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Spaces of contestation: Challenges, actors and expertise in the management of urban security in Greece

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Abstract
Urban security has emerged as one of the key priorities in political and public life in Greece over recent years, and especially since the country fell into financial crisis in 2009. This article offers an unprecedented overview of the challenges, actors and expertise in the management of urban security in Greece, drawing attention to the political tensions that envelop them. The first section focuses on the phenomena considered to constitute core challenges for urban security in the country: from common crime, immigration and urban poverty and degradation, to social unrest, policing, far-right militias and vigilantism. The various state and non-state actors engaged in the management of urban security are then outlined, and the relationship between expertise and official policy-making is critically assessed. Objective and subjective forms of insecurity are shown to be highly contentious, responses to such insecurities are found to produce insecurities in their own right, and constraints upon non-technical expertise are identified as limiting the scope of pertinent state policy.

Unlike in Western Europe, urbanization in Greece has been shaped by the country's belated and partial experience of industrialization and its weak tradition of state welfare provision. Socioeconomic and spatial polarization have been affected by the fact that Greece has retained proportionally one of the largest self-employed sectors in the

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European Union, and that it has maintained one of the highest levels of poverty and inequality in the region, with one of the worst records for reducing poverty through social transfers (Cheliotis and Xenakis, 2010). Residential mobility has been limited by high levels of home ownership and the necessity of family-based welfare, which, alongside the comparatively scant provision of public housing, has served to inhibit the creation of ghettos. Even in Athens, where, since the 1990s, the presence of immigrants experiencing deprivation has been most concentrated, patterns of self-employment and limited flexibility in housing stock led to lower levels of segregation than experienced by immigrants elsewhere in Europe (Maloutas, 2009; Arapoglou and Maloutas, 2011).

The mixed composition of the urban environment, however, has not prevented stigmatization or social conflict. Instead, the very visibility of marginalized groups within urban centres has become a focal point for political securitization and public insecurity as socioeconomic tensions have increased. Rising rates of unemployment and household indebtedness, and the impact of financial crisis and austerity measures since 2009, have heightened socioeconomic polarization and brought about an intensified political and public focus on the management of urban security challenges. Such concerns have primarily concerned Athens: the Greek capital is the centre of political power and a convergence point for public strikes and demonstrations, as well as being the symbolic heart of the nation, home to monuments such as the Acropolis that are possibly the most emblematic of Greek national identity. At the same time, socioeconomic tensions within the metropolis have become starker, with professional and managerial classes converging in north-eastern municipalities, clerks and salespersons heading to southern districts, and immigrant service workers moving into central, southern and northern districts (Arapoglou and Sayas, 2009). Despite the fact that trends of suburbanization, socioeconomic polarization in the city centre and associated concerns about urban degradation and crime all pre-dated the mass immigration of the 1990s, those middle classes unable or unwilling to relocate from the inner city have increasingly struggled with the stigmatization and insecurity attached to living alongside immigrants (Kandylis and Kavoulakos, 2011).

In this article we review the phenomena considered to constitute core challenges for urban security in Greece – common crime, immigration, urban poverty and degradation, social unrest, policing, and far-right militias and vigilantism – as these are conceived by different constituencies within the country, and we pay particular attention to the Athenian context in so doing. We move on to outline the spectrum of key state and non-state agents engaged in the management of urban security in Greece, and offer an unprecedented account of the relationship between expertise and official policy-making in this area. Objective and subjective forms of insecurity are found to be highly contentious, responses to such insecurities are seen to produce insecurities in their own right, and constraints upon non-technical expertise are identified as limiting the scope of pertinent state policy.

Challenges to urban security in Greece

Common crime

Greece has ranked amongst the most crime-fearing nations in Europe and beyond ever since its inclusion in pertinent international comparative analyses in the early 2000s. In

tandem with rates of fear of criminal victimization, public concern about crime as a national problem in Greece has come to exceed the EU average and has stabilized at an extraordinarily high rate. Political and media discourse on the centre and far-right of the political arena have strongly associated risks of common crime with urban environments, and levels and patterns of common crime within the capital have been the overwhelming focus of such attention (Xenakis and Cheliotis, under review).

On the one hand, Greece has seen a significant rise in some forms of common crime since the onset of the country's financial crisis in 2009. Between 2009 and 2011, for example, the total annual volume of burglaries and thefts rose by 33.3 percent, from 72,658 to 96,925, and the rate of burglaries and thefts per 1000 inhabitants rose by 32.8 percent, from 6.4 to 8.5. The total annual volume of robberies during the same period increased by 40.9 percent, from 4708 to 6636, while the rate of robberies per 1000 inhabitants increased by 41.4 percent, from 0.41 to 0.58 (Xenakis and Cheliotis, under review).

On the other hand, certain types of violent crime (for example rape) have fallen since the onset of the financial crisis, while rises in other violent crimes (for example homicide) turn out to have been less stark when expressed in terms of absolute numbers and rates per units of population, and when compared with the pre-crisis period (Xenakis and Cheliotis, under review). According to the latest comparable data, moreover, rates of common property and violent crime in Greece remain moderate by European standards (UNODC, 2012; see, further, Xenakis and Cheliotis, under review; Cheliotis and Xenakis, 2011).

Immigration

Over the past two decades, immigration has commonly been regarded as a security challenge in Greece both by centrists and those on the far-right of the political spectrum. Rising levels of xenophobia amongst Greeks have supported policies and practices that associate immigrants with criminal, cultural, ethnic and national security risks, and such associations have been encapsulated in the ways in which the presence of immigrants in urban centres has been discursively framed.

Concerns amongst the public about the relationship between immigrants and crime have been fuelled in large part by political and media discourse pointing to the significant over-representation of non-Greeks in police-recorded crime statistics and the country's prison population. In 2011, for example, whereas immigrants constituted an estimated 11 percent of Greece's total population, the proportion of non-Greeks amongst all offenders known to the police stood at 43.7 percent for thefts and burglaries, at 54 percent for robberies, and at 41.3 for homicides (Xenakis and Cheliotis, under review). According to snapshot data from the Greek Ministry of Justice, meanwhile, non-Greeks comprised 63.2 percent of the country's prison population on 1 January 2012 (Cheliotis, 2013, forthcoming).

The over-representation of immigrants in police-recorded crime statistics and the prison population in Greece cannot be explained without reference to strong anti-foreigner biases that have been found amongst Greek citizens, in police practices and in judicial decision-making processes. Research has shown, for instance, that Greek

citizens are more likely to report crimes to the police when offenders are believed to be immigrants; that the police systematically over-police immigrant communities, including by conducting so-called 'sweep' or 'cleaning' operations, and tend to stop-search and arrest non-Greeks with significantly greater regularity than Greeks; and that the judiciary is far more likely to pass prison sentences – and longer prison sentences at that – when the offender is of non-Greek origin (Cheliotis and Xenakis, 2010, 2011).

Another key factor that has contributed to the association of immigration with crime in Greece is that a sizeable proportion of immigrants in the country are undocumented. In 2011, for example, out of an estimated total of 1,239,472 immigrants in Greece, some 390,000, or 31.5 percent, are believed to have been unregistered (see Maroukis, 2012). Irregular migrants are criminalized for being undocumented, despite the fact that the Greek state bears significant responsibility for the scale of the undocumented migrant population, having systematically avoided putting in place an effective and timely system for processing asylum and residence applications (CPT, 2011; Campaign for Access to Asylum in Greece, 2012). Indeed, by 2012, half of non-Greek prisoners were being held in connection with violations of immigration rules and regulations. Furthermore, legal and illegal categories of immigrants have been regularly conflated by commentators from across the centre and far-right of the political spectrum (Xenakis and Cheliotis, under review).

Aside from the identification of immigrants with criminality, public insecurity about immigrants amongst Greeks has an ontological dimension that reflects widespread sentiment that the size of the immigrant population in the country constitutes a threat to the cultural and ethnic integrity of the Greek nation. Immigrant populations have become increasingly concentrated in urban centres, especially in Athens, where many Greek residents have otherwise welcomed the cosmopolitan trappings of multiculturalism – insofar as restaurants and art are concerned, for example – and have also readily enjoyed services provided by migrant labour. At the same time, however, the very presence and expansion of diverse racial communities – and of darker-skinned migrant communities from Asia and Africa more particularly – in the hyper-symbolic historic heart of the capital city have been jarring for what is a strongly nationalistic society with a markedly declining birth rate (see, further, Kandylis and Kavoulakos, 2011; Danopoulos and Danopoulos, 2004).

Religious distinctions have similarly proved alarming by being portrayed as a combined threat to Greece's culture and national security by the Church, as well as those on the centre- and far-right. Athens is the only European capital not to house a state-funded mosque, owing to sustained opposition (most prominently from the Greek Orthodox Church) on the grounds of both the cultural and physical threats to the nation that it could stimulate (Karyotis and Patrikios, 2009; see, further, Tzanelli, 2011).[1] Prayer congregations taking place in Athenian public squares have meanwhile been described as ominous manifestations of power by Muslims, which also purportedly signal the risk of extremist Islamic 'microstates' emerging within Greek cities (see, for example, Lambropoulou, 2012), and prayer congregations held in informal private settings have been treated with suspicion for potentially harbouring terrorism (see, for example, Kostakos, 2007).

Urban poverty and degradation

Since the emergence of the country's financial crisis in 2009, dominant political discourse in Greece has increasingly conflated problems of common crime and immigration with other social phenomena such as urban poverty and degradation. In the run-up to the national elections of May and June 2012, for example, centrist parties PASOK (on the centre-left) and New Democracy (on the centre-right) chimed with those on the far-right in linking the risk of mugging and robberies to the poor living conditions of immigrants and the alleged threat additionally posed by the latter to public health. Since the elections, the governing coalition (primarily comprised of New Democracy and PASOK) has manifested a continuing tendency to discursively frame urban poverty and degradation as traditional problems of public order. Political discourse has thereby served to encourage heightened insecurity amongst the public, which has interpreted indications of deterioration in 'community well-being' or 'quality of life' as signalling an increased risk of criminal victimisation (Xenakis and Cheliotis, under review).

One key concern has been Athens' swelling homeless population, most recently estimated at around 13,000 people. Many amongst these are immigrants and drug addicts, but the population has included growing numbers of middle-class Greeks who have fallen into bankruptcy (EC, 2012). These homeless constitute just some of the 28,000 residents of Athens who, in 2012, were estimated to be receiving daily food provisions from municipal and Church-funded soup kitchens alone. Relatedly, problem drug use has been an issue that has attracted significant political and public attention. The phenomenon has become more visible in Greek city centres as drastic reductions in state funding for core drug rehabilitation agencies have pushed more individuals in the process of seeking or following drug addiction treatment onto city streets. Police 'sweeps' of central urban areas have also heightened the visibility of drug addicts by displacing them into new districts and neighbourhoods. Despite the alarm all this has engendered, however, problem drug use remains very low by European comparison, and even saw a decline from 2009 to 2010, whilst the annual volume of police-recorded drug-related offences and the corresponding number of accused persons also dropped in the country after 2009 (Xenakis and Cheliotis, under review).

Instead of portraying the problems of urban poverty and degradation as phenomena that generate or inflame insecurity amongst the general public, charities and leftist political parties have framed the challenges as ones impinging upon the most marginalized themselves, also emphasizing the way in which state policies have exacerbated such harms. For example, the extent of degradation in Greek cities has been described by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and by Syriza, the principal left-wing opposition party in Greece, as verging on a humanitarian crisis. Compounding an unemployment rate of over 26 percent and a rate of poverty that has exceeded 30 percent (as adjusted for inflation), cuts to state health and welfare spending have produced a steep rise in negative health outcomes, such as increases in malaria and tuberculosis, as well as elevated rates of suicide (ELSTAT, 2012; Matsaganis, 2012; Xenakis and Cheliotis, under review). In addition, the financial crisis and subsequent austerity measures have severely curtailed the role that families have traditionally been able to play in supporting their members, in a country where state welfare nets have long been minimal (Papadopoulos and Roumpakis, 2009). This has left vulnerable individuals more likely to find themselves on the streets, where they face grave risks to their health and security.

Social unrest

Social unrest in city centres and Athens in particular has been another key concern for centrist and far-right politicians, who have commonly accused Syriza of fanning anarchist violence.[2] More generally, the mix of rampant youth unemployment (which had reached 58 percent by August 2012; ELSTAT, 2012) and an allegedly 'institutionalized' 'culture of sympathy' towards anti-systemic politics (see, for example, Andronikidou and Kovras, 2012) has been expected to be combustive. Assumptions that the country has been on the verge of sustained mass unrest have superficially appeared to be supported by repeated outbursts of public disorder. Less than a year before the financial crisis broke, Greece had experienced its worst unrest for decades. Sparked by the lethal shooting of a teenager by a policeman in Athens, weeks of sit-ins, demonstrations and clashes between protestors and police took place nationwide in December 2008. Since 2009, disorder has repeatedly broken out in cities each time that the Greek parliament has voted to approve the austerity measures required to secure international financial support. The costs of such unrest have been portrayed in symbolic as much as in financial terms, with historic buildings as well as businesses being destroyed in urban centres during riots. By winter 2012, however, there had been no replay of the month-long unrest of December 2008. Defying commonplace predictions and sensationalist pronouncements by politicians and journalists, public disorder in the years following the outbreak of the financial crisis has been on a far lesser scale than that which preceded the crisis (Xenakis and Cheliotis, under review). One factor likely to have played an important role in quelling unrest has been the increase in state coercion recorded since the onset of the country's financial crisis, as discussed below.

Policing

The Greek police have been heavily associated with insecurity in Greek cities by almost the entire political spectrum: centrist and far-right opinion has blamed a high degree of urban insecurity on excessive police restraint and ineffectiveness in tackling crime, while those on the left, as well as NGOs, have accused the police of fuelling crime and insecurity by selective policing and demonstrating inadequate restraint in their use of force.

Centrist and far-right perspectives have largely associated urban security with the perceived risk of criminal victimization as regards common crimes, such as muggings and robberies, and with the size of the immigrant population, especially the number of immigrants with irregular status. To the extent that criminality and immigration are thought to have increased, the police have been chided for failing to take sufficient action against crime and criminals. Recent years have seen weakening public confidence in the police 'fight against crime' and increasing public scepticism concerning the effectiveness of neighbourhood policing (Cheliotis and Xenakis, 2011; see, further, Hough et al., 2013, forthcoming).

Similarly, leftists and NGOs have suggested that the police have contributed to levels of criminal victimization by their passivity, but the focus of their concern has been police inactivity towards violent assaults perpetrated by far-right militias and vigilante groups (discussed below) where immigrants and leftists have been targeted. There have been mounting allegations of police sympathy towards, and collusion with, far-right violence,

including instances in which assaults have taken place in front of inactive police. Insecurity has been exacerbated by the typical reactions offered by the police and the Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection to criticisms of such police passivity: either no official response, a blanket denial, a promise of an internal investigation, or even a degree of support (AI, 2012; *Neoi Fakeloi*, 2012).

Leftists and NGOs have also repeatedly criticized the police for their frequent and excessive use of force, and have campaigned against the impunity shown by the state towards such excesses. According to NGOs such as Amnesty International and Reporters Without Borders, for example, police intimidation of citizens has been on the rise, with incidents of violent abuse against peaceful protesters and reporters during and after demonstrations in city centres seeing a significant increase over recent years. Patterns of official denial or obfuscation in response to allegations of abuse have intensified feelings of insecurity (see, for example, AI, 2012; Basille and Kourounis, 2011). Equally, concerns have been raised not only about the breadth and intensity of police 'sweep' operations against immigrants, but also the 'doublespeak' in which these have been officially characterized as actions designed to restore the human rights of illegal immigrants (*SKAI*, 2012).

Beyond an association with practices of intimidation and abuse, the police have additionally been identified as instigators and drivers of social disorder themselves. The rioting unleashed in December 2008 was regarded amongst leftists as testament to the devastating impact of an over-readiness to use force amongst the Greek police. More generally, the typical use of force to dispel mass demonstrations – whether through the deployment of tear gas, baton rounds, stun grenades or, more recently, water cannon – has been viewed as provoking violent vendettas between the police, on the one hand, and young anarchists and far-leftists, on the other (Xenakis, 2012).

Far-right militias and vigilantism

Perhaps the most challenging urban security issue facing Greece today is the presence of violent far-right militias and gangs in the country's cities. There has been longstanding campaigning by NGOs to have the existence of organized far-right violence recognized and treated by the state as a menace to the security of individuals living and working in city centres, as well as to public order more generally. Successive centrist governments have tended to refute or downplay the problem, however, and have rather suggested that such groups primarily pose an unacceptable challenge to the extent that they represent illegitimate efforts to substitute the police.

Since 2009, the escalation of racist violence in Greece has been characterized by NGOs as the steepest in Europe. Within only the first six months of 2011, NGOs in Athens claimed to have treated at least 500 victims of racist attacks. In late 2012, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees described the level of racist violence as 'alarming', and the US Embassy in Athens took the exceptional step of warning US citizens residing in or travelling to Greece of a heightened risk of attack for those whose complexion might lead them to be perceived as foreign migrants (Xenakis and Cheliotis, under review; US Embassy in Athens, Greece, 2012).

Far from emerging alongside the financial crisis in 2009, violence by far-right groups had already been steadily rising throughout the 2000s, overwhelmingly targeting

immigrants but also leftists and anarchists (HLHR et al., 2010). By 2009, far-right platoons of 30–40 uniformed men armed with sticks had established a regular presence, unchallenged by the police, patrolling immigrant-dense neighbourhoods of Athens, intimidating local shopkeepers and residents and engaging in violent assaults against immigrants and their property. Other violent attacks against immigrants and their property have been carried out by smaller groups of vigilantes. Media commentaries have frequently suggested that both the platoons and the smaller groups are comprised of members of the far-right party Chrysi Avyi ('Golden Dawn'), not least because the perpetrators are often alleged to wear black, the colour of the party. Although Chrysi Avyi has gone so far as to use footage of participation by its MPs and other party members in attacks on the market stalls of immigrant traders for propaganda purposes, the party has nevertheless denied responsibility for assaults causing serious bodily harm (see, further, Xenakis, 2012; Xenakis and Cheliotis, under review).

Indicative of the reluctance amongst the centrist politicians who have dominated Greek governments over recent decades to acknowledge organized far-right violence, however, the state has not monitored or recorded either organized far-right violence as such, or racist violence in particular (Xenakis, 2012). As recently as December 2010, officials and prosecutors from the Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection denied to representatives of the NGO Human Rights Watch that racist violence was a serious or growing problem (HRW, 2012). Following pressure by NGOs and the media over the course of 2012 through international publicization of far-right violence in Greece, the Minister of Public Order and Citizen Protection chose to characterize the phenomenon as a symbolic challenge to the police and to the law (*Neoi Fakeloi*, 2012) and advocated caution and restraint in responding to it, explaining:

> We are talking about a new phenomenon. For the police, the field is terra incognita. Racist crime is complex. Its resolution requires knowing wholly different ways of perceiving things. Great care and seriousness are needed, and we shouldn't act in terms of communication just to make public relations gains. (*Kathimerini*, 2012)

Efforts to prosecute the perpetrators of such crimes have remained extremely rare, and no strategy has been instigated to actively protect potential victims. On the contrary, not only have steps been taken that effectively exacerbate the monetary and coercive risks that are known to dissuade immigrants from reporting such crimes to the police (HRW, 2012), the policing of immigrants has itself appeared to be central to the government policy for resolving the problems posed by far-right groups. As the Minister of Public Order and Citizen Protection stated in a recent interview, '[i]f the irregular migrants issue is being dealt with, I think there would not be much breathing space for the neo-Nazi phenomenon in this country' (*Financial Times*, 2012).

Mapping actors and expertise in the field of urban security in Greece

The range of actors engaged in the management of urban security in Greece has been as plural as the challenges set out above. Not only have the contributions by such actors

been characterized by fragmentation and a lack of overall coordination, in certain cases they have even been counterproductive, to the extent that the provision of security for some has helped to generate insecurity amongst others. In this section, we briefly review the range of actors, both state and non-state, involved in the management of urban security in Greece. With the goal of furnishing some explanation for the weaknesses of state oversight in this area, we go on to plot the limits to expertise informing pertinent official policy.

State actors

The main state actor in the field of urban security in Greece is the Hellenic Police, whose Chief is accountable to the Minister of Public Order and Citizen Protection. There are currently around 55,000 officers in the Hellenic Police, one of the highest rates per 100,000 population in Europe. Although critics have often argued that the number of officers undertaking street-level tasks is insufficient, a number of special police squads have been established to this end over the years. The official role of these squads ranges, for example, from protecting public buildings, metro stations and other sites seen as potential targets of crime (Special Guards), to tackling social unrest (the riot police, or MAT), to using motorcycle patrols to prevent or halt common crime in urban areas (the DIAS team), protect businesses in the capital's centre from vandalism (the DELTA team) and respond to emergency calls (the Zeta team). In recent months, officers of the DIAS team have also participated in mass 'sweeps' of immigrant populations. There is often overlap between the roles performed on the ground by these squads (for example, the DELTA team has been employed to break up demonstrations), but levels of training differ from one squad to another (for example Special Guards, who also perform regular policing tasks, receive only 4–6 months of training).

There have been numerous reports to date that a culture of violent policing is prevalent amongst these squads, reflecting the broader militaristic tradition of policing in Greece (on which see Mawby, 2011). Indeed, in at least one of the squads, many officers have previously worked in the Special Forces of the country's military (Xenakis, 2012). Also, despite longstanding taboos deriving from the 1967–1974 dictatorship about the deployment of the military for regular policing tasks, the army was reportedly called to assist in the prevention of anti-government protests during recent national-day marches in Thessaloniki. In what has been described as a move towards preventive and community-oriented policing, a new scheme was introduced in the early 2000s under the name 'Neighbourhood Police Officer', whereby a couple of police officers visibly patrol and interact with local communities. To date, however, the scheme has been implemented inconsistently and has encompassed traditional law enforcement functions such as arrests in flagrante delicto. Indeed, according to media reports, there are plans in place to utilize neighbourhood police officers in mass 'sweep' operations targeting immigrants.

Local authorities also play a part in the management of urban security. The Municipality of Athens and other municipal authorities around the country, for example, organize and run policing operations of their own, increasingly including regular police core tasks such as searches. Municipal authorities also participate in Local Crime Prevention Councils. The formal mission of these Councils includes encouraging local communities

to actively support crime prevention programmes and assisting the police and other institutions whose work may contribute to preventing crime (for example drug rehabilitation units), yet Councils have generally failed to get off the ground since their establishment at the end of the 1990s. As regards urban poverty, and especially following the start of the country's financial crisis in 2009, municipal authorities have organized soup kitchens for the poor and shelter for homeless people.

Non-state actors

Private sector involvement in the field of urban security has burgeoned in Greece over the last two decades or so. Citizens have increasingly invested in the hardware and services of the private security industry (Cheliotis and Xenakis, 2011), and a number of municipal authorities have chosen to contract-out their policing operations to private companies, whether in terms of design or execution, which reinforces widespread perceptions that state-operated policing in the country is insufficiently competent.

Such perceptions are evoked by far-right groups, which have proclaimed their violence to be aimed at re-establishing law and order in areas, such as the centre of Athens, purportedly neglected by the state. The appeal of this rhetoric has been self-fulfilling, insofar as the police have reportedly been directing crime victims to seek assistance from Chrysi Avyi (see Psarras, 2012). Immigrant communities have often formed local watch teams to prevent victimization, assisted to this end by groups of anarchists patrolling on motorcycles after dark, although there have been occasions when the presence of anarchists may have served to incite and exacerbate, rather than deter, far-right violence.

As concerns addressing the challenge of urban poverty since the financial crisis hit Greece, contributions by non-state actors have to date far exceeded those by state authorities. Various domestic and international NGOs have organized food banks, as have the Church and left-wing and anarchist associations. On the far-right, Chrysi Avyi has also organized soup kitchens, although on a highly exclusive basis – that is, on the strict condition that beneficiaries are of Greek origin – and capturing the process of food distribution on film for the purposes of propaganda. Finally, there has been a range of grassroots initiatives across the country designed to ease the impact of austerity upon local populations, for example by introducing small-scale barter economies, although some such initiatives have struggled to attain longevity.

Expert engagement and expertise

As with other policy areas, expert input to policy-making on public order in Greece – and, in this context, on urban security as well – has formally and informally been drawn from a range of actors, predominantly consisting of government-funded research institutes, university-based academics, in-house experts of government ministries, individual or teams of foreign ad hoc advisers, and special advisers to ministers.

KEMEA (Centre for Security Studies) is a think-tank overseen by the Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection and tasked with providing advice and consultation

to the Ministry and related authorities on security policy. The institution was established after the 2004 Athens Olympic Games with the explicit intention of harnessing expertise acquired by security services personnel as a result of training programmes and exercises carried out in preparation for the Games. As advertised through the organization's website, the outputs of KEMEA researchers suggest that staff expertise is strongly weighted towards the technical, focusing on themes such as fault monitoring in interlinked information and communication technology systems and operational risk analysis for the protection of national infrastructure.

In preparing and drafting legislation, the Ministry also uses ad hoc committees that bring together in-house and external expertise, from prosecutors, senior police officers and other senior bureaucratic post-holders from the Ministry, to members drawn from university faculties of law and sociology. Policy construction within these committees tends to be a discursive and empirically light affair: even when addressing a nominally critical security issue, such as the threats posed by terrorism and organized crime, committee work has proceeded on the basis of unrecorded general knowledge and assumptions held by participants (Xenakis, 2004). In any case, as has been found in relation to the Ministry of Justice (see, further, Cheliotis, 2012), it is likely that in-house and practitioner positions tend to be privileged over those of academics, reducing the influence of broader expertise on policy-making. Also, as has been testified with regard to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Valinakis, 2012), dedicated in-house civil service staff often lack the skills to carry out effective policy design or to provide adequate research support to ministers. Moreover, senior police expertise is known to be vulnerable to changes in political leadership: political affiliations are thought to affect senior appointments, and such post-holders are often replaced upon the election of a new government.

Foreign expertise has also contributed to policy-making on specific areas of concern within the Ministry's portfolio. In 2000, for instance, following a lethal attack on the British Military Attaché in Athens by a guerrilla organization, London's Metropolitan Police Service temporarily provided the Hellenic Police with a large team from its Specialist Operations Department, offering expertise on data collection and analysis and public communication strategies, as well as assistance with the ongoing investigation. In 2009, a smaller team from the Metropolitan Police visited Athens to advise the Ministry on restructuring the Greek Counter-Terrorism Agency. More recently, the Ministry received advice on urban policing from the former mayor of New York, Rudy Giuliani, and from the former Chief of the New York Police Department, Bill Bratton, in advance of police reforms which included the introduction of emergency units armed with Kalashnikovs to combat robberies by organized crime groups in city centres. Again at the operational level, Greek police currently engage in European training networks and online 'webinars' that aim to provide expertise that can be used to modify their practices.

Expert input to the policy-making process can also come from the personal team of advisers that is commonly retained by the minister even when he or she is moved to another ministerial post. Specialized expertise amongst ministerial aides has been rare, precisely because of their generalized duties and the usually short-term nature of ministerial posts. A notable exception has been the case of aides working for Michalis

Chrysochoidis, who have included policing experts with strong academic research backgrounds. This anomalous example is reflective of a politician who showed particular interest in, and commitment to, the Ministry. Chrysochoidis not only held the position on three separate occasions, but his four-year period of unbroken service in the role – between 1999 and 2004 – was also unprecedented and is as yet unmatched.

Limits to expert input

As this synopsis suggests, expert input to policy-making in the Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection has had significant limitations.

The scope of expertise influencing policy-making has been curtailed, firstly, by the weight given to experts with a technical operational purview of security. Knowledge related to immediate causes and effects appears to have been privileged, whereas that addressing the broader context and root causes, and incorporating knowledge from an appropriate range of social partners, has been neglected. It is striking, for example, that although the effective management of urban security has been closely identified by the Ministry with the effective management of immigrant populations within urban areas, there seems to have been no serious effort, if any, to include or even to advocate the inclusion of representatives of such populations within relevant policy-making processes. Unfortunately, the failure to recognize immigrant community associations as potential partners in state efforts to provide urban security may be symptomatic of the growth in xenophobia amongst political and public opinion, rather than of mere oversight on the part of either the Ministry or its experts.

Secondly, when non-technical scholarly expertise has been consulted, the extent to which it has managed to influence policy may have been hindered by weaknesses that can characterize such expertise per se. To some degree, these weaknesses may be indicative of the deficiencies that have long affected the research culture within Greek universities, where party-political competition and clientelism have inhibited development towards internationally accepted standards of scholarship (see Pesmazoglu, 1994). Although there have been advances since the 1990s, progress towards the European standards initiated by the Bologna Declaration of 1999 has been slow. For instance, the dramatic expansion of higher education institutions in Greece between 1999 and 2004 continued to be structured by local and regional political demands and lacked any formal accreditation procedures. As recently as 2011, moreover, a significant proportion of academic personnel were reportedly failing to understand, and to be resisting change designed to implement, quality assurance principles (Ipsilantis et al., 2012; see, further, Papadimitriou, 2011; Keridis and Sfatos, 1998).

Thirdly, however, and as is the case in other policy areas, expert input to the policy-making process on public order and urban security can more generally be limited by political patronage and clientelism. A relatively small elite of experts, amongst whom 'a clear political affiliation with a particular political party is … common', have been found to appear recurrently in various policy-making procedures across government (Ladi, 2006: 63; see also Featherstone and Papadimitriou, 2008). Similar findings have been reported at the level of local government, where only those experts belonging to an

interest group sharing the mayor's party affiliation or to the personal network of local council officials are included in decision-making processes and have any power to influence their outcomes (Getimis and Grigoriadou, 2004). Thus, experts chosen to participate in policy- and decision-making processes are more likely to be there for reasons of convenience rather than necessarily having the most appropriate expertise for the task at hand.

Fourthly, and most importantly, limits to the input of appropriate expertise to policy-making have been reflective of a general lack of appetite amongst political leaders to see either evidence-led policies broadened or community-oriented policies instigated. Given the strongly centralized and hierarchical structure of public policy processes in Greece (on which see, for example, Featherstone and Papadimitriou, 2008), ministerial leadership plays a crucial role in determining the extent to which expertise can access and affect policy-making. Even at ministerial level, non-technical expert input may well be regarded as an unnecessary distraction from the Ministry's duty to react immediately to the challenges it faces. As proudly pronounced, for example, by the current Minister of Public Order and Citizen Protection during a recent interview in which he was asked to comment on public concerns about a nexus of crime, illegal immigration, social unrest and violent far-right groups offering 'security' to citizens:

> The question is what we're doing about it; what the government is doing about it, what state institutions are doing about it. I feel, however, that we're not sitting still. We're not simply observing it; we're not carrying out sociological analyses; we're not proposing an in-depth discussion; and we're not postponing things in order to deal with them in the long run. We're doing that which present conditions and our abilities permit. (*Neoi Fakeloi*, 2012)

This relegation of non-technical and social partner expertise appears to be part of a broader political commitment to retaining key elements of the continental European model of public order policing, within which crime and disorder are primarily approached as affronts to state authority rather than as symptoms of community problems, and are primarily responded to with centralized, militaristic policing practices sustained with lower levels of accountability than are present in Anglo-American policing traditions (see Mawby, 2011).

Conclusion: Politics and prospects

On both the right and the left of the political spectrum in Greece, objective and subjective forms of insecurity have been chiselling away at public trust in the ability of government and state institutions to provide for the basic needs of individuals. In recent years, official data on immigrant criminality, on the one hand, and xenophobic attitudes and practices, on the other, have created a vicious cycle that has not only boosted far-right political parties but also stimulated support for far-right militias and vigilante groups, which operate primarily within Greek cities. At the same time, the lack of action against organized far-right violence and the selective and excessive use of force by the police has fuelled insecurity amongst immigrants, leftists and anarchists. Since 2009, furthermore, intense socioeconomic hardships have been superimposed on a context in which trust in politicians and state authorities has long been at low levels by European comparison. Given

this combination of developments and the broader risk of sociopolitical destabilization that they suggest, there is a clear imperative for the country's government to ensure that the state effectively tackles urban insecurity.

In order to effectively manage urban security in a way that does not lead Greece to abandon the democratic principles enshrined in the rules of European Union membership, official policies need to curtail their reliance on coercion. The country's government needs to tackle socioeconomic polarization and its criminogenic potential by working to create sustained economic growth, including the promotion of training and employment opportunities for young people. To cater for the basic needs of individuals, appropriate social provision needs to be made at the levels of national and local government. For instance, given that reduced funding to drug rehabilitation programmes is known to have not only pushed problem drug users onto the streets but also increased rates of HIV-Aids amongst them, government funding for such programmes needs to be restored to pre-crisis levels. With regard to the responsibilities of local government, support for those most deprived needs to extend from supplying food aid to providing much-needed public washroom facilities in city centres and establishing rehousing programmes. Given the extent of xenophobia and political polarization within Greek society, efforts to maintain social stability will require systematic action to encourage the respect and acceptance of difference and the rejection of violence towards others. Commitment to social stability will also require initiatives to improve levels of trust in public authorities, for example by instigating effective oversight of the police and the judiciary in order to secure the rigorous, timely and just performance of their roles.

A prerequisite of urban security management that is both effective and progressive is an appreciation by political leaders of the range of policies and practices that can serve this end in combination with one another. Recognition of the multidimensionality of urban security challenges is a necessary step for the design of responses that encompass coordination across ministries and other state institutions, as well as the identification of, and cooperation with, an appropriate array of social partners. To date, however, and as elsewhere in Europe (Edwards et al., 2013, forthcoming), insofar as progressive responses to urban security challenges have received appreciative recognition amongst political leaders, this has largely been restricted to the rhetorical level. As we have shown, for example, notions of neighbourhood policing and policing respectful of human rights have been attached, respectively, to regular policing activities and 'sweep' operations against immigrants. Although the possibility of overcoming the impediments to more progressive policy-making seems very slim in the current political and economic climate, a suitable mix of encouragement and pressure from domestic and international arenas might conceivably stimulate political willingness to seriously explore such ideas and put them into practice.

Notes

1. In October 2012, the Greek state's plans to build a mosque in Athens were reported to have been shelved indefinitely, owing to the country's financial crisis (*Hurriyet Daily News*, 2012).
2. On distinctions in Greece between social unrest and attacks perpetrated by covert groups self-identifying as anarchist and far-leftist, see Xenakis (2012). Whilst the country experienced a spike in such attacks between 2008 and 2010, their number fell dramatically in 2011, when only 6 occurred, all of which were non-lethal and only one of which caused minor injuries (Cheliotis and Xenakis, under review).

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