

10 YEARS OF CRISIS

The Ethnography of Austerity
10 > 12 January 2018

Workshop

Ten Years of Crisis: the Ethnography of Austerity

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ISCTE-IUL, Lisbon – Portugal

Org.

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This workshop aims to bring together and contrast analytically the ethnographic material from Southern Europe gathered by our three large anthropological projects and compare it with evidence from Northern and Central-Eastern Europe and Latin America. We seek to demonstrate that the anthropological conceptual toolkit is essential to understand what is happening on the ground in the world of 'austerity'. Our comparative debate will go beyond the already familiar claims of increased socioeconomic inequality by confronting it with such classic anthropological topics as household economics, intergenerational relations, gender differentiation, approaches to the meaning of work, family and kinship networks, forms of socio-cultural belonging, regimes of indebtedness, and modes of personhood. We aim to achieve a broad comparative view of national responses to austerity and to generate new methodological, conceptual and theoretical frameworks.

The projects

PI Antónia Pedroso de Lima, CRIA, "Care as sustainability in crisis situations" FCT, PT.

PIs Dimitrios Theodossopoulos and João Pina Cabral, University of Kent at Canterbury, "Household survival in crisis: austerity and relatedness in Greece and Portugal", ESRC, UK.

PI Susana Narotzky, University of Barcelona, "Grassroots Economics: Meaning, Project and Practice in the Pursuit of Livelihood" [GRECO], ERC Advanced Grant, S.

DAY 1

9h00 - 9h30

Welcome and Presentation

9h30 - 11h00

Session 1 - Ethnographies of Austerity I

Papers

BRIAN CAMPBELL (Max-Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Germany)
«From Convivencia to Connivencia (and back again?) Racialised austerity and (the return of) political-ethnicity in a Spanish enclave in Northern Africa»

Partido Popular politicians boast that, thanks to their acumen, the Spanish enclave of Ceuta emerged from “the crisis” unscathed. Indeed, the civil and military sectors – which employ half Ceuta’s population but are dominated by Christians - survived intact. Austerity slashed those resources that those not dependent on public employment - who tend to be Muslim - need for subsistence or to compete for highly-desirable jobs in the civil service. Falling behind the rapidly-growing pro-Muslim “Dignity Party”, and drawing on memories of past struggles as dubious Spaniards, my Muslim informants complain that instead of “slimming” the public sector and fostering business, the PP dumped the risks of austerity onto them as expendable, racialised citizens. Major discontent is leveled at the PP’s ritual-economy of convivencia, developed to diffuse the violent ethnic tensions of the 90s. The PP patronises religious associations, funding their rituals and temples, as long as “others” are invited to participate. Ceuta’s calendar is therefore dotted with events that celebrate the enclave as a melting-pot whose ethno-religious groups are all validly Spanish, and publicly commit participants to further the values of cohabitation. Boycotting the system, my informants argue that “convivencia” is “connivencia”, a ploy to distract Muslims from socio-economic inequalities, make associations compete for patronage, and break the Muslim vote. In response, the anti-migrant populist movement “Ceuta Insegura”, has turned its sights on Muslims’ demands for a “convivencia real”, considered a threat to their privilege and Ceuta’s Spanishness. Derailed by austerity, convivencia merely fuelled the antagonisms it sought to mitigate.

PATRICIA MATOS (GRECO, Universitat de Barcelona, Spain) & DIANA SARKIS (GRECO, Universitat de Barcelona, Spain)
«The Body Politics of Austerity: gender, agency and work in Portugal and Spain»

In this paper we address the articulation between body politics, gender and agency under austerity conditions. The paper asks: how is austerity experienced and perceived with and through the body? What is the role of gendered embodied dispositions as livelihood coping strategies in conditions of reproductive crisis? How is human agency conditioned (or enabled) by bodily narratives used as models to justify and legitimate needs, claims and entitlements? We draw on comparative ethnographic fieldwork undertaken in 2015 and 2016, in Setúbal (Portugal) and Velez-Malaga (Spain), two urban contexts with distinct economic histories, but similarly shaped by the severe outcomes of austerity politics and economics, as exemplified in high rates of unemployment and the growing overburden of paid and unpaid work among working-class women. The latter, in particular, have increasingly assumed the major responsibility of securing and ensuring the well-being of the household and its members, and made to endure the painful embodiment of managing the disruption and reconfiguration of their means of livelihood. They do so through the mobilization of various livelihood pursuits, within and outside the household. We argue that under conditions of austerity-led reproductive crisis, gendered bodies in affliction signal the resourcefulness of embodied coping dispositions, as well as the limits of moral sentiments among subaltern classes in producing and performing a politics of hope across generations.

LISA RODAN (Household Survival, University of Kent, UK)

«How do young, educated Portuguese migrants in London experience *vita activa* as familial persons?»

Employing Arendt's concept of the *vita activa* (Arendt 1958), I will argue that the socioeconomic conditions leading up to the 2008 financial crisis shaped the expectations and values of the millennial generation of Portuguese towards a life awarded meaning by means of a 'vita activa' grounded in the values of global neoliberal consumer society. The potential to access this form of *vita activa* was then removed by subsequent austerity measures in 2011, obliging those who still sought it to migrate to the Northern European cities at the centre of the global consumerist system. I will argue that the lived experiences of these educated Portuguese migrants within the 'global city' (Sassen 2001) of a London undergoing looming political change is shaped by the conflict with their intrinsic state of being a familial person (Pina Cabral 2016) and their evolving values held by the *vita activa*.

Discussant: SUSANA NAROTZKY (PI GRECO Project, Universitat de Barcelona, Spain)

11h – 11h30 Coffee Break

11h30 - 13h00

Session 2 - Ethnographies of Austerity II

Papers

KATHERINE SMITH (University of Manchester, UK)

«Poverty, Fairness and Imagination in North Manchester, England»

The ways in which the past and an imagined, shared future coalesce via the present is often narrated through experiences of poverty. Drawing on two years of ethnographic research on a social housing estate in one of Britain's most economically deprived areas, Harpurhey, North Manchester, England, this paper explores the limitations that experiences of increasing poverty impose on one's ability to imagine, anticipate and prepare for the future, as well as expose the fragility of the ongoing interdependencies in present day social relations. As a sort of 'social historiography of the future' (Jansen et al. 2008: 11), this paper begins by introducing the ways in which experiences of poverty are expressed and recognised through a politic of fairness, and goes on to address the ways in which imaginations of the future are affected by the ever-present threat of loss or sanctioning of one's benefits income, ongoing welfare reforms, and the uncertainty of others who are also dependent upon state welfare to make ends meet. Therefore, the ways in which the future is anticipated and prepared for require day-to-day tactics, strategies and creative networks that can themselves become fractured and unpredictable. Interrogating the roles of imagination and anticipation in times of crisis, this paper offers ethnographic insights into what a future might look like for those who are dealing with the harsh realities of the affects of welfare reforms in the context of austerity, and how a future is imagined, if at all, or concealed.

JOSÉ MAPRIL (CARE, CRIA, FCSH-UNL, Portugal) & ELIZABETH CHALLINOR (CARE, CRIA, UM, Portugal)

«Back to square one? Bangladeshi and Cape Verdean Migrations in Europe»

The paper examines how migrants from Bangladesh and from Cape Verde adjust their expectations and re-arrange their life projects in response to the effects of the austerity measures adopted in Portugal in the wake of the 2008 crisis. Differences in terms of social class, age, kinship networks, migratory contexts, histories and trajectories between the two groups produce divergent responses which nonetheless share a common thread: experience and resilience in the management of precarity.

GIACOMO LOPERFIDO (GRECO, Universitat de Barcelona, Spain)

«Entrepreneurialism and the Politics of De-politisation: The Case of Veneto, Italy»

This paper follows both the political and entrepreneurial pathways of a successful entrepreneur in an industrial district around Vicenza, Italy, in order to make sense of a common statement that regularly surfaced in the field: many people in Vicenza claim to be non-political, and not to believe in politics. They also claim that the “economic miracle” that made Veneto one of the most industrially advanced regions of Europe throughout the 80’s and 90’s was “non conflictual”. While de-constructing these assumptions, the paper nevertheless acknowledges the astonishing decline of identifications with the political field, and analyses it in terms of the emergence of a new ideological formation, which we term entrepreneurialism. The latter seems to have been constituted within the processes of the sudden and un-mediated transition from Venetian peasant economy, to the new SME industrial expansion. Ultimately, the paper seeks to put into genetic/causal relation the emergence of new economic formations with the transformations of the political/ideological field.

Discussant: FRANCES PINE (Goldsmiths, University of London, UK)

13h00 – 14h30 Lunch Break

14h30 - 16h00

Session 3 – Autonomy, Dependence and Care

Papers

MERCEDES GONZÁLEZ DE LA ROCHA (CIESAS, Occidente (Guadalajara), Mexico)

«Private adjustments and social isolation: Household responses to economic crises in Mexico»

In this paper, I reflect on the implications of the Mexican crises of the 1980s and 1990s in the lives of working poor households. I draw from my own long-standing research interests and findings in shifting dynamics of household organisation to examine the process that has led to the erosion of social support systems among the poor. In so doing, I re-examine the widespread notion of the resourcefulness of the poor: their assumed endless capacity to work more, to consume less and to take part in mutual help networks. I argue that the poor have undergone a process leading to social isolation. This process can be understood as the outcome of three distinct but related phenomena: 1) the erosion of work; 2) a paradoxical de-diversification of household work

strategies; and 3) the private adjustments that have taken place at the household level, and their limits.

ANTÓNIA LIMA (PI CARE, CRIA, ISCTE-IUL, Portugal) & FERNANDA RIVAS DE OLIVEIRA (CARE, CRIA, ISCTE-IUL, Portugal)

«Care, support and solidarity among Portuguese families: intertwining mutuality, dependency and autonomy in times of crises»

Approaches to the Portuguese recent socio-economic crisis are usually centered on its economic and political character. Departing from a discussion on the different dimensions and forms of care, in this paper we will examine how people constitute formal and informal networks of care to deal with the precariousness produced by austerity policies. Confronted with the mass unemployment and increasing shortcomings in the state care system, people return to informal ways of care making ends meet. We will analyse some cases of interpersonal support networks to explore the wider repercussions of these activities that (re)appeared in contemporary Portugal where grassroots familial and social welfare projects are organized in order to address hardships in the actors' livelihoods. Through an ethnographic discussion of these processes among Portuguese middle class families, we will argue that interpersonal care not only tackle some immediate effects of the crisis but also reveal new social and economic meanings of care, support and solidarity practices, which have profound impacts on the sense of autonomy, dependency and being a person.

PATRICIA HOMS (GRECO, Universitat de Barcelona, Spain; Aresta Cooperative), GEMMA FLORES-PONS (Aresta Cooperative) & ADRIÀ MARTÍN MAYOR (Aresta Cooperative)

«Care and livelihood sustainability within agro-ecological cooperativism»

Throughout these last 10 years, the agroecological movement has expanded in Catalonia (Spain) partially due to the increase of food coops in the region. Nevertheless, since 2014 in several internal debates people are repeating a series of questions that point to an inflection of the agroecological cooperativism movement: Why have waiting lists disappeared from consumption cooperatives? Why do people stop participating in the agroecological movement? Why are commands relatively small? Why do producers continue to have precarious and highly demanding dedication projects? Why is there little diversity in the cooperatives regarding the models and people who participate in them? Why is such a personal involvement required in order to access to an agroecological consumption? In this paper, we explore the potentialities and limitations of the most common current model in the region based on proximity food provisioning networks composed of consumers' food coops and small organic food producers where different forms

of cooperation and reciprocity articulate socioeconomic exchanges. We address these issues regarding the sustainability of productive projects and the extension of agroecological cooperativism to the whole society with its objective of achieving food sovereignty. In particular, we analyze the reproductive tasks, often invisible, necessary for the sustainability of these projects and the tensions that emerge with care work in other areas of life. In this sense, participation in these projects involve a workload that often gets into conflict with the lack of time for child care, paid work or activism in areas other than food. In this context, new models that try to deal with these aspects are diversifying the degrees of participation, are reformulating the idea of self-management and are flexibilizing the workloads in order to be more inclusive and ensure the sustainability of people's lives.

Discussant: SILVIA BOFILL (Universitat de Barcelona, Spain)

16h00 – 16h30 Coffee Break

16h30 - 18h00

Session 4 - Citizenship and the Nature of Democracy

Papers

CATARINA FROIS (CARE, CRIA, ISCTE-IUL, Portugal)

«When State doesn't care. The criminal act at the core of the nexus security-insecurity»

To what extent can we consider the criminal act as a strategy, a choice, a necessity, an opportunity, or even the inevitable outcome in the individual struggle to deal with adversity, inequality, discrimination, fear or vulnerability – in short, as a way to obtain security? This is the working hypothesis developed in this presentation, offering an exploratory reflection around the nexus security-criminality, framed within the broader theoretical concept of human security with a specific focus on (failed) state interventions and female crime.

YASMINE SIBLOT (Université Paris 8, Cresppa-CSU, France)

«Class and Politics: the Working Classes in Contemporary France»

Empirical works conducted in France since the 80's, both statistical and ethnographic, show that manual and service low skilled and unskilled workers can still be described as a social class, in spite of strong inner differences. There are growing similarities in the forms of subordination at work in industry and in services and even administrations. The exposure to unemployment and

precariousness, the low wages are common to industry and service low skilled and unskilled workers, how are mainly men in one case and women in the other. Immigration was for a long time a specificity of industry and masculine, but it is as high today among service workers is more feminine. And it is deeply shade by class belonging. The gendered division of space and roles has evolved since the 70s, and the relation to school and public institutions is also very different, but the distance to legitimate culture is still very clear. A common feature is also the relations to politics. The working classes today in France don't share a political identity and are deeply excluded from the political field. There has been a strong rise of political abstention, and of the vote for the right and the extreme right among working class citizens. The rise of unemployment, the decline of solidarity at work because of precariousness and new forms of management and the decline of traditional sociability have strong effects. But it is essential to underline also the evolution and the decline of the political parties and organisation that used to claim to be representing the working classes.

MARIA INÉS FERNÁNDEZ ALVAREZ (Universidad de Buenos Aires, CONICET, Argentina)

«The public space as production of revenue: theorizing while struggling from a popular economy perspective in Argentina»

Since 2015, I conduct a collaborative research with associations and cooperatives of street vendors that make up the CTEP, an organization created recently in Argentina with the aim of representing the workers of the "popular economy", meaning those who, having been left out of the labor market "invented a job to survive". The CTEP's transversal objective is the recognition of this population as workers and to equate the rights of this sector with those of the rest of the working class. In the case of street vendors and vendors in public transport this idea brings one thing to the forefront: the struggle for the right to the use of public space as a space of work and (re)production of life. This struggle underlines their right to participate in the revenue that the city produces and entails a theory about value production that challenges the "(in)formal" or "(i)legal" frames from which the street vendors practices are usually underpinned. My presentation will focus on the political work carried out by the CTEP militants as a struggle for recognition of a rightful share of "urban commons" (streets, squares, etc.) and of the work carried out by street vendors as an activity that gives effect to the rightful share in the distribution of that common. In a broader sense, I seek to contribute to study of the ways in which the so-called "urban poor" develop creative practices to support the production and reproduction of life from varied experiences of precarity.

Discussant: ABEL POLESE (Dublin City University, Tallinn University)

DAY 2

9h30 - 11h00

Session 5 - Ethnographies of Austerity III

Papers

EUGÊNIA MOTTA (NUCEC, IESP-UERJ, Brazil)

«Futures seen from the favela»

A large proportion of the Rio de Janeiro's population lives in favelas. During the city's preparations for the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympics, these spaces became the target of large-scale interventions concentrated on *urbanization*, *public security* and the stimulation of *entrepreneurism* and *formalization*. From mid-2016 onward, these policies began to be suspended. In this paper, I shall discuss some of the forms through which these government projects became part of people's lives, composing their universe of expectations, aspirations and opportunities, as well as the frustrations and interruptions associated with public interventions or personal plans – or the possibility that they might ever happen. The analysis is based on ethnographic research conducted by myself, since 2012, in a favela in the North Zone of Rio de Janeiro. I take as my analytic and empirical focal point *houses*, physical places, constitutive of familiarities, objects of significant financial and imaginative investment by local people. Through houses I discuss how the futures imagined as a solution to the 'favela problem' intersect with the future horizons towards which people mobilize in pursuit of a good life for themselves and their families.

MARIANO PERELMAN (Universidad de Buenos Aires – CONICET, Argentina)

«The Dollar as *Evidence* of Crisis: Class Identity and Processes of Uncertainty in Buenos Aires, 2011-2015»

A few days after her reelection, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's government began taking actions to mitigate the flight of capital out of Argentina. Among them, it declared a prohibition against the practice of purchasing dollars for savings. This decision was widely taken by the so-called middle class as *evidence* that Argentina was in crisis. Protests against the government soon followed. In this presentation, I will focus on the way some middle-class groups constructed the idea of crisis as centered on the prohibition against stockpiling dollars for saving in the "formal market." My argument is that this "crisis" cannot be explained by addressing "the economy." It is necessary to comprehend this *evidence* with a consideration of class experience. For this middle-class sector,

the impossibility of buying dollars threatened the way in which they construct forms of worthy living. By "de monetarizing" the Dollar to investigate it as an object of group differentiation, it is possible to appreciate how the impossibility of saving lodged new impediments to the delineation of class frontiers and social differentiation. Unlike 2001, however, there was a strong debate on whether the country was in crisis. Analyzing a moment of crisis in which the crisis is under discussion is illuminating. It helps to understand how people build and live the crisis. It allows us to comprehend the multiple temporalities and experiences embedded in group and class experiences. The Argentine case framed in an international context allows for an understanding of the uses of global crises at the local level.

JAIME PALOMERA (GRECO, Universitat de Barcelona, Spain)

«The Catalan *Red Belt* in the crisis. Household reciprocity, assets and the role of the baby boomers»

One of the most widespread narratives about the economic depression that began in 2008 is that this is a "crisis of the middle classes". Though partly accurate, such a powerful headline obfuscates that the biggest crises of all needs to located in the urban periphery. In Spanish cities like Tarragona, the Red Belt is home to a vast social majority that neither coincides with the typical image of the graduate precariat (only 30% of Spaniards have a university degree) nor with that of the poor. This is an invisible majority that had experienced a long process of upward mobility and now has trouble planning its future. Moreover, while much research on the crisis has focused on solidarity economies (also linked to the so-called middle classes), the most prominent response among the urban working class has rested on practices that have the household as their cornerstone. In the face of diminishing wages and a State increasingly specialized in chronic poverty, two intertwined strategies have acted as a safety net: 1) family reciprocity (micro-solidarities which are not new but rooted in history); and 2) heritage and real estate assets in the hands of these networks of family support. Finally, fieldwork reveals a paradox: though there is a clear expectation as to what the role of the state should be (source of redistribution and guarantor of social rights), the family functions morally as the basic unit of solidarity, and expectations of inheritance play a key role.

Discussant: ANTONIA LIMA (PI CARE, CRIA, ISCTE-IUL, Portugal)

11h00 – 11h30 Coffee Break

11h30 - 13h00

Session 6 - Ethnographies of Austerity IV

Papers

TAMTA KHALVASHI (Free University of Tbilisi, Georgia)

«Optimism, Indebtedness, and Moral Breakdown in the Republic of Georgia»

Connected to societal aspirations, economic decay, and moral breakdown, indebtedness has come to embody current global anxieties of precarity, disquiet and dispossession. Yet despite its central place in current social and political debates, our knowledge of its underlying socio-cultural logics, practices, and experiences remains understudied and largely opaque. This paper explores how indebtedness is morally experienced, who are the actors involved, and how and why it is embedded in everyday social life in the former Soviet Republic of Georgia. The freedom to exercise political choice in Georgia as a result of the end of Soviet Union was being paralleled by the freedom to engage in quick money borrowing. An availability of various loans stimulated by the neoliberal-style economy created a particular form of temporal orientation, unleashing new optimism about better life. Yet, the increasing amount of consumer debts backed up by individual properties have resulted in quotidian problems of nonpayment and material dispossession, leading to social fragmentation and moral breakdown. Based on years of embedded fieldwork among debtors, I argue that our understanding of extreme indebtedness and economic exploitation needs to be studied under the rubric of morality and optimism in order to make sense of systemic crisis that has become chronic at the margins of Europe. Indeed, credit has enabled the expansion of new aspirations and desires, turning the Black Sea into an area unified by shared emergencies and exigencies. The paper will thus give a ground-level view of how do the people categorized as victims (debtors) and perpetrators (lenders) activate their optimism, and how do they morally experience and interpret their practices?

ANTONIO M. PUSCEDDU (GRECO, Universitat de Barcelona, Spain) & STAMATIS AMARIANAKIS (GRECO, Universitat de Barcelona, Spain)

«The Social Reproduction of Austerity: A Comparison of Greek and Italian Households»

Austerity policies in southern Europe have had a profound impact on the majority of the population. However, people's responses to the Austerity crisis seem to vary across different national frameworks. In this paper we provide a comparative analysis of ordinary people's experiences and understandings of 'the crisis' in two deindustrializing cities in Italy (Brindisi) and Greece (Chalkida).

Focusing on the social reproductive strategies of people with limited access to wealth and power, we seek to explain how 'the crisis' has intensified and subsumed other ongoing crises and how this can be examined across national frameworks. In particular, we look at changes and differences in the extractive and redistributive logics of the state and how these have negatively affected people's life prospects, expectations and notions of care. We analyse the grassroots understandings, explanations and responses to crisis through three interrelated topics: livelihood strategies, intergenerational relationships and interaction between the people and the state. Looking at people's responses to 'the crisis' across national contexts, the paper wants to highlight common trends and patterns of differentiation.

ILEKTRA KYRIAZIDOU (Household Survival, University of Kent, UK)
«Waiting in the shadow of the crisis»

Waiting is a pervasive mode of living under conditions of crisis and austerity. Waiting for an end to crisis and long-term memorandum periods. Waiting for food in soup kitchen lines, for employment opportunities, for payments of salaries unpaid, for renewal of short term employment contracts. This paper explores different modes and practices of waiting in the lives of residents faced with material precarity in the city of Thessaloniki, Greece. Waiting is experienced as a period that generates vulnerability and insecurity, but also a period that harbours hopes and motivates people's practices. Waiting entails compromises but also creative tensions and affective connections that shape micro economies of intimacy. This paper argues that micro economies of intimacy by inventing ways to move things along, ensure survival but also renew the solidified waiting time of the circles of effects austerity generates.

Discussant: FEDERICO NEIBURG (UFRJ, Brazil)

13h00 – 14h30 Lunch Break

14h30 - 16h00

Session 7 - The Limits of Debt

Papers

HADRIEN SAIAG (CNRS,IIAC, LAIOS EHHSS, France)

«Financialization from the margins: notes on the incorporation of Rosario's subproletariat into consumer credit (Argentina, 2009-2015)»

This paper discusses how Rosario's subproletariat has been massively incorporated into consumer credits, based on two field-works carried on in 2009

and 2013 in Rosario's (Argentina) main industrial district. Indeed, in this short period or time, Rosario's subproletariat's saving and debt practices changed dramatically. On the one hand, nonregistered workers' families have been incorporated into the national social protection system, from 2010 onwards, which resulted in massive cash transfers to people who did not previously receive formalized and regular income. On the other hand, financial institutions began offering new consumption credit instruments to this population (credit cards, credits in cash, and delayed payments for household electrical), through very aggressive practices. As a result, by the end of 2013, almost every household contracted at least one consumption credit to financial institutions, while almost no financial institution provided any kind of credit and saving device to this population until 2010. This situation is understood as a complex process, portrayed by 1) the juxtaposition of a variety of complex and compartmentalized formal and informal debt practices, which express highly diverse kinds of social relations; 2) the access to new forms of consumption from which the subproletariat was previously excluded; and 3) a new form of exploitation, characterized by a profound feeling of alienation of people's time, because of the existing hiatus between the time of financial institutions (formalized on a monthly basis), and the time of people's work (made by erratic and non formalized payments).

THEODORA VETTA (GRECO, Universitat de Barcelona, Spain)

«In and out the debt spiral: household strategies and moral struggles against foreclosure in Greece»

Whereas the causes of the onerous public debt and the ways to tackle it have been the center of debate around the so-called Greek crisis, little attention has been paid to private indebtedment. Even though Greek private debt is not as high as in other countries regarding GDP, its increasing rate since 2001 was one of the most spectacular in Europe. The same stands for the amount of non-performing loans, the so-called "red loans". Based on ethnographic data on indebted households and magistrate's court trials in the city of Kozani, I will discuss: (a) The ways working class households have been caught into vicious circles of indebtedment via recurrent negotiations with banks, and the moral understandings underpinning the debt relation. (b) The moral struggles among banks, "good" and "bad debtors" around the definition of the insolvent, particularly in the face of the recent recapitalizations of the banking system. More precisely, I will look at household strategies seeking state protection under the Law for Over-Indebted Households, in an attempt to secure their residence from foreclosure.

ANA LUÍSA MICAELo (CRiA, ISCTE-IUL, Portugal)

«Where are the evicted? Statistics and people that don't want to be visible»

Portugal has one of the highest rates of house ownership in Europe. Once housing mortgage and credit encouraging were seen as an effective public policy to offset the absence of a social housing policy, the process known as financialization took over Portuguese household strategies entailed in credit, making no distinction between the upper, middle and working classes, nor between workers and the unemployed, retirees and social grant beneficiaries. For decades, to get a mortgage loan to buy a house was a decision based on an effective economic rationality. Ten years after the global financial crisis emerged, we'll address the way in which to own a house, seen intersubjectively as a safe investment in real estate, family savings and heritage, turns out to be a nexus of endless indebtedness, a real chance of home-loss and personal insolvency. Increasing about 400% per year, insolvency is a technical euphemism for family bankruptcy, meaning, for those affected, eviction, displacement and total dispossession, court guardianship, new dependencies and moral meanings, great sorrow and social suffering. In addition, and despite the considerable changes in recent public policy orientations, the total number of evictions (which includes those carried out by the state, as well as by private institutions) is rarely calculated and even less debated. Drawing on fieldwork among crisis-afflicted and indebted households in Lisbon, this paper addresses the absence of collective action of the evicted and the invisibility of the foreclosed, debating the idea of silence as a way of violence.

Discussant: ANA PERRIN-HEREDIA (CNRS, France)

16h00 – 16h30 Coffee Break

16h30 - 18h15

Session 8 – Generations of Austerity

Papers

DIMITRIOS THEODOSSOPOULOS (Co-PI Household Survival, SAC, University of Kent, UK)

«Iphigenia's sacrifice: how different generations live through austerity»

Iphigenia is an unemployed actor and activist. She resists austerity by refusing to accept the impoverishing limitations of life under austerity. She plans to set up a theatre performance; an adaptation of the classic play—Iphigenia at Aulis,

by Euripides—now adjusted to the context of the Greek financial crisis. Iphigenia imagines herself on stage, incarnating the classical heroine, sacrificed on the altar of austerity by Angela Merkel, Christine Lagarde and Wolfgang Schäuble. While she reworks the play script, Iphigenia has a dream: she is taken to the sacrificial altar, not by Merkel, Lagarde and Schäuble, but by her own parents! The afternoon of the next day, Iphigenia and the ethnographer attempt an analysis of her dream. Through participatory ethnography they engage with a timely, familiar, but not frequently discussed observation: that different generations have suffered unequally by austerity, and benefited disproportionately during the affluent years. What can Iphigenia’s dream tell us about the moral economy of austerity? The paper will attempt a radical interpretation, following a reflexive-Marxist approach.

JOÃO DE PINA CABRAL (Co-PI Household Survival, SAC, University of Kent, UK)
«The millennial conjuncture»

In this paper, I argue that a set of social, political and economic factors conjoined in producing a generational effect upon the people who, roughly speaking, came to adult life at the change of the millennium. I am here less occupied in characterising that conjuncture in terms of the way in which ‘austerity’ and aggressive capital accumulation has shaped our world—since that has been done extensively by a number of colleagues, and there is an overarching consensus about it—than in grounding analytically the way in which a new approach to personhood can engage with history. I aim to show that a concern with the workings of hegemony in social, political and economic terms, as understood by Gramsci’s take on ‘conjuncture’, is fully compatible with the sort of neurophenomenological approaches to personhood and kinship that have been emerging of late. Contrary to Ortega y Gasset, I am less preoccupied with identifying ‘crises’ than with characterising the dynamic structuration that operates between them, thus producing the sort of generational effects that Lisón-Tolosana so well described for the Spanish Civil War and that we presently witness among the millennials I studied in Southern Portugal.

ELISABETH KIRTSGLOU (Durham University, UK)
«What use is the house? Genealogical thinking in times of austerity»

Based on ethnographic data collected from Thessaloniki and Volos, Greece, my paper wishes to investigate austerity measures and ‘structural adjustments’ vis-à-vis local, kinship-informed cosmologies and articulations of ‘life purpose’. My ethnography of ordinary Greek social actors, women and men, suggests, the prevalence of what I call ‘genealogical thinking’ in carving one’s life-plans and pondering the future. Confronted with a rapidly changing socio-economic

context, that felt like 'losing the ground under one's feet' (as several of my informants put it), my interlocutors contemplated their options, and (lack of) choices, in a fashion that took into consideration generations before them (ancestors), themselves, their children, and future generations to come (progeny and imagined progeny). Their reflections and decisions unfolded in a context where the living, the dead and the unborn were considered as stakeholders of almost equal importance. From within this mixed, relationally defined universe of persons and meta-persons, several of my informants both resisted the austerity measures and eventually –when left with little choice– compromised with them. Interestingly, for some, the route to compromise had to pass through a radical re-examination of the validity and relevance of genealogical thinking in 'the New World Order'. Much more than a technology of governance, austerity operated as a technology of violent transformation of culturally informed mentalities and cosmologies. As such, I claim that austerity-enforced structural adjustments need to be examined not only as schemes of socio-economic neoliberalisation, but also as expressions of a culturally imperialist project that seeks to radically modify indigenous systems of thought.

Discussant: EVTHYMIOS PAPATAXARCHIS (University of the Aegean, Greece)

DAY 3

9h30 - 11h00

Session 9 - Temporalities, knowledge and struggles of meaning in crisis

Papers

SUSANA NAROTZKY (PI GRECO Project, Universitat de Barcelona, Spain)

«Struggles of evidence: grassroots knowledge and the power of knowledge status»

I will try to explain the knowledge geometries of relevance that express scalar power differences in the case of the political events that happened in Greece in July 2015. I ask what kinds of knowledge does experience produce and how might we engage with it as anthropologists trying to understand what social facts are and the value they have as evidence in political argument and struggle. In order to accomplish this I will address the tensions between experience, knowledge, and evidence in their connection with the production and challenge of particular fields of inequality. These questions seem important because Southern Europe's latest recession has had significant political outcomes that rest their force on alleged factual explanations of different kinds. Those sectors of the population whose expectations of security and stability are now faltering use their experience of declining material wellbeing and social worth as an argument for claiming radical political transformations (of different kinds). They often contradict the 'expert' evidence used to justify structural adjustment policies. I suggest that facts of power aimed at systemic social reproduction explain the lack of social relevance of some life experiences and conceptual logics about livelihood, wealth accumulation, and domination processes. These powerless voices, then, often get 'translated' into some authoritative 'expert' model and co-opted as raw facts within its realm of authority.

BENOIT DE L'ESTOILE (CNRS-École Normale Supérieure, CMH, PSL, France)

«Is Crisis but a eurocentric concept? Questions from the Brazilian field»

The explicit remit of the « Ten years of crisis » conference is to make an assessment of ethnographic works in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis which affected especially Southern Europe, and especially its widespread effects on structural processes and experience of a collapse of the social state on people's expectations. While such a way of framing the issue makes much sense from an European perspective, I suggest to question it by looking at it from the perspective of the Brazilian poor, based on long-term fieldwork in the context of

the land reform settlement in the Nordeste sugarcane region, or in favelas in Rio de Janeiro. In such situations, people give much importance to elements affording partial stabilizations, such as a more or less secure access to a house and to land. Among my interlocutors, the notion of « crisis » is more commonly used to refer to some kind of « personal crisis » following accident, death, illness, creating a radical unbalance in daily life. In this light, what Europeans call « crisis » is one form taken by processes of radical transformation of the field of opportunities and constraints. Such transformations usually challenge what were until then taken for granted expectations, possibly leading to a redefinition of ethical and ontological frames of reference. In this paper, I look at the complex relationships between the changes triggered by policy decisions at a national or international level, and the ways people attempt to govern their life, by focusing on their expectations and daily practices.

DANIEL KNIGHT (University of St Andrews, UK)

«Orientations to the future in an era of chronic uncertainty»

Potentiality, speculation, destiny, expectation, anticipation, hope. Apathy, exhaustion, resignation, desperation, disillusion. Emergence. Déjà vu. From the global financial crisis and its aftershocks, anthropologists have developed a growing interest in time. In these studies, often temporality becomes truncated at the relation between past and present, where the future often represents an unknown against which persons struggling to maintain stability cling to particular histories. Here I argue that any return of the past is directly related to uncertain futures and, in turn, precarious futures reshape historical and temporal consciousness. Through ethnographic vignettes from central Greece, I explore the diverse ways people orientate themselves in the present towards futures unknown. Futures once promised as a birthright in the European neoliberal world have been thrown into disarray, and local people are turning to meaningful shards of the past to make sense of their crisis experience. But the familiarity with feelings of history repeating itself, within the temporal 'spin cycle', has also led to a sense of comfort and security with the present crisis situation – a kind of Stockholm syndrome or case of 'better the devil you know'. For some, the emergent future, it seems, is more daunting than the painful past. In some cases, exhaustion after eight years of increasing hardship, apparently without respite anytime soon, has defeated imaginations of scenarios for a better future; interest in the post-apocalyptic is a bridge too far for exhausted people. For others, futures are awash with micro-utopias of potential and possibility, either through opportunistic and entrepreneurial business ventures or faith in community initiatives promoting social cohesion. While orientations entail planning for and imagining the future, they also often entail the collapse of those efforts. This paper briefly examines both the temporal dynamism and

potential temporal stasis of charting new individual and collective futures (both utopian and apocalyptic) in an era of chronic uncertainty.

Discussant: JANE COLLINS (University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA)

11h00 – 11h30 Coffee Break

11h30 - 13h30

Session 10 - Rethinking Theoretical Concepts

Roundtable

- LOURDES BENERIA (Cornell University, USA)
- ENZO MINGIONE (Università Milano Bicocca, Italy)
- DINA VAIIOU (National Technical University of Athens, Greece)
- ANTÓNIA LIMA (PI Care as Sustainability in Crisis Situations, CRIA, ISCTE-IUL, Portugal)
- JOÃO DE PINA CABRAL (Co-PI Household Survival in Crisis, SAC, University of Kent, UK)
- SUSANA NAROTZKY (PI Grassroots Economics-GRECO, ERC, Universitat de Barcelona, Spain)

Final debate