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# Beyond Spontaneity

## Crisis, violence and collective action in Athens

Dimitris Dalakoglou

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*This article argues for the analytical potentials of the concept of spontaneity in our effort to understand critically the socio-spatial dynamics of Athens, but especially the contemporary collective protest actions in the city. Such critical understanding emerges as a significant task given the current urgency to grasp the capitalist crisis and the collective reactions to it. However, taking into account the re-configuration of extreme-Right violence in the streets of Athens, the article attempts to revisit the Marxist dichotomy between spontaneity and non-spontaneity. Via an anthropological critique of this distinction, the paper suggests an additional point of focus beyond spontaneity.*

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**Key words:** spontaneity, crisis, protest, collective action, Athens, state, para-state, extreme-right, violence, anthropology

### Spontaneity

Spontaneity is the centre of the Athenian urban development process (Leontidou 1990). The city has been characterised by spontaneous materialities, spontaneous aesthetics, groups spontaneously coming together in sites and acting spontaneously to create an urban palimpsest where all the aforementioned are combined dynamically with state interventions, writing over and over again the urban materiality (Leontidou 1990). Indeed, this is a process described also in several ethnographic studies of daily life and socio-spatial relationships in Athens (e.g. Economou 2009; Panourgia 1995; Vradis 2012a; Madianou 2010; Psimmenos 2004; Kalianos 2011). The notion of spontaneity was raised anew and analysed in CITY by Leontidou (2012) in reference to recent incidents of public protest in the

streets and piazzas of the city. The author revisits spontaneity by referring to Gramsci (1971), who – partly following Lenin's (1902) classical argument – suggests that a spontaneous social movement does not really exist, and that we rather deal with social movements where leadership cannot be tracked. Nevertheless, Leontidou (ibid.) continues, it is apparent empirically that this Gramscian idea is challenged today by many anti-austerity collective actions in Greece, especially the Syntagma Piazza movement of spring/summer 2011. Moreover, today there are further challenges for the Leninist scheme, these are linked with what Leontidou called virtual public space, in a way echoing the analysis of Hardt and Negri (2000) on technology, contemporary forms of resistance and the multitude. In the case of Syntagma there was *no* initial conscious leadership by a pre-existing organisational



June 2011, a man standing in front of the parliament house watching the association of unemployed playing football on Amalias Avenue, photo by D. Dalakoglou

apparatus, but many, diverse historical-material and contextual factors contributing towards the particular political event. This grew spontaneously into a social movement, without the Party leadership that Lenin and Gramsci had in mind.

Another recent example of a spontaneous collective action in Athens was the revolt of December 2008. The December revolt within days evolved into more fixed, socially and materially political infrastructures, such as new workers base-unions, new squats and social centres, new neighbourhood assemblies, the first guerrilla gardening initiatives in the country (see Dalakoglou and Vradis 2011) and generally an influx of human resources into such projects, along new nexuses of solidarity on the grassroots level. A similar process was also witnessed in the case of the Syntagma Piazza movement. Indicatively one can mention the case of the local people's assemblies that multiplied and were empowered after the

summer of Syntagma. Some of them, these days, are undertaking important economic roles, such as organising the so-called "potato movement". This is the self-organised provision of affordable food products bought directly from the farmers and provided by the assembly, without the intervention of market brokers. Overall, at the moment in the country there are several anticapitalist-antagonistic political-economic projects largely existing with direct political and physical reference to the December 2008 and June 2011 movements. These are references in terms of the people involved but also political dynamics. The list of the projects, besides plenty of new squats and social centres all around Greece, also includes more than thirty non-monetary local exchange systems, time banks and direct producers-consumers networks, more than seven workers collectives and more than ten self-organised farms<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, at the very moment these lines are written, the workers of the factory "Industrial Mining" (*Viomichaniki Metaleftiki*) in Thessaloniki are holding an assembly discussing the transferral of their factory into workers' self-management, the first self-organised factory in the country. So an important point is that the recent examples of spontaneous collective actions have evolved into more concrete socio-material anti-systemic infrastructures.

### Post-Spontaneity

In spite of the lack of conscious leadership in the case of spontaneous collective actions of resistance such as riots, revolts or more peaceful actions like the initial occupation of Syntagma Piazza, it is common ground today that these are actions linked and even led by political matters, have a certain degree of organisation, expectations etc. (e.g. see McPhail 1989; Tarrow 1991, 1998; Dikeç 2005; The Guardian/LSE 2011-2012). Such initially spontaneous collective actions in some cases get a form of organisation that gradually evolves into more fixed

apparatuses. The shape and the characteristics of those longer-lasting formations depend on pre-existing repertoires of resistance<sup>3</sup> (Tilly 1978), but also on the pre-existing structural asymmetries that lead to the action each time, on the human subjects involved and of course on the physical/material framework of each occasion etc. This process could be seen in Athens during the December 2008 revolt, when the murder of Alexis Grigoropoulos by a policeman triggered spontaneous clashes between people physically located in certain parts of the city centre and police, spontaneous marching, looting and attacks to banks and police stations, starting just a few minutes after the murder and lasting the entire night (see Vradis & Dalakoglou 2011). These led to the first occupation of buildings and then to daily assemblies and organised actions, rallies and marches. Something analogous happened in the case of Syntagma in 2011. A call via Facebook led to an unexpected rally, which evolved into a camp; the camp then led to an open public assembly and then to daily rallies, assemblies and to big gatherings every Sunday (see Giovanopoulos & Mitropoulos 2011).

However, something like this does not always happen after an initially spontaneous collective reaction, as the example of the London 2011 revolt shows. Although social research (The Guardian/LSE 2011-2012) suggests that the London riots were explicitly political and that many of the people involved were aware of the structural asymmetries of their daily life, the initial actions still did not lead to visible post-spontaneous political formations. The comparison between London and Athens, makes apparent that the question of spontaneity à la Lenin/Gramsci is valuable for tactical and organisational reasons, but at the same time may be limiting under the current circumstances. Probably today the question about spontaneous formation – or not – of collective protest action is not as urgent as the post-spontaneity question which in fact was the main issue that preoccupied assemblies in Syntagma from the end of

June 2011 until police eventually led their final offensive later that summer. In other words, the question was how we could see a metamorphosis of spontaneity into a new radical, self-organised and antagonistic political economy of everyday life.

### Anti-Spontaneity

The question of post-spontaneity is important for many reasons, however in the case of Athens/Greece this question has even more specific importance given the current attempts of the extreme-Right political spectrum to hijack the politics of spontaneity. Syntagma Piazza – including the general strikes of June 2011 – was the most spontaneous, massive and powerful post-December actions of collective resistance so far. Syntagma gave new force to various antagonistic and anti-systemic projects. However, parallel to the new social dynamics that were growing in Syntagma, elsewhere in Athens took place the empowerment of a xenophobic, nationalist and far-Right antipode.

This extreme Right pole was re-formed anew as part of the post-December 2008 counter-insurrection (Dalakoglou & Vradis 2011; Dalakoglou 2011). Just a few months after December 2008, in spring 2009, that strengthened political force declared the Athenian Piazza of Ayios Panteleiomnas a no-go zone for migrants. Patrols of neo-Nazi groups affiliated with Golden Dawn (GD) started attacking migrants in this particular area. After the IMF/EU/ECB loan of May 2010 this extreme-Right tendency started taking more concrete shape and coming together more firmly, multiplying and escalating racist attacks within and outside the particular neighbourhood (see HRW 2012; Kandylis & Kavoulakos 2011)<sup>4</sup>. Recent examples of the neonazi expansion outside Ayios Panteleiomonas can be seen in the Athenian suburb of Nikaia, where in July 2012, members of GD issued an ultimatum to foreign shopkeepers to close down their businesses and leave the area.

Historically, since the 1920s the far-Right para-state (*parakráτος*) in Greece was the long-arm of the state, violent apparatuses targeting people with Left-wing affiliations during most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (see Panourgia 2008; Kostopoulos 2005; Mouzelis & Pagoulatos 2002: 88-89; Mazower 2006: 353-354). So Golden Dawn, comprising a political and physical<sup>5</sup> continuation of that tradition, until recently was attacking mainly Left-wing activists<sup>6</sup> rather than migrants. In a previous paper (Dalakoglou & Vradis 2011) it was explained that although the new rule over Ayios Panteleimonas targets mostly migrants, it was in fact initially shaped as a spatial-political response of the extreme-Right to December's spatial-political legacies. Neo-nazis aimed to control an open-air public space and promote their racist and anti-Left agenda in antithetic reference to open-air spaces, which hosted the spontaneous political offspring of the December revolt. The big difference is that neo-Nazis seem to often operate in collaboration with formal state apparatuses. For example, the government vice-minister, Markoyiannakis who was responsible for the police – in an unprecedented act – personally visited one of the anti-migratory rallies of Ayios Panteleimonas in July 2009 to chat with the “enraged local residents”. Simultaneously, the local police station seems to systemically refuse to record or examine racist attacks (see HRW 2012). While some who dared to challenge the neo-Nazi rule over the piazza were detained by the police (Dalakoglou & Vradis 2011). Ayios Panteleimonas was already notorious since 2004 for racist attacks by police officers serving in the local station (tvxs 09/04/2010). Indeed the close links between police and GD also became apparent in the elections of May and June 2012, when approximately half of police officers on duty in the headquarters of Athens Police voted for GD<sup>7</sup>.

In spite of these explicit and conspicuous links between the state apparatus and the para-state apparatus of GD, neo-Nazis in fact have been desperate to present their

actions as spontaneous reactions<sup>8</sup>, especially after December 2008<sup>9</sup>. Besides the case of Ayios Panteleimonas, another typical example of this process took place in May 2011, just a few days before the Syntagma movement. In Ipirou Street, in the centre of Athens an armed robbery – the victim of which was a Greek man who was stabbed to death by robbers of foreign origin – triggered a series of organised group attacks against migrants and anti-Nazis. This lasted for several days and included the beating of migrants and stabbings, along with attacks against some of the Athens Anarchist squats (HRW 2012; Dalakoglou 2011). Some of the participants in the rally on the ground where the assassination had taken place were suggesting that this is “our December”<sup>10</sup>. So the implication was that since December 2008 was a spontaneous revolt triggered by the assassination of Alexis Grigoropoulos by the police, the murder of Manolis Kantaris in Ipirou Street was expected by the far-Right to be the event triggering a massive xenophobic group attack, attracting neo-Nazis from other cities who came to Athens for the big day. The masses did not come, but still, the attacks happened with at least one reported death of a migrant and several injuries (HRW 2012).

A few days after these incidents, the Syntagma Piazza movement started. In Syntagma, members of GD tried to get involved, but were attacked by anti-Nazis on several occasions. Some of the most characteristic examples were clashes between anti-Nazis and Nazis during the general strikes of June 15 and 28–29, 2011. Despite their efforts to appear as part of the mass spontaneous collective action, on June 28 neo-Nazis were videotaped fleeing behind the riot police lines when they were chased by anti-Nazi demonstrators. A video<sup>11</sup> showing prominent members of the far-Right chatting with officers and passing behind the police cordon towards the police-protected zone of the house of parliament caused a scandal<sup>12</sup>. A potential attempt by demonstrators to go close to the police officers during that day would be unimaginable. The



unprecedented police brutality during the 48-hour general strike of June 28 and 29 resulted in over 500 demonstrators attending hospital.

Generally, it is apparent that the extreme-Right tendency is not as spontaneous and as grassroots-like as it portrays itself. Moreover it is explicit that the actions of this tendency do not only take the form of informal gang-style violence against migrants in the dark alleys of Ayios Panteleimonas, but it is much more unapologetically visible and systemic. Arguably, today the empowerment of GD provides a *faux* xenophobic spontaneity. Although the Right-wing extremists represent themselves as acting spontaneously, they seem to have exceptional links with the so-called “deep state” that comprises a reserve violent apparatus, being activated every time danger from the empowered Left or anti-systemic forces became apparent in recent Greek history. Some youths are caught in it, possibly thinking they are participating in something spontaneous and anti-systemic or with more evident gains<sup>13</sup>. As it was mentioned above, this far-Right violence – in or out of uniforms – is physically threatening both migrants and the existence of collective resistance and antagonistic projects that are emerging during the current crisis. So the question of how anti-systemic resistance can be formed and organised beyond the moments of spontaneous collective action *per se* is even more urgent than one may think.

### *Beyond spontaneity*

A discussion on spontaneity and collective action probably should continue by clarifying that much of the orthodox Marxist perspective has historically had difficulty dealing with spontaneous collective actions like the one emerging today under conditions of exception created by the crisis. This has several times led to the violent repression of what is considered spontaneous – and therefore lacking proper consciousness. Something like this happened in October 2011 in Athens, when the Communist Party of Greece defended the

parliament building in Syntagma against the “crowd” who wanted to reach the building in order to interrupt the parliamentary discussion about the new austerity package<sup>14</sup>. As Leontidou (2012) points out, much of the mainstream Left in the country was initially uncomfortable with Syntagma. Some of the people affiliated with Left parties either felt obliged to prove that the Syntagma movement was a conscious movement as opposed to spontaneous action, while another part of the orthodox Left, such as the Communist Party, acted against the new or newly re-configured political subjects that emerged in the Syntagma movement. Something similar was seen in December 2008 as well, when the Communist Party was congratulated for its “responsible attitude” during the uprising; the congratulations coming from the governmental minister responsible for policing. In that case, two modernist and normative perspectives on human behaviour (that of the Stalinist Left and that of the neoliberal state) met and aligned against the spontaneity of the revolt. Perhaps within this context it is not a surprise that in the elections of June 2012 the Communist Party for the first time in its post-dictatorial history hardly managed to gain seats in parliament.

The clear-cut dichotomy between spontaneity and non-spontaneity has prevailed in much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s Marxist thought precisely dealing with questions around collective action (see Lenin 1902; Luxemburg 1918; Sorel 1908; Fanon 1952; Vaneigem 1967; Laclau & Mouffe 2001 etc.) Although Sorel (1908:151) would not approve the involvement of academic discussion in the question of revolutionary spontaneity, it is true that the dichotomy between spontaneous versus non-spontaneous actions also emerges as one of the key dilemmas in contemporary social sciences (Murphy & Throop 2010: 29). Although both in academic and revolutionary discussions, the content of the term spontaneity is debatable the anthropological discussion on the phenomenon still has a value for a critical understanding of collective actions in the streets of our cities.

According to Bourdieu (1990a: 61-62) such divisions between spontaneity and non-spontaneity should be attributed to the rigidity of the epistemological paradigm used. According to Bourdieu, human behaviour has been considered as controlled by habitus, which may appear as “spontaneity without consciousness and will” (Bourdieu 1990b: 56), yet in fact habitus is in a dialectic relationship with structures. An analogous anthropological approach is that of Roger Abraham (1986). He has shown that in the case of modern Anglo-American culture actions and experiences classified as spontaneous are valued higher socially than experiences classified as un-spontaneous or planned. Spontaneity is linked to an authentic self – in the case of Marxist thinkers this could be translated into the authentic will of the proletariat. In spite of the cultural prioritisation of spontaneous action, Abraham (1986: 63-65) suggests that within American culture the social framework and individual preparation are in fact already there, just in case the spontaneous events happen. So when the incident that triggers spontaneous actions takes place, people react in ways that in principle can be classified as spontaneous. So, in fact the boundaries are blurred. Extending Abraham’s idea to our case, one can recall that people in Athens were talking for years about a popular, spontaneous movement like Syntagma, away from formal apparatuses that tame spontaneity, like parties or unions. When such movement took place although it could be classified as spontaneous the reason it had such enormous social dynamics was precisely that people in a sense were preparing for it and because it was in direct communication with some of the existing repertoires of resistance.

The difficulty to differentiate clearly between spontaneous and non-spontaneous actions can also be seen the other way around. Anthropologists studying ritual and performance (e.g. see Turner 1969; 1974; Gluckman 1963; Mitchell 2004; Mahmood 2001; Kertzer 1989) suggest that even when we deal with supposedly well-planned and

ritualistic, repetitive actions and other social performances organised in advance, improvisation and spontaneity play a major role in them, especially with reference to social change. Most famously in anthropology and the social history of Europe, carnival as a moment of popular spontaneity comprises a typical example of a programmed ritual-performance where the spontaneity of the anti-structure leads to revolts (see Cohen 1993; Le Roy Ladourie 1980). Such situations are seen over and over again during protest actions, where the exceptional and *liminal* framework of usually ritualistic and supposedly well-organised marches is not followed by the participants. Instead people spontaneously group and break from the programme. In Athens, a typical recent example was on May 5, 2010, during the first anti-austerity general strike, the day that the parliament approved the first IMF/ECB/EU loan agreement. Although the parties and unions had scheduled to leave Syntagma and the leaderships did leave, the majority of demonstrators spontaneously remained on the Piazza, clashing with the police and attempting to storm the house of parliament. So the question can be posed again, where are the boundaries between spontaneous actions and non-spontaneous ones in the aforementioned case?

Overall, the division between spontaneity and non-spontaneity seems to echo the Foucaultian (1966) understanding of the order of things. Classifications provide a way of “knowing” spontaneously acquired knowledge; this is why organising in a taxonomic way the most spontaneous human phenomena, such as language, in fact emerges as a basic part of ordering/knowing and taming an otherwise spontaneous world. In a less theoretical manner, such division between spontaneity and non-spontaneity can be linked to the process that Norbert Elias (1939) called the “civilising process”. Namely such division can be seen within the predominant modernisation process, which was conceived as a controlling and disciplining process of human spontaneity.



It could be seen just as one more division between nature and culture, where spontaneity could be tracked as part of the natural human characteristics that culture supposedly tames. Such modernist approach found one of its best materialisations in scientific socialist ideas, which implied that we should aim to transform the human spontaneity towards the desired subjectivity – a revolutionary one, a socialist one, and so on.

Generally, the discussion about the division between spontaneous and non-spontaneous actions is analytically valuable and can lead us to fruitful theoretical debates, but equally to valuable debates on tactics. Yet at the same time, as Bourdieu (1990a) suggested, it seems to belong to a paradigm that may be setting certain limits in our effort to understand political praxis on the streets and piazzas of our cities. The situation, however, is exceptional and an unlimited critical understanding is urgent for two main reasons: one, due to the exceptional qualitative and quantitative characteristics of the crisis and two, because this is a period in which the neoliberal state (and its violent state and para-state apparatuses) is targeting any anti-systemic collective action – spontaneous or unspontaneous. Even worse, this process passes through an attempt by these apparatuses to hijack the spontaneous versus unspontaneous dichotomy.

In Greece today we are experiencing a social crisis that has reached the level of claiming human lives daily<sup>15</sup>. If the December 2008 revolt signified the spontaneous social response to the culminating social crisis that had been going on for over a decade of neoliberal configurations, the debt crisis is an escalation of this wider crisis carrying enormous structural violence and extending the state of exception from a few groups (migrants, underemployed youth etc.) to the majority of the population. There is a lot at stake, the IMF/EU/ECB loan in May 2010 enforced strict cuts in welfare and social provisions comprising a paradigmatic<sup>16</sup> shift towards a new type of neoliberal governance in Western<sup>17</sup> Europe.

Before being applied to Western Europe, such regimes had galloped in the so-called global south and then post-socialist Europe. So today we see the socially established boundaries, including the ones of physical violence (Dalakoglou 2011), to be transcended, spiralling as a result to levels of a low intensity war-condition (Vradis 2012b). This condition is not limited to Greece; it is a historical period of political reconfigurations in which increasing numbers of people experiencing this kind of violence rise up and revolt. As it is perhaps apparent in our case and as students (Dauvé 1998) of the post-insurrection question imply, the debate probably cannot be limited to how to influence the spontaneous social collective actions, nor in judging whether a particular collective action is authentically spontaneous or not. On the contrary, as it seems, the focus in Athens – and beyond – should be on what happens after the spectacular, spontaneous (or not) moments of revolt. In this way, the new socio-political dynamics created after each of these moments of revolt will become the social infrastructure in order for the next spontaneous (or not) revolutionary moment not to be merely a moment, but a long lasting situation which will allow the movements to deal with counter-insurrectionary political forces.

## Notes

- 1 I would like to thank very much Antonis Vradis, Bob Catterall, Anna Richter, Evi Chatzipanagiotidou, Lila Leontidou, Jon Mitchell, Giorgos Angelopoulos, Kate Michalopoulou, Eugene Michail and Filippo Osella for their comments and help while discussing some of the ideas appearing in this paper.
- 2 For a recent list see <http://chimeres.info/blog/2012/02/23/enas-allos-kosmos-einai-yparktos/>
- 3 And this is important according to Tilly (1978), since social movements which introduce successfully a new repertoire of resistance have long-lasting historical effects. Even the occupy movement (OWS) as a movement that achieves long-lasting peaceful occupations of open-air public spaces and not temporary ones introduces a new repertoire and thus new tactic effectively.

- 4 The Network for Recording the Racist Violence, during their first pilot survey, managed to record and confirm 63 racist attacks, the attacks took place between 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2011 and 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2011. Most of the attacks were launched by groups of unknown people, according to the police, but 18 out of the 63 recorded racist attacks were carried out by police officers in uniform. See: <http://www.unhcr.gr/nea/artikel/aa6559226a5ce001775aa74c54a30b7a/anisychitika-ta-apot.html>
- 5 The links are very explicit: The leader of the colonel's dictatorship (1967-1974) G. Papadopoulos founded the organisation EPEN (EIIEN) from the prison in 1984, after he was sentenced for the coup. The leader of Golden Dawn, Michaloliakos, was the first president of EPEN Youth Sector. The colonel's dictatorship is notorious for its close links with the extreme-right para-state apparatuses before the coup and afterwards. For example, during the dictatorship, laws honouring and providing benefits to the members of the Security Battalions for their role during WWII came into force. The Security Battalions (*Tagmata Asfaleias*) were the collaborators of German Nazi occupiers during WWII and to a great extent comprised the formalisation of the pre-war fascist para-state and its transformation into organised units. This formalisation continued after WWII, peaking during the dictatorship (see Kostopoulos 2005). Allegedly (see Kloby 2004:249) Papadopoulos was a member of the Patras Security Battalion during the Nazi occupation. For sure, as army officer of the postwar state Papadopoulos served in the State Intelligence Service (SIS), in the department of internal security. The major task of this department was to tackle the communist threat in Greece (Keely 2010). In 1981, after the electoral victory of PASOK, SIS was reformed and renamed into Greek Intelligence Service. In a payroll slip leaked from the SIS during this reform, appears the name of Michaloliakos, who was notorious for his participation in anti-Left bomb attacks. This was the reason he was imprisoned. GD claims that the document is fake (see Xenakis 2012). Michaloliakos left EPEN and founded GD, in EPEN he was replaced by M. Vorides, who was the Minister for Infrastructure until June 2012 and the elected MP for the Attica prefecture in the parliament after the elections of June 2012.
- 6 These Left and antifascist movements have been targeted several times by GD. The leader of GD, Michaloliakos, has spent time in prison, convicted for his involvement in a bomb attack in a cinema in Athens during the screening of a Soviet film, injuring members of the audience. Two of the most notorious attacks of GD against Left activists were a.) the attempted murder of the Left student Dimitris Kousouris on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1998 by the member of GD's Political Committee, Andritsopoulos, who was convicted many years later and b.) the stabbing of the Leftist student Paris Chrysos close to the GD offices. The list of attacks attributed to GD is endless, most Left organisations of the country demand for many decades now for the organisation to be classified as illegal. GD in the past has changed its name in order to cope with the legal consequences of its members' acts (IOSPRESS 13/05/2006; 16/9/2006). For a genealogy of the Left youth movements in Greece after the dictatorship and some of their antifascist actions see Giovanopoulos & Dalakoglou 2011.
- 7 Police officers being on duty in Athens the election days in May and June 2012 voted in specific electoral centres, so the calculation was apparent, see Russia Today 16/06/2012; To Vima 11/05/2012.
- 8 'Spontaneous' is here used in the colloquial sense of the word, not in the Gramscian sense. This is clearly a recuperation of the concept by the state and para-state (Leontidou 2012, personal communication).
- 9 This effort to portray the extreme Right action as spontaneous goes back a long time and can be seen in the historical use of the term "indignant citizens" (*aganaktismenoi polites*), which was used by the police in order to label the para-state aid against protests. Eventually, the political life of the term changed since the Syntagma movement. In Syntagma the demonstrators directly translated the word *indignados* from Spanish. So today, the Greek word *aganaktismenoi* stands for something very different, namely the people who occupied Syntagma Piazza to protest against austerity and the political establishment of the country and IMF.
- 10 Indeed, in the obscured logic of the extreme-Right participants the Left were to be blamed, suggesting that the Left reacted to the assassination of the 15-year-old Alexis Grigoropoulos by the police in December 2008, but not to the assassination of the 44-year old Manolis Kantaris in May 2011.
- 11 The use of the terms *extreme-Right*, *neo-Nazi* and *fascist* as synonymous is on purpose. Historically in Greece the terms have been used alternatively in reference to the para-state apparatuses, but not only.
- 12 The Minister of Development at the time, K. Skandalidis, was forced to admit that there is an old relationship between the extreme-Right wing and the police that needs to be examined (tvxs 30/06/2011). Recently, another similar scandal occurred on 2/2/2008, during an antifascist demonstration in Athens. Members of GD and riot-police operated together against the antifascist demonstrators. The incident was recorded on video provoking debate in mass media and the public

arena. However, arguably this is just the – video-recorded – peak of the iceberg; participants of antifascist demonstrations for many years are witnesses of this kind of collaboration becoming more and more explicit.

- 13 In July 2012, Golden Dawn announced that it is going to collaborate with private security companies in order to legalise the night and day-light patrols of its members.
- 14 Eventually, on February 12<sup>th</sup> 2012 “when Athens was burnt” that role of defending the parliamentary building was taken back by the police who – as ordered state apparatus with centrally organised tactics – attacked the demonstrators in order to control what is usually portrayed as the pre-modern, unconscious and face-less, hooded “crowd”.
- 15 Two studies in *The Lancet* show a direct link of the conditions of financial crisis and the related austerity policies to the downgrading of the overall health of the population (Kentikelenis et al. 2011) or the doubling of the suicide rate in Greece within the last three years (Economou et al. 2011). In all, the short time period between May 2010 and the present time (June 2012) has seen a rapid recession and fast-track policies of extreme public austerity causing the abrupt impoverishment of a large part of the population (see Matsaganis & Leventi 2011). This is also reflected in the near doubling of the official unemployment figure (from 10.3% in January 2010 to over 20% today), as well as in the increase of homelessness, soup kitchens and literal starvation in Athens. However, today it is not only the advanced marginalised people who are pushed even lower. The current austerity policies create a very inclusive state of emergency for the great majority of Greek society including people who were middle class until two years ago. This is echoed in the gradual elimination of small retailers/artisans from the Athenian high street. According to a report issued by the Retailers Association of Athens in September 2011, more than 20% of small businesses had closed down in the city since 2010. Besides the structural violence directed against a substantial proportion of the population, there is an increase into acts of physical violence. First of all there are the attacks by extreme-right to migrants, but there is also work suggesting a qualitative change in the acts of physical violence (Herzfeld 2011; Dalakoglou 2011) while criminality has risen dramatically over a 12 months period. According to statistics by the Greek Police there was a 45.45 % year-to-year increase in murder and 58.5 % year-to-year increase in robbery between 2009 and 2010, while between the first semester of 2010 and the first semester of 2011 there was an increase of 132% in robberies in houses and 30% in shops. Full statistical reports available at [http://www.astynomia.gr/index.php?option=ozo\\_](http://www.astynomia.gr/index.php?option=ozo_)

[content&perform=view&id=6419&Itemid=52&lang=&lang=](#)

- 16 For example, the emergency loan granted to the Greek government and the accompanying structural adjustment programme implemented by the so-called troika (including the IMF, EU, ECB) were first introduced in Greece in May 2010, only to be extended to Portugal and Ireland within months. Similarly, the notion of a government led by a technocrat appointed as PM by parliament was introduced in Greece, with Italy following suit within one week. At the same time, austerity policies curtailing public welfare spending have been applied widely in most European countries, the UK included, with the example of the Greek economy's collapse often brought up as a warning.
- 17 As political and not geographical determination.

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