





CRISIS AND DEMOCRACY – THE DEMOCRACY IN CRISIS


Social Anthropological Perspectives
on the Fragility of the Social Contract




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Beyond localist and dichotomous models of lagging behind in modernization.



The political circumstances that led to the financial deadlock need to be contextualized both historically and in geostrategic terms, firmly placing Greece in the international political/economic map.



The contribution of Anthropology




Documenting local patterns of accountability, historical and political causality and analyzing them in context, offers us more than an update on public understandings of the crisis. Indigenous etiology – how people make sense of political affairs- provides unique insights into their preferred avenues of claiming and exercising political agency and participation.



Party-led clientalism

Clientalism has been a feature of Greek governance almost since the establishment of the modern Greek state.


Current analysis however, rightly focuses on its post-1974 role as a cause of financial instability.



I propose that we extend this time-frame to investigate party-led clientalism as the result of post-civil war/cold war political developments – or else, as a civil war/cold war legacy that post-1974 governments had to negotiate.





The State of the Right

- Post-war politics are connected to the cold war climate.
 - The 'politically dangerous' subject.
 - Inequalities and asymmetries between citizens.
 - State-nepotism sustained spheres of political and economic exclusion out of which, new elites emerged.
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Post- 1974 Clientalism

- Patronage-ridden politics kept creating new elites –while also at times strengthening existing ones, paradoxically and simultaneously- and proliferated asymmetries between citizens.
 - The proliferation of bureaucracy, parts of which were frequently created to serve an influential head of an enterprise network, a high party official or some other political entrepreneur.
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Clientalism and micro-practices of corruption between citizens and lower officials cannot be analysed at present simply as the natural opposites of meritocracy or fair play.


They have become institutions, *means* through which the everyday citizen attempts to mediate between not only themselves and the state, but also between themselves and the elites that this very scheme has created.





Institutionalised clientalism and micro-practices of corruption have become a way to diffuse power and to exercise some kind of political and civil agency, a struggle to command day-to-day experience, and a paradoxical form of civil participation.



Both the state-nepotism of the pre-1974, and *partitocrazia* created and sustained political and economic elites with privileged access to state resources, a condition which hindered economic development and damaged the citizens' appreciation of democracy, transparency and equality as *par excellence* dimensions of the Social Contract.



None of the above however can be adequately understood if Greece is not examined within an international political and economic context.

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- In a context characterized by internal asymmetries most people have differential access to social, economic and educational capital.
 - The sudden introduction of conditions of 'open competition' can in fact further proliferate asymmetry since citizens are not placed on equal footing.
 - Top-down approaches to the crisis are likely to exacerbate social problems and to contribute towards a new era of fragility of the Social Contract.