



**Lawrence, Christopher M. 2007. *Blood and Oranges: Immigrant Labor and European Markets in Rural Greece*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.**

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Like ‘a punch in the stomach’, as a Greek saying goes, Lawrence’s ethnography *Blood and Oranges* upsets our ‘Europanised’ neoliberal perceptions of social equality within the context of 21st century capitalism, simultaneously adding an holistic and rigorous contribution to the anthropology of Greece, nationalism and globalization.

Lawrence ventures to the rural township of Midea in Argolid, Greece, to explore the relation between local Greek residents and immigrant workers, providing the content and context for a discussion of the intersection between the transformation of Greek society after joining the European Union in 1981, and the wave of immigration from Eastern Europe in the 1990’s. The ethnography seeks to explore ‘traditional’ anthropological themes such as unequal power relations, nationalist discourse, identity construction, gender, and modes of accommodation and resistance through an informed and contingent analysis of class formation and dynamics, production and consumption patterns, and the political economy of capitalistic neoliberal governmentality of the European Union. In the course of the book, it becomes apparent how the orange, as the agricultural product of Argolid- a symbol of prosperity, production and consumption for local farmers, is always colored, indeed constituted by, blood: historically by poor Greek workers or kin members, currently by the exploitation of cheap immigrant labour.

*Blood and Oranges* begins with a concise, well written brief history of Greece in general and Argolid in particular. The discussion provides a contextualized approach to the historical developments, political movements and economic modes of production from the Ottoman Peloponnesus until today. Lawrence’s description of historical, socio-economic and political processes and exchanges between the villages in Midea township is analysed through relations of production, and a conscious class struggle between the villages. However, there seems to have been a profound transformation concerning class dynamics between the villages after Greece’s entrance in the European Union. This transformation has structurally altered the economic and social relations between the poorer mountain Arvanite and wealthier valley Greek villages: exploiting the new economic opportunities offered by EU in the form of subsidies, farmers of both valley and mountain villages have been able to advance economically, and thus perceive themselves as both Greek and petit-bourgeoisie. Furthermore, there has been a restructuring of household economies: female relatives and children are no longer viewed as potential agricultural labour, but they have become ‘equal’- even though



this new equality is based on the neoliberal modes of governmentality and sociality based on consumer rights. As Lawrence argues, it seems that women and children have gained equality through consumerism.

Yet, this fundamental economic and social restructuring of the agricultural communities has caused a paradoxical problem: the Greek farmers having economically benefited from EU subsidies programs, cannot depend on labour from neither economically poorer villages nor other kin. This shortage of labour is being filled by (mostly illegal) immigrant workers, who have substituted the most exploited part of the working class, such as poor villagers, women and kin (who have now become consumers). The petit land owners have become depended on the cheap and easily exploited illegal labour (due to fixed agricultural prices regulated through the EU and rising consumer needs), yet, this economic dependence is premised on the continuous social and political exclusion of immigrants, supported by a neo-racist nationalist discourse.

Compelling in its analytical rigour and its synthetical ability, Lawrence's ethnography explores issues of illegal immigration, women's 'liberation' through consumption, Greek farmers' defrauding EU subsidies and the neo-racist discourse of otherness through the lenses of globalization of a neoliberal governmentality that characterizes the 'globalised-localised' capitalism of the EU. Taking into account the history of Greece, Lawrence sketches the interconnections between the political economy of a transforming capitalism and the contradictory processes and practices that accompany it: the author argues that contrary of (or maybe constitutive to) EU's political discourse of 'democracy' and 'social equality', 'human rights' and 'rights of citizenship', its economic policies – especially the devaluation of agriculture in Greece- have created a vulnerable as well as valuable, easily exploited class of non-citizens. These very modern Others are immigrants, often from Eastern Europe, whose illegal or 'temporary' residence status excluded them both socially and politically from rights of equality and citizenship. As such, immigrants are perceived in neo-racist term as inferior Others, justifying the often brutal exploitation of their cheap labour as well as their exclusion from Greek cultural and political life. This exclusion, fabricated and justified under a nationalist discourse of boundary construction between Greek and 'Albanian' Others, places immigrants outside Greek and European perceptions of equality, making them eligible for forceful exploitation, simultaneously masking the class relations of production and the reproduction of new forms of power relations and inequalities.

Lawrence's ethnography is a valuable and intriguing contribution not only to the ethnography of Greece but to the anthropology of globalization and politics. The detailed and multi-level analysis of social, political and economic transformations is both critical and well-placed. Yet, at times the reader might feel like s/he's reading a book on Argolid's political economy rather than an ethnography of and about people. Still, *Oranges and Blood* reminds anthropology the necessity of a critical, detailed and encompassing political analysis of the interactions and articulations between the contradictory processes, discourses and practices between people and socio-economic systems, between people and the formations and transformations of power.