from monthly expenses to financially support the meal. 'It costs', as he says, '100 euros for a meal, which equals few nights out less per month'. His experience of migration inspires him to offer help to fellow citizens facing difficulties and exclusion in the present. This portrays the help offered as an understanding of one's abilities in relation to others' needs. An expression of 'baseline communism' practiced the truth is, by most of the people who offer to cook the meals at *Apan*. 'The understanding that, unless people consider themselves enemies, if the need is considered great enough, or the cost considered reasonable enough, the principle of "from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs" will be assumed to apply (Graeber 2011: 98).'[92]

The politics of sharing

The preparation and consumption of food at the meal events is not solely an activity of an ethical and political quality but also, of a pleasure shared (Graeber 2011). Considering that 'for most human beings, the most pleasurable activities almost always involve sharing something (Graeber 2011: 99)', the meal events express the pleasure of sharing food and drinks. This points to 'a certain communism of the senses (Graeber 2011: 99)', that can lead to states of *kefi* (good life) (Papataxiarchis 1991, 1999).[93] Pleasures with political dimensions that are based on the determination to share.

The practice of sharing food is a sensorial experience through which people communicate and exchange memories (Sutton 2010, 2011, Serematakis 1993, 1994). It describes a passage from matter to memory through imagination, along which memories, but also emotions are created and shared (Serematakis 1993, 1994). Thus, the meal at *Apan* is not a matter of entitlement to food assistantship, nor of the power

[92] This is a proposition expressed by Marx in his *Critique of the Gotha Program* in 1876.

[93] *Kefi,* a state of good life reached through sharing and commensality, involves transcendences of material concerns and monetary relations, and has also been linked to a general stance against state and market logic (Papataxiarchis 1991).

to provide such assistantship, issues related to the politics of organization and distribution of state food assistance in Thessaloniki, as relevant ethnographic work shows (Kravva 2015). The meal at *Apan* is a commensal experience of 'exchange of sensory memories and emotions and of substances and objects incarnating remembrance and feeling (Serematakis 1993: 14)'. It claims, affirms and practices a political project of solidarity as commensal and communal sharing.

Integral to the politics of sharing are the emergent bonds characteristic of communal meals (stronger than sharing cold meals and coffee) (Douglas 2003/1966), and forms of belonging (Serematakis 1994). In sum, central to the politics of sharing here is a collectivity that emerges at the meal events, comprised by guests and members of *Apan*. A collectivity that is attached to the space and time of the meals and tied to 'inherently synesthetic' experiences of eating (Sutton 2011).[94] This way guests and members of *Apan* become members of an emergent collectivity. Participating in common in the creation of forms of belonging through the sheer pleasures of eating and drinking together. Pleasures that usually call each one to subordinate individual wishes for the collectivity (Cowan 1990: 155).

One must not suppose, however, that there is a fixed structure in the emergent collective of commensal events. The collective of the Sunday meals at *Apan* is always in movement, always in the making as it is open to the outside: to newcomers, to everyone who wishes to participate in the meal. Everyone is welcome, whether he/she is a neighbour or not, and whether he/she can afford a Sunday meal or not. Sometimes, newcomers participate and are never seen again. No one needs to register and claim an identity or an experience of hardship to share a plate of food and a seat at the table. It is up to one's personal need, to decide whether he/she wants to join the meals at *Apan*.

Hence, the meal events shape a collectivity of porous boundaries, a 'common space' to share food and company open to the outside, a space that emerges as an urban

[94] For an analysis of alcohol consumption and creation of collectivity, see Gefou-Madianou (1998).

'threshold' (Stavrides 2014: 548).[95] The open space includes multiple and diverse relations performed each Sunday amidst accords and discords, and harbours 'the transformative power of equalitarian inclusion (Stavrides 2013: 47)', the possibility of constant reinvention of forms of relationality, as newcomers always disturb the established order.

Interruptions and repositions

The characteristic openness of the collectivity that emerges at the meal events at *Apan* supports and sustains what has been described to me by its members as 'the struggle of *Apan* against exclusion'. This refers to the vision and practice of inclusive forms of social belonging and relations that challenge rigid boundaries and refuse to endorse and follow the dominant taxonomies of official support provision, such as those of municipal, state and NGO structures. In this sense, the Apan meals seem to cancel and interrupt conventional social and ethnic classifications.

As it has been shown, dominant bureaucratic classifications that form the basis of organization of official aid provision during austerity, generate 'restricted accessibility' and produce further 'social inequalities and exclusions' (Kravva 2015). Considering that *Apan* as an autonomous initiative of support, refuses to employ classifications to organize provision and define participation in the meals, one can perceive the meal events as interventions that interrupt dominant taxonomies of official 'food assistantship' (Kravva 2015).[96] This interruption must be constantly re-affirmed. For instance, there have been occasions during the meals at *Apan* that guests blamed other guests for 'pretending' to face 'serious' economic difficulties, while in fact, not being 'in real need'. The responses by members of Apan each time were similar: 'What is important is to eat together.' 'To keep each other company.'

Most of the guests at the Sunday meals rely on official structures of material and

[95] Threshold for Stavrides (2013, 2014), signifies a passage, the in between space that harbors the potentiality of change, of creation of different forms of social life.

[96] State taxonomies may 'derive', to some extent, from the 'cosmology' of its citizens' values (Herzfeld 1992b).

health support and on daily municipal or church soup kitchens for food, which are closed on Sundays.[97] The soup kitchen food as receivers claimed, didn't 'taste right' and was often prepared with food 'gone bad', which was often the case from my experience of participation in the municipal soup kitchen. This prompted most of the receivers to reject the quality of the food and protest a sensorial experience of bureaucratic indifference (Herzfeld 1992). On the other side, participants at the *Apan* meals confirmed the pleasant taste of the served food as a confirmation of local cultural values (Sutton 2011) and interest and affection received.[98]

The characteristic 'indifference' of bureaucratic approaches to people's needs (Herzfeld 1992b) impacts on the lives of guests who rely on municipal forms of aid provision for everyday survival. Indifference weights on their daily lives and saturates relations between them with competition. This in turn, shapes their perceptions of others' precarious living conditions and suffering experience. They often blame each other for 'taking advantage' of institutional support offered. The blames raised are usually reproduced in neighbourhood talks that often reaches the ears of municipal actors managing support structures. This means that sometimes informal accusations between citizens are being employed by social workers and managers of official aid provision, as administrative tools of intimate information and support provision. This way, the unofficial blaming becomes part of the social taxonomies that generated it in the first place, and it joins a sequence of indifference that reproduces exclusions (Herzfeld 1992b).

One could see perhaps here a strong link between bureaucratic and institutional indifference, exclusions and official structures of aid provision. However recent ethnographic work portrays responses to urgent biological necessities increased

[97] For an analysis of the political character of church soup kitchens in Thrace, Greece, as forms of 'engaging' the crisis, see Douzina-Bakalaki (2016). For a critical study of municipal soup kitchens in Thessaloniki, Greece, and the way they offer 'comfort food' that doesn't succeed in tackling social inequalities, see Kravva (2015).

[98] 'The cultural value placed on the flavour (and other sensory properties) of food (Sutton 2011)', links to 'the cultural shaping of the senses' and the construction of local identity. In Thessaloniki, a city recognized and promoted in the present, as the gastronomical capital of the country, identity and the senses are shaped by the important value invested in a local culinary culture, largely defined by Minor Asia influences. Thessalonians proudly differentiate themselves from Athenians based on assumed superiority of food culture.

during austerity, that are part of organized institutional support, as forms of engagement with crisis situations (Douzina-Bakalaki 2016).[99] Moreover, it is worth noting that the observed intensification of present responses to food insecurity are intrinsically linked to a present widespread precarization under austerity, but also to a 'collective imaginary' shaped by 'memories of deprivation and hunger' in post war Greece (Yakoumaki 2006). Ordinary citizens feel that they must help in any way to 'feed the people' so that past experiences of hunger are not repeated.

Similar perceptions underline gestures of help in *Apan*. The Sunday meals are organized as a response to urgent nutritional needs and thus, they claim the long-standing human right to food. At the same time, they are organized as occasions of commensality and opportunities to share food and company amongst the people that have been worst hit by austerity, stressing the value of interaction through sensorial sharing. Hence, they claim not only the right to food, but also the right to communication. They express a struggle against 'exclusion' and 'isolation', as members say. What becomes important is that the meals are shared not solely between people that face poverty and hunger, but also between neighbours and people that feel 'marginalized and lonely', as *Apan* members stress. People that experience precarity as an intense form of solitude and exclusion.

Hence commensality is proposed as a form of coexistence, a right to adequate food and communication. While the sharing of food and company, unconditioned from dominant classifications and official taxonomies, mobilizes repositions of social precarity and suffering. Firstly, while the experiences of guests (most of who suffer from health conditions due to past and present faced impoverishment and insecurity, as we saw in the previous chapter) are communicated during the meal events, they make evident the social construction of their experienced precarious situations. Secondly, the refusal to comply with dominant taxonomies rejects organization of precarity and suffering as a discourse into bureaucratic categories (Kleinman 1997).

[99] Research conducted by Hellenic Statistical Authority (2017) shows 53.2 % of households in Greece unable to cover basic nutritional diet. As argued, food insecurity is an increasing concern in First World countries and closely related to a proliferation of food banks and soup kitchens (Kravva, 2015).

This encourages the repositioning of oneself regarding social precarity; for example, by interrupting bureaucratic categorizations of exclusions and indifference. Lastly, as guests communicate through words and gestures their personal experiences, these become social and transpersonal experiences.

The meals also provide scope for interrupting the production of social precarity as 'a condition of being and feeling insecure in life that extends to one's (dis) connectedness from a sense of social community (Allison 2012: 348)'. The meal events interrupt the way social precarity is felt as exclusion and material and existential insecurity, through the forms of sensorial communication and belonging that emerge from commensal sharing. In other words, they manage to intervene and interrupt ways of experiencing hardship and insecurity in solitude and stress this way the collective composition of the life and struggle amidst precarious situations (Alisson 2012, Al-Mohammad 2012).

Therefore, the meal events are not organized as an endpoint, but they have various political, social and existential manifestations-extensions. On the way people create ties and meaning, experience social precarity and connect with the community. Participations in something 'social', as it was described to me at the coffee meeting and 'sharing food with friends', have reinvented forms of sociality in the neighbourhood. The small changes noted mark relations in the everyday in important ways, especially for people that live and feel alone. But most importantly, the shared worlds comprised of food, music, drinks, and stories generated during the meals, are forms of collectivization that enable interruptions and repositions of citizens' lives amidst the production of social precarity.

Affective atmospheres

Many members of *Apan* perceive the space emerging in the commensal events as a space of safety. *Apan* members recognize safety as an affective form and an atmosphere that is transmitted (Brennan 2004), as an affective and effective response to present precarious conditions. This is best illustrated by an expressed opinion of a

member: ‘What is the best way to respond to someone who is abandoned and excluded and who must search sometimes amidst aggression for ways to survive? With a political theory? The most important is for her/him to feel somewhere safe, to feel that is not in danger by a society that acts aggressively towards him/her. It is the first step. If he/she feels that this can be part of his/her life she/he must feel it on her/his own. There has never been an occasion here that someone feels threatened’.

The above description communicates the intention of securing *Apan* as a safe space for the people that struggle daily amidst ‘aggression’. Safety thus, evokes the quality of affective atmospheres in *Apan* and the ‘forces of encounter’ and ‘passages’ of intimacies (Seighworth and Gregg 2010). The ‘resonances that circulate about, between, and sometimes stick to bodies and words (Seighworth and Gregg 2010: 1)’. Safety emerges here as an affective quality that is transmittable (Brennan 2004) and that is reflected in the space as much as in bodies and worlds (Navaro-Yashin 2012). The laid tables, the friendly iterations when people meet, the words spoken with affection, the table discussions that unfold, as much as the trajectories of conflict triggered, absorbed and altered, speak about the affective atmospheres of safety, marking the thoughts and feelings one experiences (Stewart 2007).

It would be less than true to assume that the affective atmospheres of safety emerge out of a ‘dialectical reconciliation’ of oppositions (Seigworth and Gregg 2010). What can be said with certainty is that they give way to ‘blends and blurs’ (Seigworth and Gregg 2010: 4). To ‘co- breaths’ (*sinhnotismous*) as it was described to me by an *Apan* member, who invented this world (*sinhnotismous)* by combining co (*sin*), to describe a sense of togetherness, with breaths (*hnota*), the breaths that play out as bodily intensities and rhythms. This seems to imply the similar in sound concept of synchronizations (*sinhronismous*) and thus, that co-breaths (*sinhnotismous)* are relationally attuned. The term evokes the recreations of body boundaries in the meal interactions and the repositionings that emerge. These unfold in moments of sharing food and memories and of cooperation in preparing and cleaning the meals. They are affective experiences and ‘the question they beg is not what they might mean in an order of representations, or whether they are good or bad in an overarching scheme

of things, but where they might go (Stewart 2007: 3)'. In that sense, co-breaths can be thought as novel affective skills and improvisational collective tactics (Massumi 2010).

Although safety is cherished and confirmed as an atmosphere in *Apan*, it does not and cannot make up a stronghold to be defended. It can only emerge as an affective virtue and potentiality in the way things are performed and said. It can have no final form as it is something that cannot be formulated into a clear aim, nor shape an all-encompassing strategy. Ways of doing things and performing relations can nurture affective atmospheres of safety but cannot plan and organize them. Affective atmospheres are emergent and not structured, circuited by unexpected intensities, impulses and expectations. At the same time, affective unpredictability can generate collective improvisations and repositions that signal subjective repositions and transitions of the known and the familiar towards the non-familiar, and thus, towards the possibility to break with habituated representations and values that can act in stereotyping. These forms of emerging intimacies that come from 'defamiliarization' (Berlant and Warner 2000, Boym 2000: 229) are all benefits that come with commensality (Papataxiarchis 1991, 2006a), but have acquired their own contextual specificity while living under austerity.

Fig. 13. During the meal at Apan.

The Boundaries of the political

'*Apan* never thought that will save society. We struggled to make something that was not philanthropy and that had a clear basis of political action. To say to the neighbourhood, and each neighbourhood of this city, that if few people gather you can produce a project. It was a message to everyone. And we must never forget this and get trapped in philanthropy, only to try and support the continuation of Sunday meals.'

I chose the above opinion expressed by an *Apan* member not for what it says about the distinction between philanthropy and solidarity, but as indicative of central and important reconsiderations by *Apan* members regarding the political basis of the Sunday meals at *Apan*. When participation increased a great deal and necessitated thirty-forty people taking turns each month to organize the meals, members begun to revaluate things. They discussed about the intense practical demands in the organization of the meals and possible ways to 'make things easier', such as changing some features, for example introducing plastic plates, glasses and spoons. Yet, as it appeared to them this registered as 'making deductions' and decided to reject such alterations to keep the qualitative affective and aesthetic character of the meal events. They decided that, 'if the time comes and deductions are required the Sunday lunch will stop'.

Equally significant then to the production and sharing of food is the way this takes place, the affective and aesthetic basis of its organization. Deductions signify aesthetical and affective impoverishment and as it appears, political compromise. This means that the aesthetic and affective aspects of commensal encounters could turn into a detached gesture of philanthropy. As it seems, for the members of *Apan* and the politics they affirm, this would signal a compromise of the ethico-aesthetic (Guattari 1992) and affective (Avramopoulou 2018) facets of the politics of sharing.

It is interesting that recent discussions and reconsiderations of the meal events resuscitated previous concerns expressed by few members over the political nature of the meals. While on the one hand, the recent discussion and decisions taken, re-

affirmed the aesthetic and affective as inherent features of the politics of *Apan*. It revived, at the same time, past voiced doubts on the political character of the meals and fears that the meal events might be 'altered versions of soup kitchens'. Here we encounter the re-emergence of the same concerns and discussion. Thus, it appears that *Apan* members are pre-occupied with enduring questions and concerns over the political basis of the meals. The fact that such questions return in time indicates that they are not solely related to the meal events but extend to thoughts and discussions over what is political after all.

When discussions initially reflected these concerns, I was an active member of *Apan*, participating in weekly assemblies, the meal events and coffee meetings, and the various political actions organized on neighbourly and refugee needs. My position in the discussion at the time, my thoughts on whether *Apan* meals differ or not from soup kitchens, and whether they are political or not, was written in the form of a small text and read- presented at a weekly assembly. I was surprised and nervous to see that the text was very well received and thus, it seemed to include the thoughts, perceptions and experiences of members. Part of the text written was chosen as a representative narrative of the lunch events, figuring at *Apan's* website sections of 'Actions' and 'solidarity' (Apan 2017). The featuring text is the following:

"The Sunday meal at *Apan* is a political action that is not limited to the space and time of the meal, nor to the issues of urgent nutritional needs, but extends to the microscale of daily practices.
What is important is the in-depth creation of relationships and values in common. Care, companionship, support, solidarity. Their cultivation and (re) production generate little subversions of present economic-political situations which mark boundaries of unemployment, nationality, gender, class, income.
The Sunday meal at *Apan* is festive, not only because it is Sunday, nor because the food is delicious and "rich", but because it is a commensal experience that negates and resists legitimation and normalization of processes of exclusion. An experience through which a novel space of co-belonging is shaped and an infrastructure for the possibility of each one to embrace the life of the other. Not as an exemption of

boundaries and situations, but as a critical practice at the level of the everyday."

Friendships and political intimacies

In what follows I would like to give attention to what was described above as an infrastructure for the possibility of each one to embrace the life of the other. A description drawn from the manifold words, sayings, embodied performances and relations that members and guests enact. Members and some guests often use the words 'hug' and 'shelter' when referring to *Apan*. As it would become evident the experiences depicted in these expressions that describe a homely warm feeling, are intricately connected to histories of affectionate friendly intimacies that make up the initiative of *Apan*.

Apan was formed in 1986 as an autonomous political formation running as a candidate in the municipal elections in Neapoli, Thessaloniki. It was created by friends and neighbours, most around twenty-five years old, who identified with mainly three groups: leftists, communists and Christians. Although *Apan* was not elected at the local municipal elections it remained a group of friends *(parea*).[100] Over the following years it was recreated and renewed by added groups of friends (*parees*). Recenlty, some members participated in municipal elections with a *SYRIZA* (left government coalition) affiliated political party that is called *Avra* (*Aftonomi-Rizospastiki Aftodiikisi*-Autonomous Radical Self- government). After the introduction of further austerity by the *SYRIZA* government, following the no vote of people to austerity at the 2015 public referendum, the *Apan* members that participated in the municipality with *Avra* resigned.

The initiative of *Apan* is housed in the present premises since 2002 (with present rent 200 euros). It is centrally located, a short distance from the main square of the area of

[100] For an analysis of an alcohol consumption based male *parea* and the way emergent relations transcend reciprocal norms and household concerns, see Papataxiarchis (1991). For an analysis of the subversive character of the relations of a female *parea* in Greece, see Kirtsoglou (2004). Lastly, for an analysis of the anti-hierarchical political relations of a *parea* of volunteers and the way they conflict with top down and hierarchically structured relations of official volunteerism, see Rozakou (2011).

Neapoli. It is a big windowless and low ceiling space in the underground floor of a two-storey building and for this reason, members sometimes refer to it as the 'basement' *(ipogio)*. It is a space visited by many and various people, not only in the meal events but also in the numerous talks, musical, cultural and political events that are organized frequently. Twice a week, members run a self-managed bar open to the public, to members, friends and neighbours as an occasion to meet and talk. The collected funds support the operating expenses of the initiative, rent and bills. During these music evenings and nights, visitors usually serve themselves drinks and leave money inside a small metallic box behind the little bar.

Opposite the space there is a little fountain square, where Mrs Roula meets daily her neighbours and where the initiative organizes an annual bazaar, that was called 'anti-consumption bazaar' but was renamed during austerity to 'solidarity bazaar'.[101] The money raised support a relief fund, maintained mainly by donations, that provides financial assistance to neighbours' urgent problems (ex. for medical issues). Sometimes *Apan* organizes events that take place in the main square of the area, called 'the clock' (*to roloi*). During my participation in the initiative there have been two such events organized by *Apan* in the main square, titled: 'The wave of refugees in Greece: practical solidarity in times of crisis', and 'Refugees and migrants: Neapoli can fit us all'. During the events, there was a call for food and clothes donations to newcomers-refugees in Thessaloniki.

The space of *Apan* may also be provided to other groups' events and celebrations of friends and family, such as graduation or birthday parties of members' children. There is an uncountable number of people who have keys of the space and a variety of people visit the self-managed bar evenings and nights, or the fundraising events organized often. As mentioned before, there is a constantly recreated rhizomatic web of relations that makes up the 'friends of *Apan'*: family, friends, colleagues, neighbours and members from other initiatives. It is hardly surprising, then, that one encounters various and different people at the most frequent fundraising event called the

[101] This shift in the name signals a shift the politics practiced, from alternative visions to consumption and 'ideological imperatives', to 'here and now pragmatisms' (Chatzidakis 2018).

'*tsipouro* event', named after a local strong spirit *tsipouro* that is consumed during the event. It is usually announced in the group's Facebook page and spread by word of mouth to friends and neighbours. People bring home made food and pay for consumed *tsipouro*, contributing this way towards the initiative's set up fund.

Although every event was different and each time I experienced myself as a different person in terms of the distinct and multiple relations that emerged (Strathern 2004), it seemed that all events involved a complex connection between long-term friendly intimacies and proximities, consumption and sharing of drinks and food, self-management, political discussions and actions. By what prior criteria then can we distinguish the friendly meetings from the political actions of the initiative? How can we disentangle the intimate from the political?

In this case, the politics of sharing Apan claims are inspired by the connection of the intimate and the personal with the political, of precariousness with the production of precarity, of friendship with political action. This entanglement communicates the initiative's politics of sharing discussed and its hold in history shaped by friendships. It expresses the way it is made by a multiplicity of relations that are (re-) enacted in the interface of friendly intimacies and responsibilities and political actions.[102] Political discussions, decisions and actions take place with affectionate intimacy based on long term friendships. Politics is claimed as intimate care, inspired by common recognitions of the precariousness of embodied human life, of the way humans share an embodied existence of vulnerability and thus, a responsibility towards the political and social organisation of insecurity based on social hierarchies (Butler 2004, 2016).

While political actions and interactions matter for the way they are enacted. Priority and importance are given to an affirmative manner that does not negate the will.[103] Members depict what I call here affirmative manner with *meraki,* a local expression

[102] For an analysis of multiplicity as an enfoldment of disparate elements that is in constant flux and alteration, shifting and opening boundaries and only shortly acquiring consistency, see Deleuze and Guattari (2003/1987).

[103] For the philosophical basis of the concept of affirmation as a relation of oneself with the world based on an ontological human interdependency, see Nietzsche (2017/1967).

that depicts the quality of doing something with joy, passion and commitment and doing so in spite of.[104] Hence, members wish and choose to participate in events, meetings and assemblies, even though one might feel tired from a day's work in the hospital, in the school, in the butcher shop, in the factory and so on. They participate because they feel committed, passionate and because meetings take place in a friendly and pleasant way. Of course, one can choose to be absent and/or take distance if and for as long as she/he chooses to. As a member stressed to me, 'it is up to each one to choose what kind of relation he/she wants to have with *Apan'*. Something I came to realize from my own participation in the initiative, the distance I took when fieldwork came to an end, and a deep-felt reassurance that I can re-engage when I choose to.

The inner core of *Apan* consists of approximately twenty members, most around fifty and fifty-five years old and few around thirty-five and forty years old. Men and women in equal participation. There are other members less involved, friends and neighbours that participate in actions organized without being members and people that visit often the space and the various events. One must not assume however, that *Apan* is a formless entity. Drawing from my experience of participation in *Apan,* I would describe this neighbourhood initiative as the product of the histories and multiplicities of intimate friendly relations, that manifests in politics done with affirmation and *meraki*. Apan is made up of relations that include the diverse choices that drive each one to participate and make *Apan* his/her 'house', as some members say, for what is happening in his/her life. With the exact worlds of a member Apan is the 'people that were homeless, that felt that what was happening in the social and the political could not represent them. People with personal quests and anguishes, who come from different backgrounds and managed to define collective issues that always exist and combine them with differences already shared. Since, they are running this by holding hands.'

[104] *Meraki*, coming from the Turkish world *merak*, meaning doing something with passion, dedication and joy, is also employed by members and guests to describe the food at Sunday meals.

Neighbourhood based politics

Let me focus briefly on the basic difference between *Apan* members, namely, between Christians and atheists. Whereas many members self-identify as atheists, there are other members who self-identify as Orthodox Christians influenced, by what they call, a period of 'social theology' in the area of Neapoli in the 80s.[105] Primarily, by the teachings of a particular priest at a local Sunday church school (*katihitiko*) that emphasized the value of the 'collective' and of 'solidarity', the importance of critical thought and the 'defiance' and 'rebelliousness' of Saints' lives and sayings. This period has influenced, as members claim, most of residents in Neapoli, except from the ones with a conservative background. It shaped also, as they explained, groups of friends *(parees)* in the neighbourhood between Orthodox Christian youth and young leftists and communists. These groups (*parees)* formed the basis of *Apan* and through time 'the two different backgrounds became one', as members claim.

So, the basic difference joined members together according to recognized neighbourhood-based connections. The neighbourhood unites here 'the two seemingly opposing forces' as members say: Christianity and atheism. It builds a link between differences through emergent common interests and issues. The main difference between members emerges as 'connection from another angle (Strathern 1992: 73)' and creates a common realm of relating and acting. [106] For instance, human kindness as a way of relating to others, is a core Christian value claimed and practiced by Christian *Apan* members. It is also expressed by atheist members, who might draw its value from distinct cultures and experiences: from a Kavafis' poem or shaped by one's life experience of being a medical doctor or a schoolteacher.[107] In a similar way, solidarity as the central political idea and basis for political action, is imbued in its perception and practice by Christian beliefs and readings that find their base of

[105] I consider that what members call 'social theology' is a Christian theology influenced by the Marxist approach of liberation theology and by the Enlightenment aspect of liberal Christianity. In Neapoli, it was mainly expressed by a priest, whose talks married theology, history, mathematics, political science, philosophy, astronomy, biology and physics. At the Sunday church school, where he taught, as few *Apan* members recollect, there were organized discussions on the relation of Marxism and Christianity.

[106] Strathern's (1992) point refers to the apparent differences between 'culture' and 'nature'.

[107] *Kavafis* (1963-1933) is one of the most distinguished poets of Greek and Western modern poetry.

support in the neighbourhood.[108]

The neighbourhood-based political intimate relations in *Apan* receive their features from recognized differences constantly negotiated and recreated. It is interesting for instance, that in the weekly general assemblies that follow direct democratic processes, when matters are discussed and decided the difference and connections between members are renewed as they try to address issues and decide without negating divergences. Despite expressed mutual generosities towards differences, this is not an easy and free of conflicts process. The usually long and intense assembly talks, smoothed out by sharing drinks and snacks, entail resonances and dissonances, tensions, jokes and silences. Consensus is reached through a long process of opinion exchange and talk and when common ground is achieved, decisions flesh out as outcomes of intersubjective transitions. Along this process, what is important is not only to respect differences but also to constantly reaffirm the anti- hierarchical basis of relations.

The horizontality of practice and organisation is central in the constant critique of hierarchical tendencies and inequalities. Yet, forms of intimacy that bring the members together, based on long term friendships and coexistences have been defined by the institutions of intimacy that differentiate across gender. Hence, sometimes female voices must make a greater effort in their participation than their male counterparts. While we must not overlook the fact that it is the male heroic figure that has marked the left politics in Greece (Kotouza 2019). While the friendly intimacies build in the context of the neighbourhood, work here as the connecting link for the creation and extension of this solidarity initiative, is also the element that generates limits to solidarity, the more so when these remain unrecognised, unaddressed and unquestioned. Yet, there have been thoughts and reconsiderations towards the direction of recognising and acting against these tendencies, evident in the latest talks organised around feminist issues and the patriarchal character of nationalist discourse and everyday relations and given by a female anthropologist

[108] In Greece, solidarity is associated with anarchist and anti-authoritarian political struggles of the post dictatorship era (Rozakou 2018).

working at the local University of the city. Such concerns reflect the bigger picture of a post 2015 turn of attention to marginalised gendered groups, linked to the public space given for these issues by the left party SYRIZA in government and a response following the male dominated anti-austerity movement (Kotouza 2019).

Overall, communities of solidarity, such as Apan, and the politics of sharing they enact represent the creative aspect of the struggle against the crisis and austerity (Papataxiarchis 2019) and against the precarity they establish. While most of the neighbourhood based autonomous political initiatives that emerged from the 2008 revolt and the anti-austerity movement dissolved with time, Apan continues to claim a neighbourhood-based politics. It has managed to build an example of how intimate relations between neighbours can generate a form of inclusive political solidarity with effective consequences on the affective material everyday level, in bringing people together to deal with shared problems.

Apan constitutes an example of the politics of precarity discussed in the second chapter, and the way they link different experiences of precarity and distinct social groups under insecurity and inequality produced by present neoliberal ideologies and politics (Casas-Cortes 2014, Lorey 2015, Muehlebach 2013, Neilson and Rossiter 2005). Another political project based on the politics of precarity that operates in the Western areas of Thessaloniki (see Introduction), is a coalition of initiatives called 'Open Assembly of Western Areas' ('*Anihti Sinelefsi Ditikon Sinikion'*), that organizes actions of solidarity to different struggles in Thessaloniki and other areas of North of Greece, such as the struggle against the gold mining project in Chalkidiki, or a struggle against the environmental danger of an oil company located close to a Western residential area. The political collective organizes direct actions against foreclosures, anti-fascist protests and interventions against privatizations of public spaces in the Westerns areas. But there is also the initiative called 'Action of Western Areas' (*Drasi ditikon sinikion*) that organizes direct actions against employment rights violations and house electricity reconnections (motivated by the death of a thirteen-year-old girl from carbon monoxide poisoning from the fumes of a makeshift heating stove in 2013,

who lived in a flat with no electricity in Ksirokrini, a Western area of Thessaloniki next to Neapoli).[109]

Situated knowledge(s) of precarity

Lefteris: 'We have gained a lot from the Sunday meals. *Apan* has gained a lot.'
Ilektra: 'What have you gained?'
Lefteris: 'Haven't you gained anything yourself?'
Ilektra: 'Yes, but I participated from the start to gain something for my research.'
Lefteris: 'It was not the same for us. It was revealed to us on the way, that we gained more than we offered, and, how could we connect to and learn about what people are going through otherwise? Not from the media, for sure.'

We were having wine with tapas at a restaurant located just next to the main square of Neapoli, 'the clock', as people know it. It was a warm autumn night and we were sitting outside, drinking and talking, myself and three members of *Apan*. Lefteris has been a member of *Apan* from the start and is one of the members that introduced the idea of the Sunday meals in the first place. His expressed opinion made me wonder. What has been gained? What kind of return members received? And how does it relate with what I received from my participation in the Sunday meal events?

As Lefteris explained, the Sunday meals are forms of engagement with the precarious lives of people (Douzina-Bakalaki 2016). How could they 'connect to and learn about what people are going through otherwise?' As he describes, obviously not from a distant view, from a position of consuming media mediated representations. 'An amoral virtual reality: suffering at a distance and a safe distance at that. How can one assess meaning at these circumstances? (Kleinman 1997: 319)'. What he claimed then was not a view from above but rather 'a view from a body' (Strathern 2004), shaped by the commensal sharing encounters and the intimate and affective interactions. This

[109] During austerity, the increase in the consumption tax has doubled the price of electricity, resulting in many houses being cut off from electricity due to unpaid bills. For the first nine months of 2013 for example, there have been 257,002 disconnections (ekathimerini 2014).

kind of anthropological approach to present experiences of precarity enables members and the anthropologist, to share meaning based on accounts of an intimate knowledge of present reality. Hence, to be able to see from another's point of view and to know by feeling and listening to other people's experiences of precarity is part of the gain of the Sunday meals for *Apan*. The profound personal and collective involvement and emergent relations are forms of gained knowledge of the current situation. An 'embodied situated' (Haraway 1988) and 'partial' (Strathern 2004) knowledge, where knowing implies inhabiting and acting.

Thus, engagement signifies here not solely a rejection of indifference but also knowing and transcending the institutionally arranged boundaries of visibility and invisibility of precarious situations discussed in the first chapter. It signals repositioning across such constructed boundaries by getting to know people's intimate precarious situations and experiences. A knowledge that is situated on the way one sees and experiences and is shaped of course by the histories of friendly intimacies of the initiative. An unanticipated knowledge that is gained through the 'unexpected openings' and connections (Haraway 1988), enabled by the affective transmissions and intimate transitions and (re) positions generated in the politics of sharing of *Apan*.

This doesn't imply an 'allegory' of interchangeability', nor an easy and unproblematic re- positioning, but it comes from a finite point of view, from a body that is 'situated' and joins a 'collective subject position' (Haraway 1998). 'The loving care people might take to learn how to see faithfully from another's point of view (Haraway 1988: 583)'. This is 'a power-charged social relation of "conversation" (Haraway 1988: 593)'. Trying to see and understand without claiming to be the other. Trying to grasp the experienced positions of the less powerful, without romanticizing but also without taking their experiences uncritically (Haraway 1988). This in *Apan* points to a critical acceptance of the way guests act and think. The recognition that getting to know is not a matter of imposing an expected change, but of recognizing the contradictions and complexities involved. What can best be illustrated by a member's expressed opinion: 'The problem with Sunday meals in the past was our own expectations. We tried to give to people characteristics that could fit to the general characteristics of

the initiative, like becoming people of social movements (*kinimatiki*), leftists, solidarians. This was a problem that is clearly ours. With time, we realized that we can only accept people and try to understand.'

The above description reveals an important transition of solidarity action in Apan: giving performed in relation to expectations and giving performed as engagement with present difficult experiences under austerity. In the first instance support is conditioned by the willingness to change demonstrated, what recalls the structures of support based on philanthropy (Bakalaki 2009). While in the second instance, solidarity is recreated through practice as a critical acceptance and understanding that refuses to narrow the plurality of positions under crafted expectations that prefigure the directions change might take.

It is a fact that guests' participation in other solidarity actions organized by *Apan*, such as helping at the food kitchens at the makeshift refugee camp of Idomeni at the border with Macedonia, was exceptionally low. The communal assemblies of members and guests were also stopped soon after they started because of the extremely low participation by the guests. At the same time, guests that became accustomed to share the same table every Sunday grew relations of cooperation and solidarity between them. For example, when a regular guest of Sunday meals, a fifty five years old single father with health problems who was living with his son was evicted, and a member of *Apan* found a small low rent flat in the area for him, all friends from the shared table at the *Apan* meals, helped him with the move.

Fig. 14. Member and guest, Lefteris and Roula after the meal.

Conclusion

The affective and intimate connections generated by *Apan's* commensal events can generate occasions of reproduction of antagonistic oppositions as we saw. But in a similar way they can become relations of cooperation and solidarity that mobilize help in ways that reveal ordinary political responses. It is possible therefore, to leave neighbourly antagonisms and hostilities behind, as the initiative of *Apan* suggests. The intimacies and proximities that make up neighbourly life, can be the elements of forming a common project of sharing. This can be open and inclusive and contain multiplicities of relations and links that give way to creative outcomes. Creativity is stressed by many members of Apan. Perhaps multiplicities could not be sustained if they did not eventually build creativity, and inversely, creativity would not emerge if multiplicities and differences were negated. Hence, the point is not to reproduce

familiarities shaped in history as intimate forms of experience, but to open up, include people and recreate links.

In that sense, neighbourhood is the basis to communicate with those one recognizes as "intimate others" and engage with their lives. As a member described: 'beyond the small civil wars that erupt daily in the common multi-storey buildings or in the street, neighbourhood is what makes religious, atheists, communists, social democrats to be together and unite concerns. This has a dynamism and if it has creativity it can become great. To participate in a solidarity initiative because I like it, would be mainly to realize my own wishes and self-satisfy myself, feel that I am something, and find a role for myself. Here the role is acquired through relationships that are diachronic and have many elements that join people together'.

At this point we could ask whether the neighbourhood constitutes here a moral and political proposition? A proposition defined, as it appears, by an understanding of the personal as interpersonal and collective. That corresponds to a call for the personal and interpersonal as collective politics, and a negation of the political as personal. This call draws a distinction between self-absorption and a shift of attention to the life around us, in this instance, the local life of neighbours and the 'diachronic' relations that produce it. The way this shift is realized in *Apan* is not limited to neighbourly issues. The political derives its meaning here from wider concerns with issues linked for example, to the lives of refugees, whether they are residents in the neighbourhood or not. But most importantly, it derives its meaning from sharing practices and political relations based on friendships that are enacted with affirmation and *meraki*. This acknowledges the affective and aesthetic-ethical in the politics of sharing and solidarity mobilized.

Apan has a specific way to respond to present conditions of precarity and act politically. Like other political initiatives in the Western areas of Thessaloniki, it organizes direct actions, political events and interventions and takes part in larger common struggles and protests in the city. But the most important political intervention appears to be the creation of a common urban space open to all, shaped

by the affective politics of sharing and the histories and multiplicities of friendly and neighbourly intimacies. The space emerges as a big open *parea*, a group of people who meet and share food, drinks, discussions, emotions, and memories. The openness of the *parea* constantly recreates intimacies that (re) connect people to the social community, interrupting the production of social precarity and the taxonomies and frames that sustain it. This is felt in the stomachs as much as in the hearts and minds of the people that choose to participate.

Chapter eight: Conclusion

fractal connections

In the final stages of writing this thesis I visited the city of Ioannina accompanying a friend from Thessaloniki who taught at the local University. Being close to the mountainous district of Zagori we decided to visit the area, where the first local ethnographic encounters took place by John Campbell (1964). The mountains that have been the home of the Sarakatsani, the community of transhumant shepherds studied by Campbell, are the Western slopes of the Pindus range. Visiting the Papingos village, where once the Sarakatsani used to graze sheep and goats, I found out that Sarakatsani (apart from one family) have settled in that village and owned many touristic businesses and restaurants. This observation encouraged me to reflect about the changes that took place in Greece through the years. The area is now a protected national park, that includes among many things a reconstruction of a Sarakatsani hamlet as a museum. Yet, as I soon found out, there are great changes pending in the future, that make touristic development appear like a "fairyland". A 2014 bill ratified in the parliament contracts for hydrocarbon research and extraction in the area (a biodiversity hot spot area), as gas and oil exploitation is part of an economic recovery strategy.[110] The likely catastrophe for the local human, plant and animal species life, links 'austerity capitalism' and sovereign debt with future ruins of life (Bear 2015).

As mentioned in the previous chapters, participation in the processes of gentrification and touristification of urban centres seem to provide a temporary economic relief for the distress felt amidst a precarious present, yet, paving the way for a destructive long-term effect. The financial policies applied in the context of sovereign crisis set in motion not only these massive processes and changes , but also the neoliberalization of nature conservation that enables the exploitation of biodiversity 'through capitalist development' (Apostolopoulou and Adams 2015). The sovereign debt crisis has been 'systematically used to justify, inter alia, the deregulation of environmental legislation

[110] WWF (2014).

and the privatization of public nature (and other) assets, fulfilling long-standing demands from the private sector (Apostolopoulou and Adams 2015: 29)'. The long-term catastrophic outcomes of such policies associated with state debt concern the destruction of ecosystems, and thus, the intensification of precarious social and physical environments. The case of the Sarakatsani—the first micro-society studied anthropologically in Greece—is representative of the catastrophic long-term effects of capitalist austerity in Greece.

As I walked in the high mountains of the area of Zagori, thrilled by the views of snowed peaks and the rivers of Aoos and Vikos flowing, and stood at the top of the vertical cliffs of Vikos gorge, I contemplated the elevated view of a situation, or as it is known, the bird's eye view. Writing this conclusion, I attempted to place the composition on the steep mountains of the ethnography, a view from above while being firmly on the ground at the same time. While being passionately committed to the anthropological endeavour, rendering the 'interdependent' and 'interacting' scales through which 'life' appears to the ethnographer (Pina Cabral 2018b). This way, to attempt to recreate an ethnographic portrait and knowledge of this indisputably transitional period that Thessaloniki and Greece currently undergo. Which as it seems to me, lies between the past, the present and the passage of time, without the possibility to predict what may happen in the future. This indeterminacy describes the unforeseen and slow ways time works on life, but also the fast-changing extractive forms of neoliberal capitalist economy and the struggles that emerge against them.

The view from above and the view from the ground, point to different spaces of relating to the field site, a move towards expanding - 'scaling up'- and a move towards detail - 'scaling down'- (Strathern 2004). An important question here concerns the way these scales connect/compare across culture (Strathern 2004). How the discussion of austerity experiences in low-income neighbourhoods in Thessaloniki, Greece, can connect with different field sites and ethnographic themes. Fractal connections maybe a key approach in this endeavour, as they refer to non-reductive singularities that can create correspondences (Strathern 2004, Wagner 1991). A fractal connections approach could distribute the ethnographic pieces of this thesis within

relevant spaces of knowledge production and across scalar changes across history, geography, culture and forms of capitalist government financing. In this sense, it can connect with different studies of the way life under austerity takes shape. But also, ethnographic descriptions of austerity experiences, seen as fractal epistemic shapes, can connect with zones that overlap: inequalities structured around the contexts of class, racism, patriarchy, homophobia, demoralising neoliberal priorities, debt, conditions of dispossession and displacement, ecological destruction and corporate extractive mechanisms. These overlapping zones, evident in the intensification of conditions of precarity for an increasingly larger part of population, are implicated in the intimate experiences of people, as the many recent social movements around the world have highlighted.

However, there are differences in the way precarity is produced and experienced, even amidst the residents of the low-income neighbourhoods studied in this research. Yet, the case of these neighbourhoods studied revealed to us the way low-income communities are unevenly affected by austerity, rapid impoverishment, the loss of opportunities and basic rights and the deregulation of the labour market. Perhaps a female resident in these neighbourhoods can relate better to a female resident of a low-income neighbourhood in austerity Lisbon, in terms of the risky and uncertain situation she experiences, than to a male or a female resident from the wealthy areas of Panorama in Thessaloniki. The fractal approach to ethnographic analysis can connect different experiences of precarity without negating the singularities entailed and offer valuable anthropological insights on the relations and experiences generated in intimate contexts under public debt policies. This point to the larger significance of the conclusions drawn here.

un/sustainability

The study of the impact of austerity policies on low-income urban neighbourhoods in Thessaloniki, Greece, revealed the overlapping structures and experiences of precarity. Residents in these neighbourhoods are intensely subjected to various forms of loss and insecurity and forced to adjust to the changing conditions shaped by the

structural adjustments, the retreat of the welfare state, intense privatization, flexibilization of labour, mass unemployment, and the financialization of economy. The intimate and very unequal ways they experience austerity, communicate multiple crises in their daily lives.

As we discussed in the third chapter, austerity is a continuation of neoliberal policies introduced in Greece since the 90s, although the latter differ from the mass unemployment and huge cuts on wages and social security that followed austerity measures. We also saw that powerful moral, ideological and political frames of crisis depicted how the terms of fiscal policies were imposed (Roitman 2014). The way a neoliberal logic redefines fiscal policy on the basis of sovereign debt in financial terms (Bear 2105). Such frames encompassed orientalist tropes grounded on a discourse of problematic modernity, and austerity was presented as an opportunity to discipline an assumed backward social body.

As Bear (2015) shows in her analysis of austerity policies on the Hooghly river in West Bengal, state debt has taken certain historical forms linked to new markets of debt bonds and changes in fiscal policy that turn 'political and ethical relationships' 'into a financial relationship'. The financialization of debt reduces 'the ability of governments to set their own policies', and instead, 'there is a strong tendency to change the public sector into a fiscally disciplined adjunct to the rules and rhythms of financial markets'. This means that 'sovereign debt is detached from the political concerns of the state' and is managed 'by the value systems of financial markets' (Bear 2015: 192). The management of debt in relation to market concerns by central banks and debt offices, erodes the long-term political institutions and relationships and becomes 'a financial matter that underpins bond markets in debt (Bear 2015: 11)'. While International Financial Institutions 'discipline governments to focus on fiscal policy that will enable the repayment of, and trading in, sovereign bonds to continue (Bear 2015: 197)'. What is important is not the repayment of debt, but a condition of indebtedness (Lazzarato 2012) that allows the continuation of 'accumulation of the financial system (Bear and Knight 2017: 2)'. This historical form of managing sovereign debt and imposing structural adjustments in so many sites since the 1980s, makes evident the history of

austerity policies (Bear 2015, Beat and Knight 2017, Federici 2019, Rakopoulos 2018). It also shows that austerity becomes a medium through which 'financial markets constrain and extract value from state institutions in new pervasive ways (Bear 2015: 197)'.

As shown, this phase shift of financialization of capital (Marazzi 2009) undermines the ethical and political facets of public life and causes instabilities and further inequalities (Bear 2015). The social and political institutions of the nation state are supposedly designed to control and minimize precarity and ensure the citizens' access to rights, to housing and food and the resources that can secure everyday living. However, the state under austerity no longer practices redistribution but supports and intensifies the market 'patterns of unequal distribution' (Bear 2015: 201). The overlapping structures of precarity documented in this study, expose the unsustainability of austerity policies, which exist in order to sustain financial markets (Bear 2015).

spirals

As discussed in the first chapter, the visibility and invisibility of precarity are knotted together and are difficult to unravel. The entanglement of the visible and the invisible aspects of the crisis produced by austerity often means that urban households become zones of privatized suffering in present difficult times and reveals the dubious operations of policy. Key here, is the biopolitical management of precarious situations via state institutions; the political technology applied on individuals and the population, that arranges planes of visibility and organises peoples' access to social rights, which is contingent on the statistical management and representation of the crisis (Foucault 1998/1976). This is an intimate operation that moulds household and neighbourly intimacies, as depicted in the ethnography presented in this study.

It defines the material and existential precarity of young adults and their relation to the family household. But it also shapes the daily crises that aggravate the physical health of women who overwork to shoulder anxiety and provide and care for their families. It organizes the everyday lives of precarious citizens who live in the low-

income neighbourhoods studied, and who depend on various structures of (occasional and regular) institutional aid. The importance of data in governance regimes, in this case in governing through austerity, shape realms of visibility and invisibility of the precarious present. This is indicative of why critical anthropological scholarship is needed in times of crisis.

As the ethnography makes clear, precarity is not solely an instance of power, but a way power operates under austerity. Precarity exposes the uneven distribution of indebtedness and the embodiments of austerity among the residents of low-income neighbourhoods. It takes shape within historical and social contexts of inequality and according to norms of recognisability, the way one is recognised or not as worthy of protection, the way one is marginalised and excluded, and whether one has access to rights and resources to secure living (Alexandrakis 2015, Athanasiou 2012). Precarity demonstrates how regimes of indebtedness managed by financial capitalism, govern citizens based on class relations and nationalist and patriarchal institutions (Lorey 2015, Ettlinger 2007).

The intensification of female domestic workload in austerity economies, linked to changes in the organisation of social reproduction, and the precarity it produces reinforce inequalities based on the gender division of labour as we saw in the fourth chapter. These historical ways of gendering social reproduction veil structures of exploitation under capitalist accumulation (Federici 2012). In this case, the unpaid labour performed by women covers gaps created by the sovereign debt financial policies while capital continues to make-extract profit (Federici 2012). Important is also that these changes not solely increase gender hierarchies but strengthen also the normalisation of gender, as the women in their struggles with precarity perform and invest with greater force in normative gender identities and roles (Athanasiou 2011, Avdela 2011).

The figure of the young adult who returns to live at the parental household under extreme economic uncertainty is an illuminating case study of the uneven production of precarity across intersections of age and class. We see how experiences of young

adults with working class backgrounds are defined by precarious labour (Berardi 2009, Bourdieu 1998, Kalleberg 2009, Ross 2009, Standing 2011, Vosko 2006) and structured by social inequalities that intensify a generational precarity under capitalist austerity. How the constraint and insecure situations of low-income family households in which young adults find temporary shelter, entail multiple layers of material/existential precarity.

Lastly, the focus on intimate relations between neighbours demonstrated the way marginalisation, exclusion, and xenophobic and racist attitudes that grow within the everyday interactive spaces of the neighbourhood, intensify experiences of precarity. The precarious situations produced by the fiscal policies of austerity, structure the life in the neighbourhood in material and affective ways. While contexts of inequality such as sexism, homophobia and racism that deepen precarity, operate from above as the governance through austerity often promotes a misogynistic and racist nationalism, and resurface from below as residents engage in rivalries and hostilities in their struggles of survival and belonging. In other words, current forms of government financing and the definition of public good in economic terms generate overlapping forms of unequal precarity and spirals of violent exclusion and marginalization.

The various forms of precarity shed light on the unstable situations marked by present experiences of loss and suffering by residents of low-income urban neighbourhoods. They convey the environments of crisis created by the fiscal policies applied in the context of sovereign debt, and the temporal experiences of uncertainty and insecurity in all aspects of daily life, characteristic of neoliberal makings of time scape (Comaroff et al 2001, Tsing 2015). In the words of Bear (2015: 172), 'the contradictions of austerity capitalism are experienced as problems of time'. All participants are unable to plan a future and face the collapse of nurtured aspirations and expectations towards a progressive improvement (Alison 2016, Bourdieu 1998, Muehlebach 2013). Instead they face impoverishment, zones of exclusion and physical burdens that aggravate health and cause suffering. Precarity is mined by states of anxiety (Molé 2015), despair (Bourdieu 1998), loneliness and isolation (Alisson 2012), experiences of waiting (Jeffrey 2010, Koshravi 2017) and uncertain relations (Han 2011).

The ethnographic accounts of precarity and surviving austerity, are testimonies of the way the management of state debt through financializing the economy unsettles daily life and off-loads the burden onto citizens in very uneven ways. As this thesis shows, austerity economies reinforce inequalities and exclusions at multiple levels. Structural factors determine who will be mostly affected by austerity measures. But inequality is not produced solely by a 'single neoliberal ethos of market rationale' but also from the multiple struggles and 'attempts to account for, and regenerate the ruins of austerity capitalism (Bear 2015: 53)', the attempts of impoverished citizens to sustain life and negotiate belonging amidst crisis that often contribute to spirals of precarity and inequality.

dis/continuities

Approaching precarity through the lens of intimacy allowed us to see the various ways intimacy supports or undermines the life projects of citizens. We explored the intimate experiences and relations that austerity economies generate or rely upon, and the ethics and politics of relations, thresholds, passages that emerge in response. The residents of the neighbourhoods studied, attempt to secure survival and account for the fiscal policies that are destroying their lives, while they acknowledge that the structural reasons of their precarious situations lie in social inequalities and austerity measures. They protest the uneven distribution of indebtedness, yet, as we saw, experiences of precarity sometimes register as personal shortcomings through the moralising aspects of local normative stereotypes drawn from the realm of cultural intimacy. Intimacy manifested in embodiments and relations as continuity often provides the necessary means for survival, but it can also generate further precarity, hostilities and exclusions. Yet, reconfigurations and discontinuities of intimacy emerge with significant political dimensions. These emergences, often affectively manifested and entangled with the precarious situations, communicate how citizens manage the cruelties of austerity, construct strategies, build reciprocities and engage in critical repositions. The multiple ways they live and negotiate experienced forms of precarity. These micro-scale daily struggles portray the importance and limits of agency and the contradictions and significance of intimate realms of life in surviving the present.

Intimate relations are important in extreme times of uncertainty, by offering temporal solutions (Han 2012), and the means to make an income and attend to daily crises (Millar 2014).

Through a focus on intimacy we could examine the ethical and political dimensions of the social relations that austerity economies rely on and generate. Intimacy invited us to think further about the political stakes of precarity, the power structures and conditions that constrain life and the reconfigurations and alterations that emerge as people attempt to make a living in a hostile and insecure present. As the previous chapters described, citizens must juggle life amidst precarity while they are being made accountable before capital through state debt and austerity (Lazzarato 2012). Documenting and analysing the intimate realms of daily life, we could see how this plays out across power, belonging and change. Intimate spaces as we saw, are spaces of hierarchy, hostility and exclusion, but also of solidarity, critique, inclusivity, change and kindness. It is precisely by looking at realms of intimacy that we can grasp the complex contradictions of austerity capitalism and the political aspects of daily life, the way precarity is produced and experienced and the political articulations against it.

As all the ethnographic accounts of this thesis show, experiences of precarity move between thresholds of intimate life and encompass efforts to endure guided by situated perceptions and social and cultural local aspects. This means that continuities of cultural and social figurations are mobilised to secure survival during the current disruptions caused in the lives of many citizens. It also means that austerity economies rely on the reproduction of available forms of living. Forms that, as shown, can manifest in embodiments and relations that act in complicity with oppression and inequality and which allow us to see the impersonal structures of power as personal relations of daily life.

Firstly, women's daily performances of care and support for their families are key in the everyday struggles with precarity. They are mobilised by the local gender notions of mother and housewife *(nikokira),* that are important locus of identity and belonging

for these women. These dominant gender notions-models draw their significance from powerful discourses built around the heteronormative institution of the family household, the *nikokirio*. An institution that defines gender and ethnonationalist identity and informs constructions of national intimacy, a homogenous social and political body in and against the crisis. Hegemonic meanings of the *nikokirio* permeate ethnopatriarchal state operations that produce violent exclusions (Athanasiou 2012). While the embodied discourses of the gender notions of mother and housewife act often in excluding and marginalising those whose practices and attitudes are assumed to deviate from dominant significations, roles and values of the *nikokirio*. This way they become complicit with inequality and mechanisms of oppression. The economies of austerity thus, re-inscribe these bonds of complicity and reinforce the continuities of the state with national intimacy and the gender continuities linked to the dominant models of mother and housewife.

Hence, historical relations and practices linked to the family household, the *nikokirio*, offer the context in which the precarious present can be addressed. As we saw, they ground the support offered to young adults who face precarious employment, insecurity and hardship and return to live at the parental household. In this instance, the family household, an institution of intimacy with a significant dimension in local social life, emerges as an ambiguous unit of security and protection, as it relieves the young adults from relentless subjection to job insecurity but creates gender and generational based disputes and painful compromises. It offers a dubious shelter, an intimate realm of solidarity and care against the aggressive impacts of austerity, but also of intense hierarchies and disputes.

We see thus, how the *nikokirio* reinforces imaginaries of security and safety amidst precarity, even though people experience violent conflicts and compromises within its realms. Yet, besides the cruelty articulated and enforced by the *nikokirio*, one cannot overlook its effectiveness in limiting chains of precarity produced by situations family household members face. Austerity times are thus recreating imaginaries and spaces of hope against difficulties faced, that on the one hand act effectively, and on the other hand disavow the cruel dimensions of these spaces.

It is important to note here, that the recorded family household intimacies reveal once more the political aspect of domestic life (Cowan 1990, Dubish 1986, Hirchon 1981, Ortner 1974, Rosaldo 1974), but also that gender, family and economy are connected (Galani-Moutafi 1993, Moore 1992, Stolcke 1981, Strathern 1985b, Yanagisako 1979, 2002).

The struggle with precarity as discussed, is a struggle for recognition and belonging. This is evident in the neighbourly intimacies shaped by the longing for inclusion within dominant schemes of recognizability defined by ethnonational identity and gender normative ideas linked to the *nikokirio*. Such expressions of intimacy tend to fortify stereotypes, exclusions, xenophobia, homophobia and racism. Within these intimate manifestations of power and of the politics of belonging, that pit neighbour against neighbour, daily interactions become ways through which neighbours discipline each other. In this context, a neighbour's experience of social precarity is sometimes seen as personal misfortune and shortcoming. This way, it is desocialised and depoliticised, and the uneven impacts of austerity obscured. In this sense, the precarisation of life under austerity tends to divide citizens and thus, impedes collective struggles (Lorey 2015). An outcome exemplified by the reactionary political responses in Europe and the USA.

These forms of disciplinarization, which are socially and culturally grounded, parallel the disciplinary effects of austerity policies. In this sense, the local ideas and practices linked to national identity and rigid gender norms that have long informed social life in Greece and that frame acts of disciplining and criticizing others, provide the moral continuities to the political rationality of the neoliberal policies of austerity (Brown 2015). At the same time, such local practices form part of the neighbourly socialities and friendly intimacies that uphold the projects of survival of some impoverished residents. For example, they mobilise the means to generate income, such as through the neighbourhood informal trade in homemade produce.

On the other hand, long-term friendly and neighbourly relations provide the necessary continuities for the organisation of an autonomous neighbourhood solidarity political

initiative. In this case, histories of friendly relations organise the material, affective and political infrastructure that offers support to citizens in need (including refugees without documents) and repairs broken realms of neighbourhood coexistence. In this sense, friendly intimacies as continuities become part of the characteristic cultural politics of solidarity in Greece during austerity and the refugee crisis. They shape the relations that engage with the precarious environments produced by austerity and the recent refugee crisis.

As it seems, adjusting to, and surviving, the precarious conditions created by financial neoliberal policies depends on social and cultural continuities and reversal to previous historical forms. As Papataxiarchis (2018: 244) argues, in present 'troubled times' in Greece 'the past gains leverage over the future', and 'the drive for survival in an age of generalised trouble apparently prevails'. This corresponds, as shown in this thesis, to prevailing forms of intimacy. Through the violent and dramatic changes austerity imposes, but also through the mundane ways of dealing with these changes and the crisis they generate, it seems that life is reproduced along the same common sense lines, reproducing the same contexts of inequalities and exclusions. However, this is not merely an illustration of the way large economic and political forces and structures of power are intimate processes (Berlant and Warner 2000, Herzfeld 2005, Stoller 2002, Povinelli 2006, Wilson 2004). As the accounts presented in this research demonstrate, the employment and intensification of familiar and historical forms and social and cultural continuities entail repositions and reconfigurations, in the way they harbour unfamiliar connections.

The intensification of continuities in roles, relations and identities that comes with the attempts to adjust and survive in austerity times, also brings the critique of these continuities under the pressures they cause. In precarious conditions as Bourdieu (2000: 234) argues, 'situations of mismatch' multiply and cause 'tensions and frustrations'. We see such tensions and frustrations experienced by the overburdened women who perform care for their families and who share their troubles in eventful neighbourly meetings, in which novel forms of gender-based intimacy and solidarity emerge. Through these affectively emergent and depersonalising intimacies in which

the personal is thought in political terms, the women come to acknowledge the arbitrariness of their gender roles in relation to the inequalities of austerity economies and female unwaged reproductive labour. This has profound implications, as their accounts undermine invisibility, the taken for granted nature of their work and the constructed narratives of national intimacy amidst and against the crisis that assumes a homogenous social and political body equally impacted by the crisis.

Young adults that return to the parental household in the face of extreme precarity, battle also with tensions caused by the return and engage in critical repositions vis a vis experienced family intimacy, discourses of hegemonic modernity and neoliberal values. Ambivalence as a central aspect of their experience captures the frustrations and the creative tensions of moral dilemmas they face. While as we saw, tensions in the realms of neighbourly intimacy shaped by gender norms and exclusionary modes of belonging, coexist with de-familiarisations and inclusive socialities punctuated by the unpredictability of neighbourly proximities and encounters. Neighbourly intimacy depicts a constantly contested communality that can be the ground of hostility and racism but also of kindness and generosity towards the precarious other. This wholly affective endeavour, that takes place sometimes before taking positions or confirm 'consciousness' (Stewart 1998, Herzfeld 1992b) potentializes neighbourly intimacy as openness and inclusive connection.[111]

The political project of the neighbourhood initiative constitutes an effort to bear fruits of inclusive tendencies of neighbourly intimacy and organising a collective endeavour. Members of the initiative espouse and practice an affirmative and affective manner of social and political participation and collective improvisation in the face of problems and struggles. The initiative and the weekly meals organised for neighbours in need, seem to replace the hostile and xenophobic attitudes that strengthen precarity by a

[111] There is a local historical pattern of emergency measures and rise of national 'consciousness', as in the post-civil war period when certificates of national probity differentiated citizens with a left and communist ideological positions and who participated in the civil war, as enemies of the nation, 'dangerous citizens' who were sent into exile or deprived of social rights (Panourgia 2009). Betrayal and lack of national consciousness are repeated themes in local history and tied to crisis situations (Herzfeld 1992b, Stewart 1998). Further, as shown, church has a great authority in defining the 'consciousness' of Greek national identity, with greater force, as it has been documented, in the city of Thessaloniki (Stewart 1998).

different kind of contact that privileges relations of sharing based on affective proximity. In this sense the effects (and affects) of the initiative concern more than mere support that mends the wounds of austerity.

Hence, everyday struggles with insecurity and precarity entail continuities but also tensions that disrupt and reconfigure these continuities. This indicates that further research is needed concerning the transience of these novel configurations that are at the same time instances of political articulation. For example, further study is required on the temporality of the political emergent female solidarities that develop across novel affective intimacies female neighbours built in public. Solidarities that withdraw as we saw, easily to attitudes complicit with inequality as they link with investments to hegemonic operations of the heteronormative family household (the *nikokirio*). Another example is provided by the critiques raised during the ambivalent and contradictory experiences of return to live with one's parents by young adults that are entangled with painful compromises. But also, illustrative here is the kindness and care that emerges in the neighbourhood that can, however, easily turn into hostility, exclusion and racism. Even the more stable political forms of care build in capillaries of sharing in the autonomous neighbourhood initiative constantly confront pragmatic, temporal, ethical and political challenges. Could these micro level political expressions taking place amidst emergent disruptions in precarious situations, become sustaining political acts?

From the above we can conclude that the intersections of various forms of intimacy and precarity have multiple valences. They stress the collective composition of personal life (Allison 2012, Al-Mohammad 2012), repositions, and the displacement of boundaries, such as between hostility and kindness (Han 2012), xenophobia and care (Sigh 2011), and conviviality and conflict (Cowan 1990). Most importantly they reveal the sharpest contradictions with which participants live in austerity times, as they are forced to the fundamentals of surviving.

It is for all these reasons that intimacy emerges as a discursive process, dynamic and affectively unlimited. The ethnographic accounts show that we must think of intimacy

as a realm of variation and change, a view that reflects Herzfeld's (2005) formulation of cultural intimacy. The important in this conceptualisation is that change is inherent in the inner workings of intimacy, in the way regularities are reproduced in ways that generate new forms. Yet, intimacy in this study of a precarious present defined by austerity, does not signal a realm of embarrassment and celebration as in Herzfeld's (2005) study, but a relational field punctuated by the tendencies of sedimentation and change, conservatism and critique, amidst suspending and activating a critical re-approach of continuities through the conflicting tensions of the present.

I propose thus to examine the life under austerity under the prism of precarity and intimacy and their intersections. This way we can consider how the play of continuities and discontinuities defines the social transformations taking place in Greece at the moment. Most importantly we can capture something very important, the possibilities of political articulations in the everyday, while capitalist austerity and a conservative, xenophobic and misogynistic nationalism rule the lives of the people not solely in austerity Greece, but in many different parts around the world.

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