

How to study the crisis anthropologically?

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THIS IS A DIFFICULT
TIME FOR GREECE, BUT
GOOD TIME FOR THE
ANTHROPOLOGY OF
GREECE...



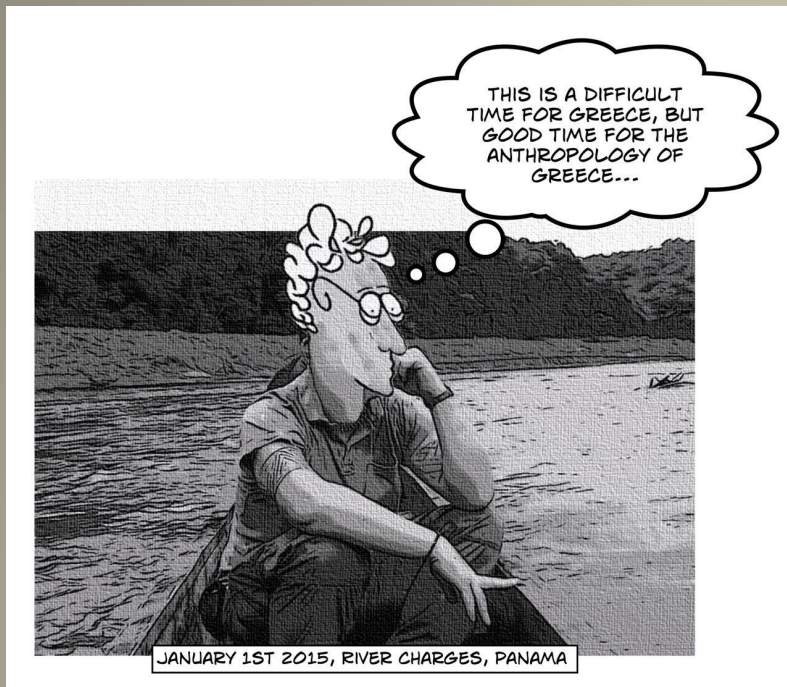
JANUARY 1ST 2015, RIVER CHARGES, PANAMA

From facebook
page:
*households in
crisis*

ELECTION NIGHT IN PATRAS

IN PATRAS THERE IS A TRADITION OF NOISY FOOTBALL-STYLE CELEBRATIONS, WITH SUPPORTERS OF THE WINNING PARTY STORMING THE STREETS OF THE CITY...





- The crisis has stimulated academic work about Greece
- and
- ‘legitimized’ the anthropological study of Greek society as ‘urgent’ or timely research.





- was the anthropology of Greece equipped to deal with the enormity of the crisis?

Emerging topics in the Anthropology of the Greek crisis

City-/Protest-/anti-austerity- movements

Indignation/discontent

Anti-hegemonic discourse

The emergence of fascism

Police violence

Cultural mismatches

Crisis temporalities

Civil war/hunger/junta

Urban spaces

The position of migrants, xenophobia

Gender & crisis

Family

Food

Precarious-ness/poverty

Solidarity initiatives

privatisation/bankruptcy

populism

Entrepreneurship & livelihood Strategies

Is it fair to argue that the anthropology of the Greek crisis, has so far been, ethnographically thin?

- we have seen some nuanced ethnographic accounts,
- but a good number of anthropological accounts on the Greek crisis takes the form of sociologically and politically informed commentary, or simply targets systemic considerations.

The subjectivities of peripheral-ised actors is taken for granted or presented as undifferentiated.

Despite our success in outlining the ills of neoliberalism, as these have been exemplified in the Greek case, there is no sufficient engagement with the neoliberal consciousness of the Greek subjects.

1. The anthropology of the Greek crisis has made a great contribution in de-pathologising* the crisis-afflicted subject;
2. but the anthropology of the Greek crisis has not fulfilled, so far, its responsibility with respect to de-exoticising* the crisis-afflicted subject.

*See Theodossopoulos. 2014. On De-Pathologising Resistance. History and Anthropology, Vol. 25, No. 4, 415–430.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02757206.2014.933101>

How much we know about the undifferentiated local actor?



Possible explanations that have contributed in the exoticisation of the Greek crisis-afflicted subject:

- the preference for commentary, without sustained engagement with the voices of broad Greek populace
- the relative neglect of the pre-crisis anthropological literature on Greece, e.g. work on accountability
- a mirroring of the discourse of politicians



Political engagement or political apathy?

- Engagement, yes
- Un-reflexive politicization, no.

It is time to tell our readership who we are.



THEODOSSOPOULOS,
ANTHROPOLOGISTS OF
THE CRISIS

Summary:

1. There is a tendency in the emerging anthropology of the crisis to outline the destructive effects of neoliberal ideology, but without problematizing the neoliberal consciousness and preferences of local actors.
2. For anthropological standards, the anthropology of the Greek crisis has been so far ethnographically thin. There is a proclivity towards top-down commentary.
3. In the case of authors who identify as Greek there is too much reliance on their 'native' subjectivity—which provides a valuable perspective—but is communicated in an un-reflexive way. Political reflexivity is lacking, overall.



But the future of the emerging anthropology of the crisis is promising...

