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Navigating Together; Key Actors in Today's Greek Society Working their Way through the Challenges of a Crisis.

Since 2007, Greece is facing a constant economic decline, a rising state debt and severe intervention in internal politics by the Trojka (European Central Bank, International Monetary Fund and the European Commission). In addition to the vast economic changes, demographic circumstances are fundamentally different since approximately 90% of the immigrants desiring to reach Europe now cross the porous Greek borders. Inevitably, these profoundly changing economic and demographic circumstances pose a strong demand on people's coping capacities. This combination of rapidly changing determinants of society provides a fertile ground for indeed rising racism and xenophobia. The analytical concept 'social navigation' assumes that a changing climate in society necessitates a constant quest for ways to manoeuvre around the diverse and changing obstacles people encounter in times of crisis. People are thus not merely reacting upon their environment, because the changing character of society requires their coping mechanisms to be reconsidered repeatedly. Apart from extreme neo-Nazis, willing to use violence against immigrants, there are a number of groups in society actively involved in anti-racist movements aiming to counter such violence.

We focus here, on both these young Greeks engaged in such movements (whom often position themselves on the left side of the political spectrum), as well as on African immigrants. Both groups constitute key actors in the current Greek society. They are involved in the central debates about citizenship, democracy, migration policies and the continuous cutbacks that are impeded on Greece. Simultaneously, both groups are seriously affected by the crisis and occupied with surviving. On the basis of the concept 'navigation', we will analyse how the coping mechanisms of these two different groups are mutually intertwined. The ideological perspectives of leftist youngsters express sympathy with the deteriorating position of African immigrants; however, their personal problems often restrict them in sufficiently supporting them. Consequently, African immigrants are more restricted in their attempt to invent new coping mechanisms to overcome the challenges caused by the economic crisis and rising anti-immigrant sentiments.