UNICONFLICTS
IN SPACES OF CRISIS

CRITICAL APPROACHES
IN, AGAINST AND BEYOND THE UNIVERSITY

ENCOUNTERS AND CONFLICTS IN THE CITY GROUP
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UniConflicts

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Critical approaches in, against and beyond the University

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Encounters and conflicts in the city group

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CONTENTS

Intro
“Encounters and conflicts in the city” group 9

1 Al-Hara as a Spectacle Spatial and Social Exclusions in Cairo’s Private Universities
Salma Belal 16

2 Spaces of dissent: The anti-university in theory and practice
Iain A. Boal 34

3 Plato’s Republic and Student Loan Debt Refusal
George Caffentzis 44

4 Writing conflicts. Sketching a new approach to urban conflicts, fieldnotes from Exarchia, Athens
Anna Giulia Della Puppa 50

5 Crisis ridden space, knowledge production and social struggles: The case of Athens
Stefania Gyftopoulou & Asimina Paraskevopoulou 61
6 End Of The University: The Knowledge Common
Dimitris Kotsakis

7 Establishing Indifference: The Affective Logic of Neoliberalism
Leandros Kyriakopoulos

8 Unintelligible interlocutions: Language and body in autistic and non-autistic experience
Theodosia Marinoudi

9 The conflicting transformations of the city in the photographs of contemporary Moroccan artist Yto Barrada
Chourouq Nasri

10 A European answer? Of continents, containers and un/domesticated movements
Collettivo RicercAzione

11 Resistances and the emergence of a post-neo-liberal just city: Social and seismic movements in the neo-liberal Chile after disasters
Claudio Pulgar Pinaud

12 Limits, oppositions and connections between social movements and the academic community
Nikos Souzas
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors/Editors</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Practising historiography as noise</td>
<td>Danae Stefanou, Evdoxia Ragkou, Anastasia Peki, Georgia Pazarloglou, Anna Papoutsi</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>(Critical Music Histories)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The planning of the space of Transport: hegemony exercises; cognitive errors and false consciousness</td>
<td>Christos Taxiltaris</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Standpoint Theories and “In-Between” Feminist Positionality: Troubled Interconnections Between The Militant Sphere And The Academic Knowledge</td>
<td>Chara Tsantili &amp; Carolina Topini</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The group “Encounters and Conflicts in the City” called radical research groups, critical workshops and researchers, students and collectives that are placed in, against and beyond the neoliberal university in an open gathering on the 11-14th June 2015 at the Department of Architecture at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece).

Through this gathering, it was aimed to create a public space of dialogue transcending divisions among academic and scientific disciplines and to critically approach the urban issues of the era of crisis, through a dialectic, intersectional and postcolonial approach.

The central questions that raised are two:

1. What is the role of knowledge, of the university and of researchers in the era of crisis?
2. What are the critical epistemological and methodological tools for studying the spatial expressions of the ongoing crisis at multiple scales?
Within this context, it was sought to be examined the ongoing crisis not just as an over-accumulation crisis but also as a crisis of social disobedience and of the inability of the circulation of capital, patriarchy and nationalism. Moving against the mystification of the crisis, the gathering was interested in critical approaches that focus on the spatialization of social relations and examined the spaces of dissent. Particularly, it was examined the articulations, the limits, the contradictions and the dialectic relation of commons, enclosures, inclusion, exclusion, insurgency and counter-insurgency as well as their hybrid intermediate forms, which emerge in and through physical space, modes of communication and the constitution of communities. Overall, the gathering aimed to break the North/South or East/West dichotomies and to focus on the fields of gender, race, class and culture.

Building on the critical evaluation of social relations, the circulation of social struggles and subjects and communities in motion, we search for their contentious spaces and their spatial transformations, limits, possibilities and contradictions in the era of crisis. Moreover, understanding education as a unity of theory and practice, we seek these epistemological and methodological tools that emerge from and aim to the deepening and the circulation of social struggles and social movements. In the context of today’s global and local crisis, we note that while a plethora of social struggles and insurgencies emerge, the academic research often appropriates and commercializes their ideas. It is exactly here that we identify the dead-end.

Hence, the gathering sought to surpass the so-called academic activism and to set as a main target the critical examination of the following:

A. The role of knowledge and of researchers in the university and in social movements

The neoliberal University and the educational system consti-
tute strategic mechanisms for the production and reproduction of social relations. In particular, within a dynamic process of neoliberalization, the university studies are intensified and are linked more and more to the labour market. Within this context, it was examined issues such as the production of knowledge, knowledge as a common, the neoliberalization of the University, the new educational enclosures and the concept of Anti-university.

The transformation of knowledge into private property and consequently into a commodity creates new enclosures in the field of knowledge. These new enclosures in neoliberal education are expressed both through the commodification of the physical space of the universities and through the objectification of human abilities. Some indicative examples are the increase of studying costs, the studying loans, the control of access to information, the commercialization of academic papers and books, the securitization of the University space, the criminalization and the rhetoric against student mobilizations, the suppression of the struggles of university employees and the restriction of the freedom of speech.

However, since 1960s and 1970s, the universities are spaces of collective emancipatory movements, of social struggles and of radical experiments of self-organization for the production of knowledge. As a response to these movements, since 1980s, a number of educational reforms has been introduced. These reforms seek to promote the marketization of the university, aiming to produce the appropriate competitive workforce and to suppress student movements.

Yet, during the last decade, many dynamic student movements have emerged in France (2006), Greece (2006-2007), the USA (2009-2010), the UK (2010), Italy (2010-2011) and so on, which targeted the enclosure of knowledge and were connected and inspired many other urban social movements.
Axes of discussion

A.1 Social education and emancipatory movements in the universities
   – Student movements: limits and contradictions, connection with other urban movements, confrontation of their suppression and criminalization
   – Perspectives of a radical pedagogy towards the knowledge as common
   – Ideas and practices of free-autonomous universities beyond the education of the neoliberal university

A.2 Control and commodification of knowledge
   – Public, state and private education in the neoliberal era
   – Politics of knowledge enclosures and copyrights
   – The suppression of academic freedom and of the freedom of speech
   – Knowledge as private property and commodity for the production of value and surplus value
   – Student loans and study costs as mechanisms of disciplining
   – The cultural politics of the neoliberal university
   – Paid and unpaid work at the University

A.3 The role of the researcher
   – Lifelong education, competitiveness and the precarious status of the researcher
   – The researcher as producer of dominant discourses and her/his role in the reproduction of power
   – Competitiveness, academic carrier and academic divisions and hierarchies
   – The biopolitical character of the neoliberal education and the construction of new identities
   – Education as praxis, understood as a unity of theory and practice
– Researchers, networks and groups against and beyond the neoliberal university

B. Critical epistemological and methodological tools for the study of the crisis’s spatial expressions at multiple scales

Against the privatization and commodification of the academic knowledge and the intended hegemony of the neoliberal perspectives, we seek those critical epistemological tools of knowledge production that encourage social emancipation. During the last years, urban movements and a plethora of visible and invisible practices of resistance and emancipation offer a variety of tools for the destabilization of the dominant ideologies, ways of disaggregation of power, negotiation of contradictions and visibility of differences. In parallel, today there is the urgent need for the promotion, circulation and deepening of these critical perspectives and their linking to social struggles. Thus, we aim to discuss epistemological and methodological tools, such as the following:

B1. Dialectic critical urban theory
Which are those critical approaches that assist us to perceive and examine the multiple dimensions of urban space? How do dialectic approaches and critical urban theory contribute to the understanding of the spaces of social movements and the spaces of capital, racism and patriarchy?

B2. Intersectionality and urban space in the era of crisis
How does intersectionality contribute to the study of the urban space? Which are the intersectional crossings of the multiple systems of domination, oppression and discrimination such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, dis/ability, age, cast, language, culture, body size, education level or citizenship?
B3. Cultural and postcolonial approaches

How do cultural and postcolonial studies contribute to the understanding of urban space and the conceptualization of body, identity and modes of communication. How does the criminalization and the suppression of alternative modes of culture, information and lifestyle operate as mechanisms of control, disciplining and normalization? What is the role of social media in the communication of social struggles? We seek the expression of the ongoing crisis through the spaces of architecture, art, media, and internet.

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INTRODUCTION

This study examines the phenomenon of simulating the traditional Egyptian alley in an event entitled “Al-Hara” - which means “The Alley” in Arabic - hosted by the Theatre and Film Club in the American University in Cairo (AUC) in the spring of 2015. The main goal of this study is to problematize such phenomenon, and provide alternative interpretations for it. The paper begins with contextualizing the phenomenon both politically and geographically in a broader perspective, shedding light on the bigger umbrella of the neoliberal political economy and its spatial implications in staging the scene for the spectacle. A description of the event follows, inspecting the event of Al-Hara, as an exhibition; drawing similarities of representation between such constructed spectacle in 2015, and the World Exhibitions and Fares of the 18th century, given the difference between the exhibitors and exhibits in both cases. In the first, the exhibitor is basically from the same origin of the exhibit, only with class and cultural differences, but
of the same society. As for the second, the exhibitor is the European Colonialist. In the following section, further analysis is conducted using Orientalism as a framework to understand the structure of the relation between the Orientalist and the Oriental in the case of Al-Hara. Examining the process of defining and consequently representing the Other, and through this, Orientalizing the Self, followed after, with questioning the hyper-reality of Al-Hara as a simulacrum.

1. THE NEOLIBERAL UNIVERSITY

Neo-liberalism advocating the greater role in market economy in national system, “the progress of society in material and social values depends on the freedom of individuals to make choices” The wide variety of “choices” new cities are offering, including all its assistive services with a wide pool of other choices in terms of educational institutes and bodies that compose a wide picture of substituted goods than the provision of the national system (Sayed, 2006). As if Cairo did not exist, new cities such as New Cairo and 6th of October, located barely 40 km away from downtown Cairo, strive unashamedly to distance themselves –economically and socially, but also affectively— from the once city victorious, Escaping the existing urban reality to a better sold image of a gated “better life” with all-inclusive facilities of education and services to guarantee the pure exclusion and independence from other. The lack of public transportation connecting the core urban area with the suburbs in the desert facilitates the geographical detachment of these cities, which has grown devoted to the needs and whims of its wealthy residents, turning its back to the Egyptian capital and its history. The dirt, noise and disorder associated with the city, especially since the political upheavals of 2011, are declared off limits in the luxury housing developments and the gated communities that proliferate in the desert landscape.
Following the prevailing neo-liberal notions of capitalism in creating exclusive urban environments and socioeconomic circles, privatized educational institutes serve as poles of attraction for economic investment, taking priority over being institutions of higher education. In Cairo, private universities are anchor projects for the rise of new satellite cities. The relation between the establishment of new cities and private universities is contingent, completing the commodified image of a “sufficient community”, promoting those satellite cities. Marketed heavily on their partnership agreements with western universities, these seemingly colonial educational facilities aim to sell “better educational reform” compared to the higher education provided by public state universities, transforming knowledge from a public and accessible right to a branded commodity available upon payment. As shown in the timeline in Figure (1), the state’s efforts in founding public universities froze within the period of Al-Sadat’s open economy era, and alternatively shifted to facilitating the establishment of privatized universities concurrently with the rise of new cities.

The new relatively distant geographic locations from the city’s core, has directly impacted the construction of new, highly dependent identities and characters fearing the normal confrontation with daily situations exterior to their comfort zones. Mobility norms to and from these locations are manifested in the exclusive form of private vehicular systems, whether university assigned buses or privately owned cars. Thus, the exposure to the city is limited to the daily commute to campus and to the surrounding suburban commercialized facilities for recreation. Accordingly, new generations are emerging in these exclusive social bubbles, barely relating to the city’s diverse cultures, the resulting detachment purposefully inferred their longing to create a world which didn’t exist. Surely the objective to reinvent a copy of Al-Hara was not to reacquaint themselves with Egypt’s alleyways, but to invent a world to alienate themselves from.
2. THE EVENT PROJECT: AL-HARA AS AN EXHIBITION

In Timothy Mitchell’s *Colonizing Egypt*, he describes the World Exhibitions in European cities as mere representations of reality, which arose from the effect of an ‘external reality’ (Mitchell, 1988). Mitchell noted to such exhibitions as “Spectacles, set up the ‘world as a picture’ ordered it up before an audience as an object on display, to be viewed, experienced and investigated” (Mitchell, 1988). In this section, I shall analyze the main components of the event as an exhibition, the set-up setting, costumes and performances through which the experience of the traditional Egyptian alley is represented.
Advertising for the event was mainly through social media, particularly, a Facebook event that circulated fast among inner circles of AUC, and other private universities’ students as well. “It is a unique and unprecedented experience from the local Egyptian streets brought to you. Come experience one of Egypt’s gems and, what we believe, is our lost identity.” With this as the introductory statement of the page, inviting its audience to pay a 150 Egyptian Pounds ticket to have a chance “to walk in the alleys of Cairo, and experience this style of living”. The commercialization of the event is based on its target audience which requires such entertainment. In their sense, identity is perceived as an exotic commodity, which the spectator is provided the opportunity to reclaim it in the materialized form of this experience.

2.1 SETTING
The event took place in the AUC in New Cairo, a fortified campus in the desert of New Cairo City, approximately 30 kilometers away from the city core of Cairo. According to one of the organizers, when interviewed; “We brought Al-Hara all the way to the AUC campus.” Another was asked about the possibilities for AUC students to visit traditional neighborhoods the answer was; “Well, they could, but they don’t have to, we have brought it to them here. It’s on their campus. Also it’s much safer here” (Bower, 2015). This in a way determines the geographic relationship between the model (simulation) and reality, drawing the apparent lines of segregation between two communities of the same place, implying that the common living environment of most Egyptians is marked as unsafe.

As expected from a theatre and film club, the setting was impressive, showing to be well-funded. The club constructed a partial part of a traditional Egyptian neighborhood, with the famous Egyptian Qahwa –street coffee shop, ground floor shops, fair grounds, street vendors with carts or sitting on the ground, and a cornered stage with Khiyamiyya –the tent-makers textiles, decorated with
colorful hanging light bulbs (Bower, 2015). This attempt to an accurate representation of a fed the purpose to materialize the whole experience in a sense where the observer would hardly differentiate between the real and the model. Here the resemblance between this case and the Westernized image of the Orient and its real figure.

2.2 CUSTOMS
In order for this setting to operate in a traditional sense, the role of costume play was essential to complete the rendered image of Al-Hara. Students performing in Al-Hara were all dressed to the role they each played, with Gallabiyya-s and ubiquitous Tarbushe-s despite the facts that those do not represent the Egyptian outfit any longer, but according to their romanticized vision, all traditional elements are the main components of what they named ‘The traditional scene’. “The tarbush is something from our past, it’s very traditional”, said one student (Bower, 2015).

Figure 2. Simulated Street vendor with dressed custom, cart and traditional tent-makers textiles as a background at Al-Hara Event.
2.3 PERFORMANCE
What differentiates this event from what we know of exhibits is the pastiche of folkloric performances represented in patchworks carried out through the spectacle. The anchor of the event revolved around re-performing a fake local wedding, which the whole set-up served as a setting location, as traditional Egyptian weddings
were depicted in black and white movies, occupying the whole alley, with ceremonial lights hung up on the buildings’ facades. The celebratory atmosphere was complemented by a marching brass band that played the folkloric music of Hasaballah’s Band.

Figure 4. Brass Band performing in Hassaballah’s Band traditional costume at Al-Hara Event
(Source: El 7ara: How the other 95 percent lives, http://www.madamars.com/sections/culture/el-7ara-how-other-95-percent-lives accessed April 2, 2016)

The staging of this scenario, which presents as spectacle the well-known colors, sounds, smells and tastes of Al-Hara– is reminiscent of Mitchell’s description of the Egyptian exhibit at the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris (Mitchell, 1988). The then celebrated imitation of medieval Cairo in the European capital has been replaced by an imitated simulation of Cairo’s alleys just a few kilometers away from the exotic “other”. In a peculiar role switching, it is the street vendors and not the
Khedive Ismail –viceroy of Egypt– who became the protagonists of the exhibition, their counterfeit presence reclaimed through mimicry by university students in their search for their lost identity.

The representational relationship between the creators of the simulation and the real alley which the former ‘orientalizes’ and stereotypes the latter, is furtherly discussed in the following section through the interpretation of Edward Said’s Orientalism as a framework for analyzing the phenomenon of Al-Hara.

3. AL-HARA: A PRODUCT OF SELF-ORIENTALISM

In Said’s post-colonial canon, Orientalism, he defined it as a constellation of false assumptions underlying Western attitudes toward the Middle East. A framework used by the West to understand the unfamiliar or strange, a lens that distorts the other’s actual reality (Said, 1978). As Orientalism is affiliated with the representation of the Self or Occident and the Other or Orient, in which the Self is privileged and has the upper hand to define and reconstruct the Other. Said argued that Orient and Occident worked as oppositional terms, so that the “Orient” was constructed as a negative inversion of the Occident’s culture. Accordingly, it is mandatory to first define the Self and the other in order to configure the structure of relationship between the Orient and the Orientalist.

3.1 ORIENTALIZING THE SELF

In order to analyze the representational phenomenon of Al-hara, it is essential to begin with the distinction between the Self and the Other in such case. The Self and the Other can be translated to the Occident/Orient, us/them, The West/the rest. In all these cases, the Self defines «its other» in relation to himself/herself, where the other is an alien and alter ago, to, and of the self (Said, 1976). By
this process of *Othering*, he/she perceives the Oriental as different from his/her own (Ashcroft, 1995).

In the case of the of *Al-Hara*, The Self, in this case the Egyptian upper classes, has instantly defined themselves, as well as those who are similar to him/her, as the secluded minority of indigenous elite separating themselves from the whole of the Egyptian society, and referring to the rest—majority of Egyptians—as the Other. The intention behind creating such Spectacle clearly rose from the sense of detachment from the core of the city as well as the perception that Other’s part of the city is marked to be dangerous. As quoted from one the organizers of the event; “Many rich men would not want their daughters to visit a place like this in real life, it’s too dangerous. Probably 50 percent of these people have never seen a place like this for real, but its safe here” (Bower, 2015). As eloquently said, this evidently reflects how this social class has unashamedly placed itself distant from the rest of society, affectively polarizing itself from the exotic other.

### 3.2 REPRESENTING THE OTHER

Said based an extensive part of his work on Michel Foucault’s concept of Knowledge is Power. For Foucault, power and knowledge are not seen as independent entities but are inextricably related—knowledge is always an exercise of power, and power always a function of knowledge (Foucault, 1980). Said identified the relationship between the Occident and the Orient through what he named “Cultural Strength”, claimed by the Occident. “Knowledge of the Orient is generated out of strength, in a sense creates the Orient, where the Orient, the Oriental and his/her world, are studied, judged, disciplined and illustrated by the Occident”, producing the knowledge through which the Orient is contained and represented as a phenomenon possessing certain characteristics” (Said, 1978). *Al-Hara* as an act of depicting part of the Egyptian society in a perpetual, timeless state has huge resemblance with
European attitudes toward “the East” in the 19th and 20th centuries. In the 19th century, knowledge of the Orient was defined by a set of recurring images and clichés that do not match reality, but merely depends on the orientalists “Archive of Information”. According to Said, the archive is held together by a set of ideas, unifying and generalizing a set of values. Based on these ideas and values, the Oriental can be explained and accordingly represented (Said, 1976).

By reading the reproduced image of Al-Hara, we can attain the ideas and values of which the Self holds for the other. Its mostly based on the romanticized images from the past, represented as the cultural heritage derived from media, such as old films and literature novels, which in itself is an older form of elites representing the poor. The depiction process is entirely based on the representor’s mental image of the traditional, with no relation to actual reality. “The tarbush is something from our past, it’s very traditional, you’ll see it in lots of old movies, for example.” said another organizer –dressed in a Gallabiyya worn over his modern outfit– when asked about the choice of customs (Bower, 2015). Apparently, the reference wherefrom Al-Hara was being represented, was casted from an earlier form of representation, which also deployed the power to create knowledge from which the later representation inaugurated.

4. THE HYPER-REALITY OF AL-HARA

In order to understand the event as a simulation of the original Egyptian alley, this section will elucidate Baddrillard’s concepts Simulacrum and Hyper-reality, by suggesting the phenomenon as a pure manifestation of both concepts.

As quoted from his essay The Precession of Simulacra; “Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a
substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal” (Baudrillard, 1994). Hyper-reality is technically, in Baudrillard’s terms, not a reality that exists to separate simulacrum from reality in the world. It is, in fact, a distraction from a real world which is in itself “unreal”. According to Baudrillard, simulation leads inevitably to the extinction of the original, thus the Simulacra can never be exchanged for what is originally real. The basis for this is presented in his four successive phases of the simulation of an image, which will be used to analyze the phenomenon of Simulating Al-Hara, but in the form of simultaneous layers rather than successive stages, as they are concurrently pertinent in this case.

It is also very valid here to discuss Umberto Eco’s interpretation of Hyper-reality. Eco believes that hyper-reality manifests itself in the portrayals of history, art and architecture, entertainment, and nature. In his essay Travels in Hyper-reality describing his first visit to America he outlined the process of portraying history through making things come alive and reconstructing full-scale interiors, mixes the fake with the real so that the observer has a difficult time deciphering them as being apart from each other. ‘In the world of art and architecture, if the Americans can’t have the real thing, according to Eco, they will “fabricate the absolute fake”, or create an, “authentic copy”. For entertainment purposes, we have created whole cities for our enjoyment; these cities help our fantasies become realities’ Eco, 1986).

What Eco described back then, is a vastly applicable explanation for Al-Hara, with its pure entertaining and materialized notions. The simulation resulted from the sense of detachment from –what its creators named– identity. In their strive to reclaim it, an “Authentic Copy” was produced, distant from reality and fails to be related to any origin.
5. REOCCURRENCES OF THE PHENOMENON

The multiplication of the phenomenon in different forms would not come surprisingly. The Simulacrum of Al-Hara and other similar traditional cultural Egyptian festivities such as Mouled-s and Zar-s are increasingly occurring within various scenes. However, the elite-ness of the context in which it takes place, is a common attribute for most of them. Al-Hara was not the first of its kind as an event to take place. Nonetheless it has been followed consequently with several similar events which have followed the same representational patterns of imitation and reconstruction, and same cause as well, to provide an authentic copy.

Malls of New Cairo City regularly organize events to celebrate seasonal festivities and, from time to time, ostensibly attempts to recreate Egyptian traditional scenes. In January of 2015, the Downtown Mall— an open shopping mall and businesses district, which aspires to be “the New Cairo City hub”, organized a Mouled, complete with a repertoire of the same figures used in Al-Hara event. The street vendors dressed in folkloric attire, bright colored tablecloths, Tannoura performances…etc. (Galan, 2015).

Another very similar event was hosted at the German University in Cairo (GUC), a neighboring private university to the AUC in April of 2016. The event entitled; “As7ab Makan: Reviving Egyptian Zar Music” was organized by The GUC Music Academy in collaboration with Makan— the Egyptian Center for Culture and Arts dedicated to folkloric Egyptian Music. Astonishingly, the event, which was also publicized through social media, provided a peculiar description;
Figure 5. Zar Event Poster
(Source: Facebook Event page: https://www.facebook.com/events/582138908625958/ accessed April 2, 2016)
“Celebrating and reviving our Egyptian musical heritage, the GUC Music Academy in cooperation with Egyptian Center for Culture and Arts – Makan are presenting an unforgettable night, where East meets West, Orient meets Occident, a phenomenal evening with extraordinary musicians, who have practiced the art of Egyptian folkloric chants and Zar music for generations.” This description draws a portrait of pure self-orientalism. It might be inaccurate to name it ‘representation’ in this case. With the choice made clear to be identified as the West/Occident (GUC), meeting the East. This polarized social group has secluded itself entirely from its own society, designating itself as the Western colonial who inspects and enjoys an exotic simulacrum of the other, produced by his/her own self.

Figure 6. Left: Set-up construction of False Facades of Al-Hara at Palm Hills Club House

Most recently, simulation of Al-Hara is being replicated in Palm Hills Club- a gated luxury housing development in the des-
ert landscape of 6th of October City, West Cairo, another attempt to reconstruct a fake representation of the traditional alley to act as a recreational hotspot in Ramadan–Muslims’ Fasting month. Replacing the university campus venue, the simulation takes place at the compound’s club house, overlooking a luxurious swimming pool surrounded by vast open green areas, using the same media-inspired decorative tools to falsely create an authentic atmosphere. The reproduction of such simulacra is based on the same notions, following the same steps, targeting the same audience from which its created, and eventually result in typical copies of simulation regardless of the theme intended.

Figure 7. Right: Setting location, with refurbished street-food cart.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on what has been previously discussed, the reoccurring phenomena of simulating traditional Egyptian modes and atmo-
spheres through exclusive, and socially defined events is a reflection of increasing spatial segregation exacerbating the “social polarization” of the Egyptian society. Such simulations are structured upon the representational relationship between the Elite Egyptian community and what’ve the have defined as their Other, through their Orientalists’ lens. Accordingly, the representation product is a simulacrum, a hyper-real model with no affiliation to reality and lack of truthfulness. These multiplied authentic copies are becoming more prevalent and commonly reproduced within its communities; in strive to dig-up what they’ve named their lost identity that can only be retrieved through imitated copies regardless originality.

NOTES


REFERENCES


These brief opening remarks aim to strike a keynote of sorts, that is, to set resonating some of the central terms in any discussion of the very idea of an ‘anti-university’. It is necessary to address both the issue of contestation within the contemporary restructured university and the making of counter-spaces beyond the halls of licensed education. The urban critic Mike Davis once argued that, as bad as things may be on the campuses of the modern university, and while acknowledging their function as diploma mills and fog factories, they remain places worth defending if only because of the utopian zones contained within them. I remember debating this claim many years ago with Silvia Federici and George Caffentzis in the pages of the Common Property Resource Digest. It surely still deserves discussion.

The neoliberalization of the European university system has been a stealth affair - it took many years, and several generations of students, from the moment of cutting of subsidies at the student cafeteria in Bologna to the marketization of all room space in the
University of London, which has meant that students have to rent space in their own institution if they wish to meet any time outside classroom hours. The squeeze on campus meeting-places has been mirrored by the squeeze on communal spaces in domestic settings. Soaring urban rents have caused the widespread conversion of common living rooms into private bedrooms. And these developments are merely symptoms of the malady.

The hidden financial dynamics of the neoliberalized university have been uncovered by the political philosopher and marxologist Robert Meister at the University of California Santa Cruz and by Andrew McGettigan for the case of English universities. Meister was able to explain the paradox of massive campus construction projects moving in parallel with the sacking of janitors, staff and instructors. He grasped the importance of the decision taken by the trustees of the University of California system back in 2004, namely, to break the link between tuition fees as an income stream and the business of teaching itself. If faculty were unaware of what was happening, the money managers on Wall Street were quick to smell a sure bet; they knew that highly capitalized building campaigns could profitably go ahead because uncapped tuition fees would act as a hedge even in years of general recession. Meanwhile, students and their families were (and are) desperate enough to cough up the rising fees and plunge deeper into debt.

It took years for the dynamic to become clear and to spark demonstrations at Berkeley and Santa Cruz, inspired by a history of occupations when direct resistance flared on campus. As Mario Savio once put it on the steps of Berkeley’s Sproul Hall, “There comes a time when the operations of the machine become so odious that you cannot take part...” There is much to be learned from historical accounts of such actions; I am thinking of Paco Taibo’s memoir of the student uprising in Mexico City in ‘68, and George Katsiaficas’ monograph on the student/worker insurrection in Gwangju, South Korea in 1980.
At other times a turning away towards counter-spaces has been felt necessary. Typically these are refunctioned buildings, either squatted or rented. Sometimes matters take place in the open air, as in the ancient world. Lately in squares and streets, precarious though they have certainly proved. In addition to these favored sites, there is of course a long history of docksides, orchards, prisons, and barracks acting as counter-hegemonic settings of exchange and learning. And for women, the kitchen, the well, the riverbank wasing place, the autonomous feminist publishing ventures, the circles of sisterhood.

The pulse of radical energies code-named ‘the sixties’ produced a plethora of educational experiments. Among the most notorious and instructive was the Anti-University of London which emerged in 1969 out of the 1967 Dialectics of Liberation Congress at the Roundhouse (a converted railway building) where Allen Ginsberg, Eldridge Cleaver, Gregory Bateson, R.D. Laing and other luminaries of the counterculture came to argue.

The traces of the Anti-UL’s brief flowering have been assembled by the Danish artist/archivist Jakob Jakobsen and published as a tabloid in the style of International Times, the leading organ of the London counterculture. Vividly on display at the Anti-University were the perennial issues facing any counter-institution in a capitalist world - financial woes, sectarianism, millenial dreams, and florid psychopathology. Some of the decisions taken in those heady days now strike the reader as truly hallucinatory. The coordinator of the project, Bob Cobbing, wrote with poignant understatement in his letter of resignation: “The new arrangement by which courses will be formed at a [mass] rally in Hyde Park seems to me to be largely unworkable”. Indeed!

Equally resonant was Cobbing’s consternation at the sordid condition of the premises in the East End, and the seeming reluctance of its inhabitants - who included, as one must expect under such circumstances, a number of the sad, the mad, and the bad - to
“understand and accept their responsibilities to offset their privileges as guests of the building.”

The Liberation School in San Francisco was a simultaneous initiative six thousand miles west and with similar problems. The Bay Area has long been a generative zone for social experiment and antinomian education. Haight-Ashbury’s gift economy - its free clinic, concerts and street theatre - was in connection with Berkeley’s countercultural zones around Sproul Plaza, Telegraph Avenue, and People’s Park. These focal points were themselves embedded within a much wider network of producer and consumer co-ops and collective schemes. In the shadow of the Vietnam war, when a significant part of an entire generation refused their assigned roles in the American century, some stayed on campus and in the city, taking their politics to the administration buildings and the streets. Others decided simply to turn their backs on the city, and went to the countryside, seeking to build another world together, outside the state and the market.

The communards who headed for the hinterland soon realized that they were lacking many of the skills needed to survive. They had to reinvent practices whose memory had been erased in the transition from rural to urban life, over the long process of dispossession and enclosure. For example, gleaning in the fields after harvest.

Either way, in city and country, the renegades soon discovered the vital importance of holding space for their experiments, and what it means when you lose it. The 1960s communitarians of the Bay Area repurposed hectares of empty warehouses near the waterfront, whole streets of cheap Victorian houses near the Golden Gate park after the flight to the suburbs, and derelict farmhouses and orchards in the back country following the postwar death of small-scale agriculture.

But it wasn’t long before the local and state enforcers came after them. The most famous of the rural communes in Califor-
nia, Morning Star Ranch in Sonoma county, was bulldozed - *three times* - in the name of health and safety regulations and the laws of nuisance. In the course of Retort’s *West of Eden* project of reclamation, these struggles became referred to as “the code wars”. Anyone who has run an alternative space is very aware that the only reason it remains open is because the authorities haven’t yet shut it down. Typically by invoking municipal code violations which, as Weber understood, place us all in an iron cage.

The history of struggles in the domain of knowledge production can be traced over a long arc of resistance, all the way from the Paris student riots of 1229 through the late medieval St Scholastica Day uprising, down to the worldwide disturbances in the 20th century during capital’s long boom. Since the crisis of the early seventies, when Nixon came off the gold standard, there has been a real intensification and expansion in the weapons of mass deception and distraction under conditions of spectacle, affecting the whole field of education and public discourse in general.

For example, the discovery of a secret memo from inside the scientific laboratories of the tobacco industry stating: “Doubt is our product”, alerted the Stanford historian of science Robert Proctor to the necessity of mapping out a new discipline, the study of the active *production* of ignorance. Under late capitalist modernity ignorance is often something quite deliberately constructed; it has definable contours, not merely the limitless ocean of the unknown. As a recovering classicist and longtime collaborator I took up Robert’s challenge of coining a word for this new specialty. “Agnotology” was chosen and it seems to have some traction. For example, the word itself has recently been banned by a judge in a Florida tobacco trial courtroom, apparently a testament to the power of naming. Recently, in a lecture at the London School of Economics, Bruno Latour declared agnotology the most important science of the new century. Among other things, an agnotological perspective highlights the way in which, to take a case within the
field of public higher education, the massive half-billion dollar BP grant for biofuels research at UC Berkeley has cast a deep and long shadow of ignorance and deskkillery, blighting alternative agro-ecological knowledge. Key mantras for the Uniconflicts gathering therefore need to be: Why do we know this and not that? Are we using idioms and assumptions unwittingly satisfactory to the management, even invented by them?

At the same time, we are also obliged to be aware that there is danger in the self-conscious ‘anti.’ T.J. Clark has noted that Nietzsche is good on the miseries of our endless nay-saying, and alert to the way it most often ends by being a parodic ‘moralized’ version of the decayed positivities it aims to explode.

One major difficulty is that the very memory of the anti-capitalist praxis and countercultural knowledge generated in the great wave of 70s commoning has been, not surprisingly, under threat of loss, erasure, travesty or romance. It was one of the chief reasons a group of historians, archivists, librarians and artists - commonists of one stripe or another - materialized a new educational charity, MayDay Rooms, in the heart of London’s historical newspaper quartier. It was set up - in 2011 - as a safe haven for archives of dissent at a time when intense pressure was bearing down on social democratic institutions of learning. The aim was to create an archive-cum-social space. In an effort at prefiguration, it was designed with a reading room, a refectory and a roof garden, where the past might be animated and activated for the igniting of a future worth inhabiting.

Among the MayDay Rooms’ early archival holdings were the Wages for Housework campaign materials, the Greenham Common peace encampment documents, the New England Prisoners Association News, and papers and posters from the student struggles in the British arts schools. Documents were also contributed relating to the radical science and technology movement in Britain, and its counterpart in the US, Science for the People.
They both proposed a range of liberatory (and largely unrealized) research programs, for example, developing the science of statistics ‘as if women counted’, new methods and materials for antiracist pedagogy, as well as swords-into-ploughshares engineering projects in anticipation of factory take-overs. These initiatives had more or less disappeared by the time of Reagan and Thatcher, and have left little trace. The excavation of such histories, carried in the hearts and minds of a generation now passing, seemed to us a matter of urgency.

Libraries used to be the heart of a university community. No longer. They urgently need rethinking. Recently, on the 10th anniversary of the creation of the Prelinger Library in San Francisco - an image-rich, browsable, appropriation-friendly resource open to all - the founders, Rick and Megan Prelinger, who are associated with the Retort group and closely involved in establishing the MayDay Rooms, wrote this reflection on what they call ‘social and collaborative reading’, a phenomenon that is made possible through their conscious attention to the arrangement of space and the materials in it:

“Visitors arrive in twos, threes, fours, fives, and sixes. Bonds of friendship, kinship, and collegiality bring them here together. A solo visitor is a bit less common, yet, more often she is the visitor who commences social reading soonest. The visitors will patiently absorb the brief orientation, then go their own ways for a while. The first wave of their engagement with the library is some “solo” browsing, though they often stay within murmuring distance of one another. The second stage is the call-out to their companions: “Hey, can I show you something over here? They might pull chairs together in the aisles. Otherwise, after an hour, they have pulled a book or two, or have requested a box for sit-down exploration. The sight of one friend heading toward a reading table often pulls the other out of the stacks as well. There they sit, elbow-to-elbow, with their find-
things spread before them spine to spine and stack to stack. Quiet behavior is respected but not required. This is a noise-positive place. People share their pleasure in discovery, pleasure at finding information they hadn’t imagined might exist, information beautifully presented, information problematizing something they thought they already knew. There is reading from one person to another, reading across generational divides. Social reading time is characterized by people reading out loud to one another, sharing discoveries to the whole table, or in whispers, and bookmarking things for the other to examine. In an age when digital devices have made the solitary apprehension of reading materials into a new constant, social reading is one of reading’s many expanding futures. The emergence of digital culture has had a defamiliarizing effect upon analog materials. In the library we’ve discovered that print has become a privileged medium whose allure seems to grow greater as books recede from the everyday sphere. There is no more enthusiastic library visitor than a born-digital teenager who has never been “allowed” (offered the opportunity) to handle an old book before. We hear that all the time from our teenaged visitors: “I’ve never been allowed to do this before!!” While the world enacts ritual mourning around the so-called end-of-print, our weekly library visitors are digging in deep to the long history of social reading, and out of the pile of diggings, building a bridge to the future.”

Completely unpredicted, for example, has been the extensive use of the Prelinger Library by young urban farmers of the Bay Area researching old 1930s reports from the Department of Agriculture, when the Roosevelt government responded to the crisis down on the farm during the Great Depression. Could there be more eloquent testimony to the need for, and the sociality of, radical knowledge-making? However much it may be obfuscated by the ideology of the Lockean monad, by the patent system’s
cult of priority, and by the myth of the lone inventor down in the basement.

Speaking of the subterranean, one recent boss of the University of California, Mark Yudoff, pronounced in the New York Times (24.iix.09): “Being president of the University of California is like being manager of a cemetery: there are people under you, but no one is listening.” This Uniconsflicts gathering is taking place, so I have read in Mark Mazower’s marvellous historical biography, Salonika: City of Ghosts, on ground that used to be the old Jewish cemetery. It was cleared, I understand, in the winter of 1942, some years before the postwar developers drew up their blueprints, by city council workers who turned the site into a “rubble-strewn waste-land of vandalized graves”.

We owe it to the ancestors and to coming generations to mark out another graveyard.....for the Yudoffs and the vandals now in control of higher education.

We have the tools, we have the know how. So, comrades, if not now, when?

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Nicholson-Smith).
Everyone would surely agree that if a sane man lends weapons to a friend and then asks them back when he is out of his mind, the friend shouldn’t return them, and wouldn’t be acting justly if he did.

Plato, Republic 331c.

In the fall of 2011, just after the termination of Occupy Wall Street, I began speaking in support of those who had pledged to refuse to repay their student loan debt once a million others have also pledged to do so (under the rubric of Occupy Student Debt Campaign,). In the course of giving a number of presentations concerning this campaign I received many queries and criticisms. The queries were most often practical, e.g., “what about co-signers, what will happen to them if I refuse to pay when I become the millionth and first student loan debt refuser?” The criticisms were
also practical, ranging from “why not organize people to refuse all debt?” to “if you refuse to pay student loans debt, wouldn’t the Federal Government stop supporting the student loan program at all and hence you would harm future students?” I was prepared to deal with these practical questions and criticisms on their own terms, with empirical evidence and political argument.

But there was a more problematic criticism that was not so easily answered, since those who voiced it were not just in disagreement with the premise of the campaign--it was justified to refuse to pay a student loan debt-- but they were morally offended by it. Their retorts to my arguments for the Campaign took on an almost metaphysical aura of sanctity when they spoke about the importance of paying debts from loans that were freely entered into, whatever the consequences. Their criticism quickly left the plane of facts and even values and entered into a world of meta-values with the primary one being: one cannot be morally serious unless one pays back one’s debts.

The political problem posed by this moral attitude to debt repayment is that it touched a raw nerve in many student loan debtors who have been ashamed by their inability to pay off their loans. This shame has led many to try to cover up and not talk to others (even family members) about their plight. According to my research concerning previous student loan debt abolition efforts, one of the key reasons they have not been successful has been their inability to overcome debtors’ characteristic shamed silence that is profoundly anti-political because it turns the collective problem of debt repayment into an individual issue to be dealt with one person at a time. Consequently, this moral criticism had to be dealt with directly and decisively if the anti-student debt effort was not to meet a similar fate, since this criticism not only makes it difficult to move the critics, but it has a problematic effect on many debtors who are already vulnerable to the mental blackmail implicit in the “debt moralists” assertions.
In thinking through the conundrum posed by these debt moralists, I realized that, as a philosopher, I was equipped to deal with the philosophical arguments for or against student loan debt repayment. The more I explored the literature the more I realized that the defense of debt refusal has a long philosophical history. It was important to get this literature into the contemporary discourse on debt in response to the rigidity of debt moralism.

If Plato’s Republic marks the beginning of political philosophy, then debt payment refusal appears at the beginning of the beginning of political philosophy. Plato, the aristocratic darling of conservative thinkers, actually defends debt payment refusal in the Republic. Plato’s concern with debt should not be surprising, since indebtedness leading to debt slavery was the source of civil wars and revolutions throughout ancient Greek history from 600BC on. Solon, the famous Athenian law-giver, aimed to stop the endless turmoil caused by the cycle of debt-enslavement-revolution-debt and the ever reigniting class war between the poor debtors and the creditor plutocrats that was leading Athens to catastrophe. He did so by legislating the end of debt slavery, a move that led to the democratization of the Athenian state, and increasingly the remuneration of citizens for their public work (especially for their participation in the administration of justice and legislation, which required attending general assemblies and being part of juries, like the jury of 800+ that decided Socrates’ trial).

Solon was a politician and even a sage, but he was not a philosopher. Plato was. What did he have to say about debt repayment refusal? Significantly, the discussion of debt at the very beginning of the Republic. The first person Socrates interrogates, posing the book’s germinating question “What is justice?”, is Kephalos, a wealthy arms manufacturer -although an immigrant, a member of the Athenian 1% - and owner of the house where the dialogue staged in the Republic is supposed to take place. The name “Kephalos” itself is important, for in ancient Greek it meant “head,” and
as such it is a cognate of the word for “capital”.

Kephalos’ answer to Socrates’ question, appropriately enough for a merchant, is: “Speak the truth and pay your debts!” But Socrates easily dismisses this definition, pointing out that if a person borrows some weapons from a friend, but in the interim the friend “goes berserk” and becomes (murderously and/or suicidally) insane, it would not be just for the debtor to return the weapons to the friend...in fact, repaying the debt in this circumstance would be positively unjust, since it would lead to either murder or suicide or both! Thus the conditions of just repayment of a debt do not necessitate an absolute commitment to repayment under any conditions. Universalizing the kernel of Socrates’ rejoinder to Kephalos’ definition, we come to the following maxim: one should refuse to repay a loan when the payment will lead to evil or unjust consequences that far outweigh what fairness would result from its payment.

Plato’s suspicion of Kephalos’ wisdom was the outcome of the Athenians’ long political experience with a class of merchants and landlords who, like Kephalos, insisted that their loans should be repaid even if this should result in debt-slavery and class-based civil war. This may explain why, in Socrates’ response, Plato referred to the loan of a weapon! For creditors in this case appear to be a maddened crowd, with debt repayment being a cause of murder and suicide, especially when ending with the enslavement of fellow citizens.

These issues did not die with the end of the ancient world. Indeed, today’s “debt moralists” offer a response to those who refuse student loan repayment similar to the one that Kephalos made to Socrates’ query. In turn, we too must respond to the categorical imperative of debt moralists in the same way that Socrates responded to Kephalos’ definition of justice, with an emphatic “it depends.”

First, *it depends* on whether student loans are unjust in and of
themselves qua loans. On this count, the actual mechanisms of student loan debt speak decisively. For a start, student loan debts in the US cannot be discharged through bankruptcy, unlike almost all other loan debts can be. In addition a large percentage of these loans have been contracted under fraudulent conditions, as it was revealed in the course of frequent scandals, court cases and Congressional committees’ investigations. As Robert Meister pointed out in the case of the University of California, UC administrators pledge future student fees largely to be paid for by student loans and grants to support UC’s bond ratings, its capital projects and a variety of equity deals that turn public money to private gain. This territory has been thoroughly explored by previous student loan debt abolition movements and there is still a lot more to learn.

Second, it depends on whether the collective good is served by repayment. Here it is important to understand the function of student debt in the context of the changes that have taken place in university financing since the 1970s. The ever increasing student debt burden (now beyond one trillion dollars) has been the material condition that made the imposition of ever increasing tuition fees in both public and private non-profit universities possible and financed the expansion of for-profit universities. These developments have led to the corporatization and privatization of universities, on the one side, and plunged a whole generation into debt-bondage. There is no doubt, therefore, that restoring a tuition-free university system and avoiding a further polarization of society requires that we end the present student debt system.

Third, it depends on whether the education and knowledge student loans are intended to pay for ought be commodities in the first place. This is where Plato enters again. Plato held a life-long antipathy to “sophists.” This word had a sociological reference—those who sell their knowledge to students—as well an epistemological one—those who are wise. The sophists believed that knowledge was a commodity that could be exchanged for
money. This was their answer to the question that has been at the center of the debate concerning the development of “for-profit” universities and the intensification of corporate efforts to impose intellectual property legal regimes on academic labor. Plato would not approve. His was a notion of knowledge that was neither commodified nor commodifiable. In Plato’s Republic those who know are to live a perfectly communistic life, neither paying for their education nor getting paid for its use. For two thousand years this conception of an academic institution remained the dominant one, and even in these neoliberal times it still has value.

The very status of most universities (that are either public or private but non-profit) and the traditional temporal limitations placed on “intellectual property rights” (e.g., patents give monopoly rights for the sale of an invention for 20 year) indicate that, despite highly organized and well-financed efforts, the commodification of education and knowledge is still not perceived as legitimate. If most universities are not supposed to profit from the education they provide and the knowledge they disseminate, why should ancillary financial institutions profit from them instead?

Student debt refusal, then, is in principle as just as one’s refusal to return a borrowed loaded gun to a maddened friend who intends to murder and then commit suicide with it. It should not be deterred by objections like the following, “Wouldn’t canceling all student loan debt be unfair to all those people who struggled to pay back their student loans?” For as David Graeber retorted in his important book, *Debt: The First 5000 Years*, this argument is as foolish as saying that it is unfair to a mugging victim that his/her neighbors were not mugged as well! (p. 389) Plato would agree.
1. AN UNRULY FIELD

1A. Me
When I chose Exarchia as fieldwork for my ten months research it was because I had been living there for some time previously. Crossing this cozy lively space, the very first feeling was that something thick was going on through its small streets, something connecting people and environment around them, but I couldn’t catch it really. In a night of December 2008 everything has changed. Two bullets of a policeman in the flesh of a regular youngster of the area and, through tears and passion, a whole network of solidarity relationships and self organization practices blossomed in Exarchia to spread out all around Greece. One year and a half had
passed when I left to go back in my country, the longest and deepest period of my life.

When I returned in Athens, and more precisely in Exarchia, for my fieldwork my first concern was not to investigate some specific social practices taking place in this place, so over represented and mythologized lately and, on the contrary, so intimate for me, but mostly to understand how the perception of urban space changes in time of economic transformation, that is a cultural and social transformation as well. My attempt in doing so was basically to smash the stereotypes surrounding a conflicting piece of city and push forward the reflection on what actually means an everyday condition of conflict.

1B. And the field
Once the extreme outskirts of Athens, where Polytechnic school was built in the end of XIX century, Exarchia is a now a very central neighbourhood located between the rich district of Kolonaki on Lykabetous hill and the archaeological museum, fighting for its right to survive as it is against a persistent rhetorical criminalization supporting a creeping attempt to gentrification. Exarchia, indeed, has a peculiar history linked with social and political struggles since its very beginning.

Its maze of small streets and crossroads ensured the perfect environment for riots since the second world war, during which the only partisan brigade active inside the city was located in Neapoli, the upper part of Exarchia, between Strefi and Lycabettus hills. Its taverns, cafes and open spaces offered places to talk without attracting attention during the dictatorship. Its central position in the city makes it extremely easy to reach. The many typographer shops give the opportunity to print posters and counter information magazines, at affordable prices.

These historical and practical reasons allowed the construction of a legacy very hard to break, a sort of active mythology.
This is possible because of a constant practice of dwelling the area and negotiation between the social actors who participate in this practice. Some examples of this are the self organized clinic at Vox squat in Exarchia square, or the liberated and self managed park of Navarinou street. The main characteristic is the practice of everyday life, continually object of negotiation between social actors, without any commissioning to others, and where relations and uses of the space want to be totally out of commercial and hierarchical logics. Giorgio Agamben may call this kind of practice as deconstituent power (Agamben, 2003).

What matters to be underline is that it is not a sort of Christiania, where one can enter the “wonderland”, but actually a piece of city that acquired its characteristics with the practice of people that dwell this place. And of course, because of the porosity of its boundaries, it is characterized by the possibility to be replicated elsewhere.

In this sense, Exarchia represent the embodiment of the conflict between diametrical opposed perception of urban space: The city where roles and tasks are given and disciplined in the name of an imposed common good, versus the undocile space of negotiation where actual needs and means to satisfied them are woven together. (Lefebvre 1991, 2014)

2. A RHETORIC WAR

As crisis overimposed its presence on the city in the known forms of empty shops and urban decay, it also involved a more deep impact on city spaces perception, that varies, of course, with the variety of spaces. For Exarchia this process has much to do with its history of social practice I mentioned above. Consequently, we can see how conflict is not just embedded in urban uprising dynamics, but involves ways in which the concreteness of everyday social practice can collide with rhetorical discourse of power, precisely as in the case of Exarchia.
To make an easy example, the latest mainstream newspaper articles about Exarchia can be of some interest. The neighborhood is described as “a gray zone”, a “ghetto” where vandalism and urban decay are widespread and tolerate because of the “fear and negligence” of the inhabitants¹, in order to raise the attention on the necessity to normalize this piece of city. Moreover, it is possible to mention, as a glaring case, a famous interview the ex right-wing minister of public order and citizen’s security Nikos Dendias gave some years ago about the city in time of crisis, where he expressed his desire to be able to hang-out in Exarchia for a coffee someday. He said:

‘I believe that even those who think that Exarchia is a place out of the law, or believe they can act differently from all the rest of our fellow citizens, they should realize that even in Exarchia police is needed. I believe that little by little society is changing, perspectives are changing and all the city center will be normalized, even Exarchia.’²

What’s interesting here is that, in the attempt to call for a normalization, the construction of a paradigmatic exception is actually taking place. This discourse interrupt the normal flux of urban practice, made of contradictions and diversity, to impose a paradigm of emergency. This paradigm can be traced in the physical definition of the Exarchia boundaries involing police garrisons and patrols, the main aim of which is not so much “guarding the emergency”, but to make it evident, to construct it. To actually break down the condition of porosity the urban flow is made of.

After a short period of change in police strategy, in conjunction with the election of a new left-wing government, things are now more or less back to the origin.

We are not much far away from the “restraining” model of city Foucault discusses, with its hierachization of the urban space based on management tasks and orders, in order to face the outbreak of plague (Foucault 1993).
In this sense, Exarchia represents the spatialization of the otherness as possible, that is perceived as a risk to be faced.

3. QUESTION EVERYTHING

An everyday conflict is taking place, then. But now a problem rises and concerns how can we speak about this condition. Although conflicts are not a new issue for the social sciences, they are rarely connected with urban Western dynamics, whereas many are spreading in these contexts. The question is how can we basically represent them without jeopardize their political values and effectiveness on one side, and dumb them out on the other.

Moreover, as we saw the importance of rhetorical strategies within conflicts, how can we talk or write about spaces of conflict like that, without actually replicate the stereotypes that want Exarchia and other urban landscapes like that, as the exceptional terrain of a conflict that is, in fact, spread everywhere? How can we escape both the “journalistic” sensational but altogether indifferent approach and the dominant discourse of exception to recount an everyday condition of conflict without subtracting agency to the social actors?

The classical anthropological approaches are getting obsolete to interpret them: In the end of the 80s some courageous anthropologists tried a new way: It was the rise of a new “militant” school, having the aim of demolishing the boundaries between the researcher and his/her interlocutor in order to break the power relationship and restore the objectivity of the conflict situation (Clifford, Marcus 1987). But what’s the objectivity in a conflict?

Is it enough to let the “others” speak through our pages (and which language do they speak on our written paper)?

The huge risk embedded in this approach is to drain ourselves out in the experience of the “others”. Or worst, confusing our agency with their one. So, how to face this risk? I argue that what’s
important is to leave aside the role of researcher and ask ourselves “Who am I?” “Which side am I on?”. This is the ultimate act of responsibility for our “informants” who need to trust us, and for our agency too. It has to do with the necessity to separate the authority from the authoriality, and put the former aside.

It is, let’s admit it, a very complicate process, as it is difficult to recognize our authority, especially if we feel akin to the cause we are “studying”, but it emerge every time we find ourselves thinking in terms of “me as an anthropologist” (even one who give voice to the “others”), and not of “me as a person engaged”.

4. THERE IS NO AUTHOR(IAL)ITY BUT YOURSELF

As long as both anthropology and literature have necessary to deal with the representation of reality, I argue that literal rhetorics, beloved to interpretive anthropology, are what can help us to express a more horizontal knowledge on these terrains. Not a kind of authoritative authoriality, caging the others in its own interpretive grids, but an authoriality as the possibility of concatenation with the other (in Guattari-Deleuzian terms), as a tool to tell about the encounter with the others (Deleuze, Guattari 2010).

Narration and storytelling are, in fact, foundamental in practicing anthropology as long as they are inextricably linked to what we live and perceived on our field. Indeed, as Michael Taussig once put it:

‘most of what anthropologists hear from their so-called “informants” are stories, but the anthropologists don’t recognize them as stories. (...) So I thought if anthropologists in general are reducing stories into information, my job — or our job — should be the reverse: recognizing that this is storytelling, what’s being told to me, and to take responsibility for writing my own story.’

In this sense, the New Italian Epic phenomenon, theorized by
WuMing1 from the Italian literary collective WuMing can be of some interest for us, as its main concern is the necessity to take a side (WuMing1 2009).

Of course, there are many chances to develop a passion for fields of research where the object of our inquiry is interesting and thrilling because of our incapability to establish any kind of connection with them (I think of researches about far right movements or the so-called “ethnographies of the 1%”, just to make some examples). Even in these cases, anyway, the necessity to take a side is given and, as we own authoriality on our narrative, it comes by itself. The great difference lies on the fact that the stakes in discussion are more concerned with the disconnection as possibility to understand, even when there is a close relationship with interlocutors, and the results show it clearly. A brilliant example of this kind of research is Didier Fassin’s ethnography of French police in Paris suburbs (Fassin 2013).

But let’s concentrate on a “choosing of battlefield” that sees us closer to our interlocutors, so far.

At first, I believe it is pivotal to point the very important issue of jeopardization out. As we are talking about a condition of conflict, the acknowledgement that there are things that cannot be said, in order not to expose out informers must be always present to our mind: there is a moral balance (that in in my personal experience came always along with a very physical discomfort when lost) that have to be kept, separating the account and the analysis of the reality through our experience among other social actors, from the awkward moment when someone, for the research sake, does not respect the informer’s confessions or friendliness (reducing stories to information, in Taussig terms). I argue, this is the main aspect making the real difference between a totally authoritative narrative as novels and a kind of more complex authoriality as the ethnographic one.

It was 2008 when WuMing1 used the definition New Italian
Epic for the first time during a contemporary Italian literature seminar at McGill University in Quebec. He is a member of Luther Blisset collective writing project which took the name Wu Ming after their best seller “Q” in 1999. The new wave of Italian writing coming along with them and other authors’ books such as Babsi Jones’ “Let my words taste blood” (2007), just to give an example, has a common denominator their strong contact with reality, both in terms of writing and contents. Their novels aren’t by any chance some sorts of “postmodern narrations” where time, space and subjects get confused, as they aim to go beyond it.

In the unidentified narrative objects, as he called the NIE novels or short stories, the main ingredients are history or real facts but the narration is woven together with them following some particular criteria: First, the absolut denial of the icily ironic, indifferent tone allows us to overpass the rigid observational step that poses distance between “us” and the “other” impeding to really come in contact with “informants” on our field and after, when the moment for writing comes, not to betray their trust. Second, the use a slating gaze, that means refusing every hegemonic perspective, and seek more individual, specific narrations. Third, the necessity for our researches to be always multidisciplinary (that corresponds to the lack of a defined literary canon, for what concerns NIE novels). Moreover, WuMing1 suggests us to seek a narrative complexity that is to say being able to express all the complexity of our fieldwork turning inside out all the safe concepts often used to explain situations, and re-express them thanks to all the rhetorical tools we have available. Furthermore, he urges us keeping in mind the necessity of a not elitist writing, in conformity with the principle of horizontality. In WuMing1 terms it corresponds to a pop attitude in our expressive register. To do so, personal experiences in the encounter with the “others” are very important tools. Lastly, a very important feature of every NIE novel, as well as every ethnography dealing with urban conflict issues, should be
the necessity to avoid objectified truths and to keep our story open as much as possible, as part of a diachronic and collective effort of comprehension (WuMing1, 2009).

In this sense, I strongly believe that, as social scientists, the time is now to face a small but substantial sort of revolution in our approach to ethnography. To go beyond both a merely observational, although partecipant and careful to *local knowledge* (Geertz, 1998), stance and the hip ontological speculation on cultures. Storytelling (that could be both visual or written) should have a preeminent role in this, as long as it is definitely the only way we have to actually practice anthropology. To quote Michael Taussig once again ‘The fieldwork is incredibly important to me, because I can’t write without some sense of the tangible. And from that, I generate stories.’

5. OVERTURE

During my fieldwork my personal relationship with whatever was happening around me was pivotal. My memories, my point of view and my engagement couldn’t leave me indifferent and they became part of the ethnographic experience as a whole. Not just in the moment of writing, but well before, this issue has posed a problem about my positionality in relation with the people I met, but also with my active role on the field I was speaking about. Narrative literature about cities helped me a lot to define what kind of story I wanted to tell.

This does not want to be an attempt to deny the concretness of reality in favour of a pure subjectivity in any way, it is more an invite to reflection on considering ourself as researchers not as “tool of research” anymore, but as an unavoidable fact in our fieldworks.

I propose a new approach to urban conflict dynamics that, by considering their not-exceptional features, does not deny the cul-
tural, but most of all experiential differences between “informants” and anthropologist. That’s what a new interpretive approach is all about: not denying the existence of power relationships, but shooting for deconstruct them, as we might do with a toy, to understand how it works. Storytelling, in last instance, through its constitutive process of authoriality, is the basical and more horizontal way to tell about our continuously developing relationship with the other, where both she or he and I exist and take an active role in the social process.

NOTES


REFERENCES

1. CRISIS

1.1. ‘Crisis’ as critique and knowledge

The word, ‘crisis’ comes from the Greek verb ‘Krinein’ which means to judge, to form an opinion, to criticize. Crisis does not predefine a specific response. It is the act and the outcome of the critique; the mental act that leads to a response. Accordingly, critique comes from the Greek noun ‘kritiki’. ‘Kritiki’ is carried out in order for ‘krinein’ to take place. Thus, crisis cannot truly exist without the act of critique.

Roitman (2011: para 6) provides an enlightening explanation of “how crisis is constructed as an object of knowledge”. It is a
means to think of history as a narrative of events, politics, culture, relationships and even individual behaviours and norms. It works as a means to judge the past and learn from the past. But when she speaks of judging the past, is she not referring to the act of critique? Foucault asks for a critique that does not plainly evaluate whether the object is good or bad, correct or wrong. He speaks of a critique as a practice, producing along this process, different realities - values and truths - hence, a new ‘normalcy’. Thus, crisis is about becoming.

1.2. Crisis as subject formation and governmentality

Through the production of ‘truths’ and ‘normalcy’ crisis influences our understanding not only of ourselves but also of the position we hold in our societies. However, ‘truths’ and ‘normalcy’ guide political decisions and the political economy (processes of production) as well. In turn, processes of production influence social technologies, which have the power to shape the subject. Processes of production are understood as the socio-economic relations which emerge in urban environments where agglomeration of opportunities and concentration of people occurs. In accordance with Bratsis (2012) observation that the relation between state and civil society in Greece is organized correspondingly to the state’s economic operations, authoritarian statism (Poulantzas, 1978) allowed for contradictions and contention to emerge, and thus power to be asserted through surveillance, police control, fear and violence.

But is power working only from the top-down? Foucault shows that power relations are more complex. By introducing the notion of governmentality, he connects ‘technologies of the self’ with ‘technologies of domination’. Hence, governmentality is not limited to state politics but also includes techniques that range from the government of one’s self to governing the other. Power doesn’t only constrain human action, but at the same time makes action
possible. Therefore, power can also be seen as a form of resistance and transformation.

2. CRISIS IN ATHENS

2.1. Debating crisis in Athens

Athens has been at the epicenter of the news defined as a city of ‘crisis’. How was then crisis and the urban trauma framed?

In 2010, when Greece agreed on a loan from the IMF, ‘crisis’ was proclaimed as “a depoliticized mismanagement result, as a systematic mistake mostly produced by the people” (Encounter Athens, 2013:2). There was no explanation relating to a broader condition or trend, or even a global context. Crisis had to be perceived as a local problem that required specific treatment. It has been claimed that the crisis discourse across Europe “is portrayed as an abstract given, virtually a supernatural phenomenon and almost exclusively as an economic one.” (Leach et al, 2014: EXSUM).

Since the country entered a period of economic uncertainty, austerity policies of neoliberal governance applied in Greece generated rapid social and economic changes, already evident in the physical and social urban fabric of Athens (Kaika, 2012; Leontidou, 2012, 2014). As the debt crisis had been deepening, austerity policies managed by marginalization of the impoverished to spawn a polarized society undergoing a deepening crisis of social and cultural identity. The therapeutic menu seemed to include well-known strategies of facilitating investments, privatizations and disposessions that have already been put into practice elsewhere around the globe. For once more, the city and its space become a favoured territory for realizing relevant policies and measures, some of which are: rapid privatization/selling of public land and properties, private property confiscation, increased deregulation of planning, future development of mega-projects and public space
regeneration competitions. Nonetheless, these measures applied in city politics intensify the conflictive transformation of urban space, its usage, its perception and its appropriation.

2.2 Reclaiming Athens

Athens, hence, is a city in crisis not only due to the fact that structural changes and policies aim to re-inform the city, but also because it has become a territory in which conflicting imaginaries are spatialised. Traditionally, the centre of cities is the core where spatial manifestations of political debates take place. It is the field where both the practices of the dominant powers and the oppositional imaginaries are manifested. Athens has a central role in the crisis debates since it is the place where both the distribution of power -state, parastate or bottom-up- as well as the effects of crisis are manifested and experienced -fear, insecurity, surveillance, resistance.

In 2008, in response to this situation but also triggered by the death of a young boy by a policeman, riots started (The Press Project, 2013). A hidden and concealed social reality activated an exceptional social rebellion and exercise of counterpower. Counterpower therefore, when exercised by activists in solidarity in order to contest relations of power and control, acted as a guard over the “emergence of systemic forms of political and economic dominance” (Graeber, 2007: 35) within the society itself. Taking into consideration the economic uncertainty and the neoliberal policies implemented in countries and societies that were undergoing through processes of financial uncertainty and instability, it comes as no surprise that mobilizations counteracted to existing and rising models of economic and social control through actions of civil disobedience. After the first demonstrations, a second crest of actions occurred, that of occupying public buildings. That was an attempt to create meeting places in order to raise and discuss issues related to the ‘new’ Greek reality.
2.2 Solidarity and counterpower - examples in Athens

December cultivated new hopes in society with its immediacy and originality, suggesting that there were still vital social forces that were fighting for a new perspective of life. The December events were not an answer to the forthcoming new reality but instead they posed a question concerning the relationship between the city and the citizens as well as a question regarding the right of the citizens to self-define their lives, and finally, to gain the right to dream and to create. Since 2008, related sporadic protests have continued into 2011. People kept asking for a re-evaluation of the past tactics, a critical approach to the country’s development.

Social unrest arose in the city of Athens and through civil disobedience actions, such as upheavals, riots and protests, materialized in the urban space. In the city centre, around the Exarcheia neighbourhood, local associations, resident committees and neighbourhood groups engaged in politically, occupying practices and protest actions, such as the establishment of Skaramaga squat, the occupied Navarinou park project, the Empros occupied theatre, The Cooperative “Kafeneio” at Plato’s Academy etc. Anatasopoulos (2013: 350), when looking into those emerging communal urban experiments argues that one can observe “a shift in sectors of the private sphere of society into collective forms which embody solidarity. It is at a time such as this that many re-address an entire value system and their notion of the commons.”. These actions hence indicate the strong network ties emerging between political activists and the city’s cultural scene.

In this context of extensive urban and social transformations combined with activists’ international networking through involvement in social networks and digital activism, Greek solidarities, spontaneous grassroots practices and activists groups were strengthened and consequently new social movements were incubated (Arampatzi and Nicholls, 2012; Leontidou, 2012). Actually, the fact that society’s grassroots became detached from institutions
of state power allowed for a social movement space to be created and thus pointing out different ways of developing the urban.

The mass media described this period as traumatic while the city per se started to concern the political scenery and the dominant rhetoric. Crisis was finally given a specific space and of course that space was no other than the center of the city. But what was Athens trauma? What was the city going to be saved from and by whom?

2.3. Athens’ trauma
Initially, the trauma had to be framed. In the dominant rhetoric, one could identify two fundamental axes. Firstly, the protesters and the immigrants were presented as being responsible for the city’s decline. The space that was occupied by the above groups but also used as a scene of political manifestation was portrayed as the reason for the city’s degeneration. The protesters were presented as a threat to the economy by occupying the streets and disrupting shops operation. Accordingly, the immigrants were blamed for the looting of shops during protests and for ‘stealing’ jobs from the Greek citizens. The dominant discourse positioned political activity as an enemy to economy, and a direct opponent to the social peace and security. Further to that, immigrants and criminality became synonymous in newspaper headings. At this point, we can notice an enemy formation tactic dividing the citizenry in-between them, pointing the ones who threaten the ‘public interest’ and the ‘public good’.

These ‘truths’ were almost never questioned publicly. The situation was presented in such a way that a state of exception, requiring immediate intervention, should be accepted. Crisis formed the guilty, disciplined, indebted man, the ‘criminal’ immigrant, the ‘criminal’ protestors, and the ‘criminal’ anti-authoritarian. The last three categories were unified under the broad label of anomie. This activated an ideological-police plan under the broad subject
title ‘Zero tolerance to anomie’ (Filippidis, 2013). Political events were positioned as part of the wider ‘pathogenesis of the city center’, while new values emerged: orderliness, security of investment, public security and safety.

Interestingly, Mike Davis (1990) has articulated how surveillance techniques correlate with issues of public safety: since security issues have been for the last decades at the point of attention, installation of cameras (CCTV) in public communal spaces is perceived as a justifiable practice, negating nevertheless civil liberty, transforming the city into ‘city-fortress’ and establishing a new ‘ecology of fear’. Fear becomes a governance tactic that leads public opinion towards a desired path. It constructs moral orders, panics and truths (Altheide, 2003; Shirlow and Pain 2003), opposing, in this way, the ‘well behaved’ citizen to the ‘non behaved’, the ‘other’. Politics of fear also homogenize entire groups of people and they construct the threat per se. Political action is defined as ‘political violence’ (Dalakoglou, 2013) that is responsible for the urban pathogenesis and the prevalence of lawlessness. In the context of urban crises, a further aspect of the politics of fear can be identified. That is the geographies of fear. Here, entire neighbourhoods are perceived as dangerous and as a threat. That was the case of Athens.

The state shows hardly any tolerance towards the threat to the quality of life and welfare of residents -whose residents? - by applying preventive police practices and by persecuting subjects who ‘match’ these ‘illegal’ phenomena (Smith, 1996, 2003). Police presence in the city centre, mainly in the precarious and traditionally rebellious neighbourhoods, was already reinforced to sustain public safety in the urban space as a reaction to the December 2008 upheavals. The space, through the establishment of street barriers and extensive police presence, becomes reorganized and re-designed in non-direct ways with the police force acting as ‘urban planners’. Techniques of security and police criminal acts become justified.
Police operations, such as Xenios Zeus, whose aim is to “stem the flow of undocumented immigrants who have changed the face of the Athenian center» (in the newspaper To Vima, 2013), become rational. Moreover, when considering the events which led to the dismantling of Syntagma 2011 squats, it becomes obvious that the state’s interference strategy adopted was one of severe police repression (Bratsis, 2010; Leontidou, 2012, 2014; Sotirakopoulos and Sotiropoulos, 2013).

But the state’s tactics of re-addressing control were not limited to the aforementioned operations. Evictions of occupied buildings were also placed in action. The Skaramaga squat, which generated a fertile space for workshops, events and political groups to connect and at the same time supplemented individual housing needs, was forcefully dissolved by the eviction of the building in January 2013 conducive to issues of public safety and hygiene. Another case as such was the eviction of Villa Amalia, a symbolic squat in the city. Specifically, Dendias, former Public Order Minister, commenting on the eviction stated: “A democratic society cannot allow the forces of anomie and chaos to block the country’s path to development” (Oikonomakis 2013). The society and its space are divided between the disciplined and the anomic, the lawless.

3. WHAT WAS THE NEW KNOWLEDGE -IF NEW- PRODUCED?

3.1. State’s tactics and their role in knowledge production
The above mentioned transformations resulted into altering a neoliberal society and its shape into an ultra neoliberal society. This rationality which functioned as ‘politics of truth’ produced new truths that in turn became part of the new ‘government’ which consisted new domains of intervention and regulation. Since the city is dominated by anomaly producing violence, the city should be controlled and treated in respective ways.
Crisis cemented the culture of conflict, fear, and threat over the city. Thus crisis altered the spaces of the city; its ownership, usage, perception, imagination, appropriation and re-appropriation.

3.2. Knowledge produced by the social movements

Actions of popular spontaneity and creativity unfolded through contentious relations within the city and exceeded the material sense of urban space towards the creation of social space. The realization that transformation in an apparently fixed political field can still be achieved became instilled in the social imaginary of political insurgents. These actions pointed out how grassroots’ spontaneity, was acutely suppressed by a state which reproduced terror and unleashed flow of violence to its own citizens who defy neoliberal policies. Therefore, since urban space could no longer accommodate social movements’ actions, due to the fact that the government produced tactics in order to assert control by managing ‘disorder’, it is argued that a shift of the action space had occurred from reacting in public open space to places of more private, cultural and academic character.

Through occupation movements, organization strategies, composition of resources and the formation of networks between immigrants, students, anarchists and autonomous movements, new spaces were constructed. The dominant symbolic order and social power was questioned, hence making the vision of alternative worlds attainable, embracing the idea of building the new world within the shell of the old one. Activists engaged into practices of pre-figurative politics by creating groups of dedicated mobilization willing to make sacrifices towards the claim of social justice by acts of civil disobedience in hope of achieving new institutions within the society. Forms of resistance therefore emerged in order to challenge the existing modes of urban growth, address social change in created spaces of mobilizations and as a result establish the roots for new alternative practices of urban developments.
‘Crisis’ gradually educated us to live with the loss of the city’s contested nature, thus creating a new social imaginary.

At the same time, it becomes evident how institutions of commoning facilitated an alternative imaginary towards an autonomy which exceeds the spatial distinctness and surpasses physical boundaries in localized struggles (Stavrides, 2014). These eventually lead to collective political action. It also illustrates how strong bonds and connections lead to the formulation of networks within intertwined professionals, local associations and activists allowing the expansion of the political field of expression in places of safe environment and consequently making the shift of addressing claims from the public realm to also academic circles apparent. Democracy, therefore, through practices of emancipating autonomy is returning to spaces in which it originated: the spaces in-between (Graeber, 2007: 367) in a period of crisis, an in-between moment implying a transition towards change.

3.3 Social movements and the university – the role of the researcher

The city of Athens was transformed portraying an image of a militarized city. It was a transformation towards a kind of totalitarian state which by presenting its democratic character focused however on controlling behaviour and practices which are considered anomic and anti – social (Stavrides in Athens: Future suspended, 2014).

Due to this transformation and since urban social movements have been persistently restrained by top – down government policies and urban tactics, it comes as no surprise that new social movements in Athens have been expanding their field of expression and practices through constant networking in digital spaces, places of cultural character and academic circles, where their claims and struggles obtain legitimacy and exceed the sphere of anomic behaviour. Activists have the chance to form new networks, allies
and gain knowledge and resources on specific urban issues. Connections between local associations, insurgents, professionals and individuals committed to public and political actions are defined as crucial for the future of social movements in Greece, so actions of disobedience and localized struggles can achieve scalar compression, allowing for a collective response to crisis. This ‘knowledge’ produced within the aforementioned circles of social creativity and collective action, must become equally justified and popular to the ‘knowledge’ produced by the state.

As Merrifield (2014: 163) elaborately defends “probing researchers - inside and outside university - can ally themselves with militant activists, transforming themselves into probing militants and activist researchers, vocalizing joint dissent in brainy and brawny ways.”.

NOTES


REFERENCES


Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer.  
*Dialectic of Enlightenment*

**TWO WORLDS**

*Here in America there is no difference between a man and his economic fate. A man is made by his assets, income, position, and prospects. The economic mask coincides completely with a man’s inner character. Everyone is worth what he earns and earns what he is worth. He learns what he is through the vicissitudes of his economic existence. He knows nothing else. If once the materialist critique of society challenged idealism by stating that it is Being that determines Consciousness, and not Consciousness that determines Being, and that the truth about society lies not in the idealist representations of society itself, but in its economy,*
now contemporary Self-Consciousness has shaken off such idealism completely. People judge themselves by their market value and learn what they themselves are according to their position in the capitalist economy.¹

TWO WORLDS

Here at the so-called University there is no difference between a man and his academic fate. A man is made by his academic titles, publications, the money one brings in, position and prospects. The academic mask coincides completely with a man’s inner character. Everyone is worth what he publishes and publishes what he is worth. He learns what he is through the vicissitudes of his academic existence. He knows nothing else. If once the materialist critique of society challenged idealism by stating that it is Being that determines Consciousness, and not Consciousness that determines Being, and that the truth about the University lies not in the idealist representations of the University itself, but in its academic life, now contemporary Self-Consciousness has shaken off such idealism completely. Academics judge themselves by their market value and learn what they themselves are according to their position in the capitalist academic market.

SOME HISTORICAL FACTS

How many maintain the historical memory that the first European University, founded in Bologna in 1088, was developed as a student union? At this University, students defined the principles and ways of study, the powers and obligations of teachers, and the Rector to whom teachers swore an oath of obedience was a senior member of the students. The teachers, selected and appointed by the students, were not entitled to vote in the assemblies, and were only involved as observers. Symmetrically to this model, the
University of Paris, the second in the historic series of European Universities, was established a few decades later. There, the University developed as a *teachers union*, where students were under the domination of teachers. The historical memory of this second model has been the standard ever since.

The two symmetrically opposed historical models, the Students University and the Professors University, encouraging student or professorial domination over the University community, determined the development of universities in the European South, adopting the Students University model, and the European North adopting the professorial variant, from the 12th century to modern times. The rise of the nation-state in modern times marked the end of student control. The new National University, maintaining its autonomy as a University, came under the control of a professorial hierarchy emerging at the top of the National Education System under the ultimate supervision of the State.

It must be noted here that the University authorities at first were only marginally professorial or student-led. In their historical development, it would be fair to say that most were at best mixed, run by both students and professors, driven by an antagonistic differentiation between the North and the South, with the South being predominantly student-based, and the North predominantly professorial. But even when the nation-state put an official institutional end to this antagonism, submitting the University to professorial control under the state supervision, professorial control was meant to ensure academic freedom - defined as freedom of Knowledge. In parallel, already from the mid-19th century, student unions connected the principle of academic freedom with the participation of students in the choice of professors and the distribution of educational and research duties, since for them, the freedom of Knowledge was intrinsically interwoven with the freedom of study, of research and of teaching.
The third University model was developed simultaneously in England, France and Germany and finds its full-fledged realization in the institution established in 1810 by Humboldt in Berlin. By the end of the 19th century, this historical model, which in a way is transcending dialectically both previous ones, had become universal. In what follows, we will have a look at the historical evolution of the University deriving from this model.

THE UNIVERSITY TODAY

1. The University and the Academic Freedom of Knowledge
One would have to engage in a broad and lengthy discussion of this singular European model in order to confront its principles, its itineraries and turning points until today. Here, suffice it to summarize all this in five principles, the annulment of which defines the passage to today’s so-called University. Let it be noted here that my formulation of these five principles expresses only their abstract presence in academic ideology —I will not examine the ways in which they are rejected or accepted in concrete cases at the University.

The first and introductory principle of the model European University is that teaching and research are inseparable. The University professor is a teacher and a researcher at once. Professors teach what they research and research what they teach.

The second principle is the equality between teacher and student. The equality is founded upon the symmetry of teaching and learning. The teacher learns from the student. If teachers do not learn, they are orators not teachers. The equality is completed through the continuum and unity of teaching and learning within the unity of learning and research. During the process of teaching, the research of the students continue the research of their teachers. In general, the reverse is the case. The research of the teachers continues their own research as students and the research of their students.
The third principle is the **totality of Knowledge**, which comprises the purpose of the unity of University learning, teaching and research. According to Humboldt himself, this totality follows the Aristotelian tradition and is as such an absolute totality. Knowledge can be differentiated but not dissected, research and teaching are interconnected and indiscriminate, evolving within the continuum of Knowledge of the natural world and of **the human being in the world, as a single person and as society**.

This approach of the totality of Knowledge corresponded to the distinction between the academic University and the professional schools. According to this distinction, academic studies did not lead to a profession. The turn towards professional studies, i.e. studies that lead to a specific profession, relativized the meaning of the term “totality of Knowledge” in a dual way. On the one hand, the field of every specific professional Knowledge should, from then on, cover as much Knowledge ground as possible for the part of the totality it was accorded. On the other, University studies in each professional field should be founded upon some elementary kind of total Knowledge. This foundation also developed in two ways. First, entry into University required the completion of general introductory studies in every field of the Knowledge totality, i.e. of the natural sciences and the humanities. Secondly, University studies which lead to a professional diploma ought to extend to fields beyond the specific professional field of Knowledge.

The fourth principle that presupposes the above three, is **self-education**. A continuum of Knowledge of the natural world, awareness of human society in the world and awareness of the single person in society, exists separately in each person. Every individual is singular and unique, and his or her education —total education and specialized education alike— is his or her own personal responsibility. Knowledge of the world and self-Knowledge, which is its ultimate goal, is the result of self-education. Teachers, if they are teachers indeed, are chosen, not imposed.
The fifth and fundamental principle, deriving from and continuing the fourth, is a constitutional principle of the University itself. It is the **freedom of Knowledge**, safeguarded by the **autonomy of the University** in regard to the institutions of economic power and political authority.

The phrase “academic freedom”, when referring to the freedom of Knowledge at the University, has a specific meaning. It used to describe the ideal European University. Today, when employed to contemporary Higher Education Institutions, a completely different meaning is given to the phrase. In fact, today, it means the opposite to what it used to mean. Academic freedom is transformed into the freedom of the market. What is the opposition here, one might ask. Well, first of all it is not freedom of the University, according to its historical model. Consequently, it has nothing to do with the freedom of Knowledge.

2. The “University” and the market “Freedom of Knowledge”

*The irony of the Magna Charta Universitatum*

In 1988 the rectors of European Universities drafted the *Magna Charta* “on the occasion of the ninth centenary of the oldest University in Europe, four years before the definitive abolition of borders between the countries of the European Community” as stated in the preamble of the Charta, where they “proclaim to all States and to the conscience of all nations the fundamental principles which must, now and always, support the vocation of universities” The first of the “fundamental principles” in the text of the Charta is that “The University is an autonomous institution” in which research and teaching “should be morally and intellectually independent of all political authority and economic power.” The second principle is that “teaching and research are indivisible.” As shown above, the first of the principles of the Charta is the fundamental, principle of European Universities. The second
is the introductory one. And what about the other principles: the equality between teacher and student, the unity of Knowledge and self-education? Are they implied in the other two, or are they simply being excluded?

The irony of the *Magna Charta* is that its rhetorical return to these principles comes at the very moment when the process of their total abolition has been completed. One year after the ninth centenary in 1989, the end of “actually existing socialism” hails the neoliberal era of the end of national capitalism and of whatever remained of State capitalism. The nation-state and the international market give way to a supranational State and a global market. National bourgeois democracy and, marginally, the welfare state, has been replaced by the transnational oligarchy of wealth and generalized State repression. In the neoliberal era, the principles of the University have been abolished for good.

And what is the definition of the term *University* today? This is how the Congress of the European University Association (EUA) responded to this question in 2003: “The EUA uses the term University to refer to institutions with full power to confer doctoral degrees”, adding that, in European Higher Education, 1,000 institutions fulfill this criterion. This contrasts to the 4,000 institutions of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), the broader market of Higher Education services. Alongside this market and distinct from it, there is also the European Research Area (ERA), the market of research services. The “University”, then, is an institution, private or state, operating at the intersection of these two areas of the global market —an institution in which the distinct market services of education and research intersect at the production of the doctoral degree.

*The Bologna Process*

In the “Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education” which was issued in Bologna in June 1999 and refers to the
Magna Charta, the first of the key objectives in Higher Education is “international competitiveness” in the “promotion of the European Higher Education system worldwide”. The so-called “Bologna process”, which began with the declaration, is essentially an application of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) to the European market for education and research services. The GATS is a treaty signed by the members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995, four years before the Bologna Declaration.

Research and Education: innovation and training
In the Bologna Declaration, the University studies are divided in two cycles, undergraduate and graduate. The first, leads to a Degree which actually consists of a list of an individual student’s certified competences (“Diploma Supplement”) and provides access to the European labour market. The second cycle leads to a Master and/or doctorate degree, which is also of individual character. On this individual level —individuality is of particular importance here— University curricula are integrated programs of education and research —the term “integrated programs” is stated in the Declaration. A decisive question arises. How does the Declaration understand “education” and “research” in these “integrated programs”?

“Education” is training provision —“training” is a term also used in the Declaration. “Research” is the production of innovation —the term “innovation” is not mentioned in the text of the Declaration but it is central to the reasoning of the Bologna Process. And what about “integration”? Integration is the identification of provider and producer. The University as a provider of market training for its students becomes a producer of market innovation through the supervision of its doctorate students. Integration is also the identification of what is provided with what is produced. Integrated training means training for the production
of professional services in a specific field of Knowledge as well as training for the production of innovations in this field.

We shall finish this with a remark. Training provision and the production of innovation are both market services of private or state education and research enterprises.

Social education and Market training
In order to better understand all this, we should turn to the conceptual opposition between ability and competence, competence being of central importance in the discussion on Higher Education today. There is a crucial difference between ability and competence. *Ability develops through social education*, while *competence is produced through market training*. And what is the opposition between them? Abilities cannot be produced. They grow through the *social education* of free persons, as the subjective component of their social force. Competences, on the other hand, are commercialized abilities. As such, they are produced by the *educational market enterprises*. Competences are *reified* and *measurable* (with their own marks, point systems and rating charts), and they can thus enter the market as commodified labour power. Competences must also be *effective*, in order to be competitive.

3. After the “University”: the Social Freedom of Knowledge
As I stated above, what is today referred to as academic freedom has lost its historical connotations. It now means freedom of the market. My discussion aimed at clarifying this position. But I added that what is today referred to as academic freedom has nothing to do with the freedom of Knowledge.

The question arises: Why is academic freedom today not freedom of Knowledge? Isn’t the provision of training and the production of innovation also a production of Knowledge, albeit commodified Knowledge? It is. But this is not *free Knowledge*. Far from being the production of Knowledge determined by the social
needs and desires of a free person, it is Knowledge defined by the market needs of the alienated subject, it is the production of forced Knowledge, determined by the market and imposed by the State.

We would need more space to analyze the critical issue of the social subject, the formation of the subject into a free person, the loss of freedom through alienation and the central role of the market in the reification of abilities that leads to the alienation of the subject and finally to the deconstruction and dissolution of the person – prosopon.

Let us briefly comment on the relevant issue of self-education, the fourth principle of the model European University we mentioned above, and then on the freedom of Knowledge, as a constitutional principle of the University. We shall limit ourselves to the axiomatic formulation of its meaning based on the concept of the person-prosopon. There are three basic principles of the freedom of Knowledge.

The first principle is that of the freedom of the person. We call “free Knowledge” the Knowledge that is acquired by the social subject constituted as a person through exercising his/her freedom. The second principle is collectivity. Every social subject is not a person. The person, as a locus of social freedom is a subject presenting him/herself to others and being recognized by the others as such. The person presupposes collectivity. Consequently, free Knowledge also presupposes collectivity for the social subject to be constituted as a person, in fact that collectivity which constitutes the subject of study— the student — as a person. The third principle is creativity. The Knowledge that is acquired through exercising one’s freedom is realized also through the exercising of freedom. Creativity is the realization of freedom.

THE KNOWLEDGE COMMON

According to its principles, and specifically the principle of collectivity as a presupposition for the freedom of the person and as a
social space of its creativity, the freedom of Knowledge is founded upon the Common of Knowledge. What exactly is a Common?

At a discussion organized by the “Urban Conflicts Workshop” in June 2013 on the subject of “the Space of the Commons and of the Crisis” I gave a general answer to the question in my paper on “The Concept of the Common: Social Space and Mode of Communication”. It was response challenging the usual discourse on the “Commons” (in plural). My title already suggests my basic argument: “The Common is a mode of communication that constitutes the multitude as a public body, a mode of communication integrating the several differentiated personal lives of people into a unified public life of all.” In my vocabulary, a mode of communication within a social space, much like the Marxian concept of the mode of production, is the unity of social relations and social forces. The social forces are the unity of objective potentialities and subjective abilities to realize the relationships of the social space.

Based on this concept of the Common, and focusing on Knowledge, the Knowledge Common is the Knowledge-related aspect of the abilities determining the Common. In other words, the Knowledge Common is the Knowledge-related dimension of the mode of communication that integrates the differentiated personal life of each human, in the sense that each human as a free person is unique and singular, within a unified public life-world of all.

The Knowledge Common Beyond the “University”
The issue here is not the Common of the so-called University Knowledge, forced Knowledge determined by the market and imposed by the State, responding to the market needs of an alienated subject. The issue is the Knowledge Common as free Knowledge.

The Knowledge Common can be divided into parts, which correspond to the division of the multitude into separate social collectivities and political unities within a Common Space. A Common
Space is made up of the composition of collective space within civil society and the space of citizens within political society. In other words, it is a space combining the two central divisions in the four-part pattern of Social Space: personal space - collective space (of civil society) and space of citizens - space of the body politic (of political society). This division of Knowledge Common in parts does not negate the unity of the Common. The reason is that the division is characterized by overlaps in the production of social life and the reproduction of the social system in a continuum that socially constitutes relationships, by trying to maintain desired relationships and subvert or avoid undesired ones, from the smaller scale of the personal to the broader scale of the political.

We thus return from a different historical route to the unity and totality of Knowledge as goal and purpose of learning, teaching and research in their unity, with self-education based on the equality of teacher and student as their foundation. Free Knowledge is not possible through the University —what we today call “University”. In a world where Knowledge can still maintain, in certain areas, its true spirit of freedom —let us repeat that forced Knowledge is, in the end, distorted Knowledge— the University can exist only where the emergence of free Knowledge is possible within and beyond the University, in networks of free sociality, where persons and collectivities meet to develop the Knowledge Common.

These networks are loci of group-cooperative cultivation of Knowledge through the socially evolving division of Knowledge into parts and the recomposition of these parts into interconnected clusters of social praxis, where by praxis we understand the integration and unity of theory and practice.

NOTES

1. Zwei Welten: Hierzulande gibt es keinen Unterschied zwischen dem
wirtschaftlichen Schicksal und den Menschen selbst. Keiner ist etwas anderes als sein Vermögen, sein Einkommen, seine Stellung, seine Chancen. Die wirtschaftliche Charaktermaske und das, was darunter ist, decken sich im Bewußtsein der Menschen, den Betroffenen eingeschlossen, bis aufs kleinste Fältchen. Jeder ist so viel wert wie er verdient, jeder verdient so viel er wert ist. Was er ist, erfährt er durch die Wechselfälle seiner wirtschaftlichen Existenz. Er kennt sich nicht als ein anderes. Hatte die materialistische Kritik der Gesellschaft dem Idealismus einst entgegengehalten, daß nicht das Bewußtsein das Sein, sondern das Sein das Bewußtsein bestimme, daß die Wahrheit über die Gesellschaft nicht in ihren idealistischen Vorstellungen von sich selbst, sondern in ihrer Wirtschaft zu finden sei, so hat das zeitgemäße Selbstbewußtsein solchen Idealismus mittlerweile abgeworfen. Sie beurteilen ihr eigene Selbst nach seinem Marktwert und lernen, was sie sind, aus dem, wie es ihnen in der kapitalistischen Wirtschaft ergeht. Ihr Schicksal, und wäre es das traurigste, ist ihnen nicht äußerlich, sie erkennen es an.
In what grounds does the presence of immigrants correlate with the citizens’ insecurity about their country’s future? Or how does the citizens’ ‘sense of insecurity’ becomes the grounds for making decisions as to who is to be dispossessed? The present article tackles the issue of how in times of emergency people engage to political projects that entail the exclusion of others. Specifically, it asks how the implementation of austerity measures in Greece in the time of its debt crisis – measures supposedly necessary for the country’s return to a much anticipated financial stability – works with exclusion politics in order to ask the afflicted citizens to engage further to the vision of success that austerity implies. By way of reversing this question, I suggest that the affective formations of loss and failure – that largely follow the implementation of austerity reforms – become the space that the politics of exclusion are built upon and justify; in so far at least that such politics correspond to the lost sense of power and order. What I propose is we view this affective space of indifference towards the excluded other not as a by-product of austerity but as an affirmative public
demand towards the state to take the responsibility of exclusion; namely, to reinvent itself through the ethics of the strong and, for that, I propose we view indifference as the only way the neoliberal project can be applied.

1. READING NEOLIBERALISM AS AN ECONOMY OF RELATIONS

Since 2010 and the Greek government’s official declaration of the “state of emergency”, Greece was excluded from credit markets, and the country’s economy was taken under the supervision of the European Commission, European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund – the (in)famous Troika – for its financial support on the conditions that it would follow a strict reform program to reduce the deficit. The program was evidently limited to welfare cuts, which is, as I argue, the first and the most political affordable action of any neoliberal reform program. It is not by any means the Greek case alone that affirms such a claim. The dismantling of the welfare state by means of decreasing health costs and cutting wages and pensions has been the par excellence political way, in the postwar western world, to overcome financial crises. Indeed, the case of Great Britain in the years of Margaret Thatcher’s government is the most emblematic one in how the social welfare was related to state fund’s misuse and corruption. Social theorist Stewart Hall (1988) is revealing in his reading of that attribution of the crisis to the welfare state as well as the restrain of the (much needed) entrepreneurial investments to the labor union’s politics. In a similar fashion, in the United States, at the time of the welfare cuts of the 1990s, the images of the young black male ‘gangsta’ and the ‘welfare queen’ were portrayed as grave threat to the financial recovery. Cultural critic Henry Giroux (2009) informs us that what was demanded was again the deregulation of the welfare state, downsizing of services and regressive taxation. As he
saying (ibid.: 305) the undermining of the weak became the state’s vehicle to justify the necessity of reforms.

In the academic literature of neoliberalism, there is great focus on the social and economic changes as consequence of “state crafting” in the neoliberal fashion, as social theorist Loïc Wacquant (2012) would say. In critical and Marxist approaches, specifically, the deregulation of state control, privatization of public property and withdrawal of welfare provision are seen as the main policies that the most powerful institutions and agents push for, for the own interests. Additionally, the more (post) structuralist readings, highlight the complexity of financial and political strategies, and the importance of discursive and somatic technologies (See Ong, 2007). Namely, neoliberalism is seen as a logic that becomes intelligible as an experience of self since it refers, from the start, to techniques of self-formation, self-care and self-governance (Butler and Athanasiou, 2013). Nevertheless, Wacquant (2009) explores a shift in our historical present in which the thriving of neoliberalism is followed by the ascendance of a penal state. He views the tightening of the punitive system as a political response not to rising criminality but to the defuse sense of social insecurity caused by labor deregulation and welfare cuts. And, most importantly, he believes that this becomes possible only through a philosophy of moral behaviorism that embeds values such as ‘zero tolerance’, ‘the worth of work’ and the ‘rule of the strong’. There is, certainly, a question about the subject’s responsibility towards such changes that the dominant readings cannot correspond to. A question that accounts for the sense of the collective responsibility and accountability for the distressed present. And it is a question that since it entails the exclusion of an-Other, it requires an understanding of responsibility that extends beyond the scope of intention; or an understanding of intention that is freed from the responsibility of exclusion (see Butler, 2005).
2. THE FACE THAT MATTERS (NOT)

For a subject to find it *reasonable* for the state to undermining worker’s benefits, unemployed insurance funds and budgets for people with disabilities, drug-addicts, homeless, immigrants or refugees in times of crisis, means that it incorporates an image of the ‘weak’ that corresponds with the belief that the state should care for its resources. The recognition of the weak as a threat to state’s resources complements the desire of a strong, robust and healthy state. Indeed, by undermining the weak, the state follows the fantasy of power and order, and becomes a locus for investment and projection of utopian and liberating elements: protection, fulfillment, affinity. And since the state, through the reforms, acts as if it is endangered by people-in-need, their prevalence (which comes as an emotional investment in their presence and visibility) is implied as a possible *origin* of crisis. Thus, the impression of the weak as resource consumers fosters the imagination of a self with rights and acknowledges the image of a state with the right to disregard. Insofar as there is a recognition that both the rights of self and the abilities of the state to regulate resources are in crisis. For the subject to lose its privileges because of austerity measures means it is receptive to the fantasy of people-in-need as resource consumers, inasmuch as the subject attaches this loss to the image of success that the neoliberal reforms channel.

Wacquant is very accurate to highlight the morality of survival and aesthetics of the strong as the underlying echoes of the austerity measures implementation. For what the example of the welfare cuts indicates as to what *should* be important, what is really worth safeguarding and to where Greeks, in particular, *should* place their effort and sacrifice is the reorganization of the state on a model which acquires its value via the current neo-liberal language and its embedded ethics: individualism, self-interest, expansion, possession, competitiveness, management. Because once such quali-
ties are apparent on a face, introducing its self-presence, presented in its physiognomy, then they grant it with the promise of the one that not only will survive crisis but will, also, pull everyone out of it. The ‘commonsensical’ call for austerity, in times of crisis, is grounded on and further intensifies the deep seated relation between the caricature of the corrupted wasteful state and the fantasy of the competitive hardworking subject. On account of this magical relation between the face and the state, whatever kind of exclusion takes place becomes ‘symptomatic’ of indifference toward the subjects who do not or cannot engage with this impression of success. Likewise, it is on the same basis that any action against the ‘strengthening’ of the state is stigmatized as hostile and unpatriotic. In the neo-liberal ethos of crisis, the competitive hardworking subject has to be protected and supported.

3. THE AFFECTIVE LOGIC OF AUSTERITY

In Greece, over the course of four different governments, eight austerity packages were implemented that demanded up to 50% cuts in salaries and minimum wages, the termination of all holiday wage bonuses, cuts in overtime salaries, cuts in pensions up to 30%, the firing of 200,000 public sector employees, combined with elastic laws regulating lay-offs and overtime pay in the private sector. The Troika also demanded tax hikes (up to 30% on luxury goods, 24% on consumer goods, 15% on petrol and up to 30% on income taxes), health and defense spending cuts, privatizations of a vast number of state properties and goods, and the deregulation of education, tourism, real estate, health and energy markets. Within these five past years of austerity measures, the Greek society came also to learn that debt crisis was the inevitable aftermath of the centralist state control of economy and management of markets: a structural form that is personified in the corruption, negligence and sloth of the bureaucratic state. In addition,
the austerity rhetoric demonstrated the inefficiency of the political system to change the structural mentality of the state as responsible for the inability to handle the deficit. In a sentence, austerity reforms could not but be permanently linked to the causes of the debt crisis and the causes themselves intertwine with the condemnation of the most recent political and financial past of Greece.

It would not be unreasonable to suggest that it is the pressure of the awareness of a guilty past that made it possible for the governments to push for the importation of all sets of extreme reforms. Furthermore, I suggest we consider that the placing of Greece in a ‘state of emergency’, for the last five years, as a way to a better future produced the collective feeling that the whole population wanted ‘things to change’, despite the fact that the Troika created, through the debt crisis, the austerity measures as a one-way out of the guilty past. Indeed, what we are witnessing is a process where neoliberalism becomes intelligible as an ethical sensibility and experience through the common sense of shared responsibility and the phantom of a personal and collective advancement; a condition that serves as a safe ground for all the austerity measures and social exclusions to take place. Once we view that the debt crisis in Greece has been acknowledged through an ensemble of political gestures of accusation of the past and the state, we may comprehend the acceptance of all austerity measures by Greek society in the last five years: Measures impossible for previous governments to take were implemented in only a few years time, following the official announcement of crisis.

With the constant and repetitive implementation of austerity measures and the continual degradation of the Greeks’ living standards, and within an incrimination rhetoric about the past, and promises about seeing the “light at the end of the tunnel” as well as future successes, comes an affect of shared responsibility that nourishes a collective feeling of loss. A nourishment which is more like a skill people are invited to learn in order to make
manageable the truth of crisis and to engage themselves with the efforts needed to make intelligible the possibility of a success story. In feminist studies, the issue of loss features prominently in the discussions of the dispossession and marginalization of bodies through gendered and sexual normativity. Certainly, in the most critical approaches, loss refers not only to the impositions of the patriarchal establishment but also to the metaphysical condition in which having drives the moral economies of self-belonging and personhood. The conversation between Judith Butler and Athena Athanasiou on dispossession, in particular, highlights the metaphysics of presence as a performative production of selfhood via the sense of belonging – having in the western world is required for a proper sense of being (2013: 13). It is no wonder that Athanasiou (2012) views the financial dispossession due to the debt crisis as a process of intensification in which the affective values of having – and especially losing – are re-acquired as new dexterities. To perform a sense of self by losing through accusation and the ghost of success means, among others, to revalue the affect of having and through that to re-appropriate ways of possession and protection. It is in that sense that indifference to others constitutes the space to understand the current political theatre of crisis-management wherein the apparatus of security plays a prominent role and the affect of loss matters most.

4. TAKING ON THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EXCLUSION

To understand Neoliberalism, a word that constantly appears to be a ghost oscillating between an ‘external threat’ and an ‘internal inscription’, we ought to examine not just how Troika or other agents and institutions enforces the deregulation of the welfare, among others, neither how citizens accept the dispossession of their assets due to desiring-images of future success and personal fulfillment, but how they come to accept the dispossession and
punishment of the weak or any people-in-need and of anyone who
does not conform to the image of the state’s success. Because,
loss might be seen as a paradoxical everyday internalization of a
coercive dispossession of assets within the justification rhetoric
that becomes simultaneously an everyday practice in the skills of
having, gaining and winning, yet responsibility toward the other
is not a skill. Philosopher Emmanuel Levinas (1987) asks us to
consider responsibility as an aporetic reflex we exercise due to our
immanent receptivity to the presence of others. In his long study
on ethics he argues that responsibility is a constant existential apo-
ria we face when facing another. If one would not accept being
accountable for the actions of others and the dispossessed demand
an explanation for their afflictions, it is because responsibility is
an issue of moral economy – to whom I feel responsible and how
to compensate (see Butler, 2005: 145-146).

Morality in the strong sense lies in the accountability for one’s
actions towards the Other within a habitual, so to say, code of
conduct. Likewise, ethics comes as the way to incorporate the re-
sponsibility towards the people we never face; to incorporate a
responsibility that extends beyond the scope of intention into the
existential play of personhood. Political theorist Hannah Arendt
(1991) has also reflected on the state’s capacity to embody the sub-
jective concerns in times of emergency. She believes that when the
populace experiences loss, they become conscious of their right
to be protected and, for that reason, subject to the regime’s ability
to produce a narrative for all. Both Levinas (1990) and Arendt try
to understand the establishment of the Nazi regime through the
ethics of relating. They claim that once there is a certainty of an
actual social dimension, people await the resolving of their apo-
rias from the outside. In that sense, the pending issue of account-
ability for austerity becomes the space wherein the state assumes
its imaginative release through exclusion. Accordingly, the reac-
tonary reflexes of the state materialize as long as there is belief in
the success story. This is the magic of the state as anthropologist Michael Taussig would suggest (1992). The state evokes power by narrating (and, thus, providing) what it lacks: strength (both as fantasy and politics).

Hence, indifference becomes an ethically acceptable affective attention to the weak not just because their public image acquires negative worth due to the dominant specter of the strong that acquires affective surplus value in conditions of deprivation, accusation and ideals of success; neither because there is a supposed understanding about the collective sacrifices needed on the basis of a rational thinking that will favor the ‘strong’ productive forces of the country. It is by performing loss with a coercive optimism at heart and by stifling rationalism that individualism and possession – not as psychoanalytical categories but as socio-existential ways to participate in the public – become an active response in times of crisis: In times of deprivation and within the ethics of the strong, indifference becomes an affect with surplus value because it acts as a substitution to the affect of having. Certainly, to ask how the sense of protection is produced by the state through a politics of hate and exclusion is to over-emphasize the monovocality of a total acceptance of the reforms – wherein indifference becomes an ‘uncomplicated’ emotional response – which is never the case. Yet, Greece in the period of its debt crisis offers many examples of such politics of hate and exclusion, which are concealed within the need for protection and the desire for success.

5. BEING DIOPOSSESSED IN GREECE IN THE YEARS OF THE DEBT CRISIS

There is no better way to picture the institutionalization of exclusion as a release from debt crisis’ responsibility, than to look at the expansive growth of the ultra-nationalist party of Golden Dawn. Since the 1990s and the founding of the party, it was situated at
the margins of the electoral acceptability. Yet, with the implementation of austerity reforms, the party’s voice started to have an appeal; and with the elections of 2012, it gained almost seven percent of the parliamentary seats. One of Golden Dawn’s main pronouncements, which garnered wide publicity for the party, was the reclaiming of public space for Greeks in areas with a high migrant residency. Indeed, within the first months of their parliamentary service, groups of Golden Dawn’s members started to invade Greek street markets to drive off immigrants’ illegal stands. They were asking the immigrants shopkeepers, in front of the attendant TV cameras, the authorization papers to their shops and to those who couldn’t prove their legal status, they were tipping over stands and chasing them away. The importance of this incident, which is one among many other hate acts against leftists, gays and progressive public personas, is not just limited to the growth of a supposedly marginal group. To the contrary, it indicates the many facets that the affective formation of indifference manifests in the public sphere. It embeds in the everyday life a specific affective attention to cope with the present misfortunes as rational and reasonable: All charges against the members of Golden Dawn, in the above incident, for unlawful violence, wanton damage, illegal usurpation of authority and violation of the racial discrimination act, were dropped.

Similar with the above is another ‘scandalous’ event occurred in 2013 in the small agricultural town of Manolada in the Peloponnese, where a group of some 200 immigrants demanded their outstanding wages for more than six months for working at the strawberry plantations of the region. On being denied their wages the group wrangled with the Greek foremen, who took up rifles and started shooting at them. In the end, 35 people ended in hospital, seven of them in critical condition. News of this incident came as a shock in the Greek public sphere. The majority party in the ruling coalition government, New Democracy, rushed to
denounce this incident of blatant worker exploitation and hate crime. Despite the shock caused by media coverage of the hospitalized immigrants, which conveyed an image of modern slavery in deeply indebted Greece, Manolada had been known for several years for both immigrant torture and inhumane working conditions. State officials, local authorities and news media, however, had usually downplayed analogous incidents as isolated cases or symptoms of the ‘ills’ that ought to be reformed: the uncontrolled immigration and the inadequacy of the outdated insurance system. Indeed, in both the cases, violence and dispossession were acknowledged in the public sphere as *unlawful ways to claim what is yet rightfully just* in a modern developed state: Again, all charges against the protagonists for trafficking and for causing dangerous bodily harm, were dismissed.

However, the two most alarming incidents of this ritualistic weaving of the phenotype of the Greek victim (of circumstances) who deserves/ demands protection were not triggered by marginalized groups. To the contrary, they were initiated by the state. The first was the enforced regulation on the transmission of infectious diseases and especially HIV, among ‘high-risk groups’ of sex workers, queers, homeless and drug users by the transitional government of the banker Lucas Papadimos, which led to the humiliation of dozens HIV positives. By applying this regulation, the state created a public image of the ‘undocumented illegal sex worker infected with HIV who has unprotected sex’, which was nonetheless an effective theatrical persona for resonating the reactionary reflexes of *paterfamilias* (see Arendt 1991: 279) in order to assist the election campaign of the parties that later supported the austerity reforms. Not until their trial, a year later, when all of the accused were found innocent, did it become known (though not widely reported) that almost all of them proved to be drug users of Greek origin. Given that thousands of ‘lawful Greek family men’ had paid extra, according to the
testimonies of the accused, in order to have unprotected sexual intercourse with them and that most of them found innocent of charges of causing grievous bodily harm, we witness, again, the magic of the state, which victimizes for to fabricate the physiognomy of a victim capable to pose as the bearer of a convincing performance of the provision of protection.

For this performance, the police operation Xenios Zeus initiated in the summer of 2012 after Antonis Samaras, leader of the New Democracy party, became the new prime minister of Greece, proved to be emblematic. This harshest and most ruthless manhunt was equivalent to a military-like raid and led to the arrest of more than 80,000 foreigners in one year’s time and to the imprisonment of 4,000 undocumented migrants in so called ‘special reception centers.’ Even the name, Xenios Zeus, which literally means ‘the hospitable Zeus’, metonymically evokes the imagination of (and the desire for) having the authority to determine the terms of hospitality. Certainly, such a policy of exclusion strengthens the fantasy of the national identity, in the name of which the state claims the role of the one who can legitimately exercise power and violence. The physiognomy of the one affected by crisis who deserves protection is dramatized as cult of the community via the tattered face of the ‘HIV positive junkie’ and the ‘greasy immigrant prisoner’. Indeed, the ghost of an aesthetic uniformity is re-presented through the fantasy of exclusionary politics and the image of camps, which, in turn, suggest the competence of the state to protect the community and identity (see Sontag, 1981). It is like the ethics of possession, competitiveness and self-interest is acknowledged as a safe grounds to cope with dispossession due to the debt crisis, when incrimination and exclusion is exercised through the vision of the robust and successful state: via the very establishment of the camps the lost order responsible for the current misfortune is regained.
6. ESTABLISHING INDIFFERENCE

The face and the state act like magical counterparts. In order to seek protection from the outside, in times of crisis, the subject needs to feel recognized as a physiognomy ‘that matters’. Hence, any unsophisticated acceptance of the austerity reforms due to the public impression that the state is burdened by the corrupt social welfare system (with all the possible repercussions such impression holds for the ‘weak’) is an act to gain magical power not from the weak, but from the state’s authority to name them. This acceptance expresses a wish for protection toward the one authority that can legitimately exercise violence. It is a self-imposed spell that conceals from oneself the possibility of being weak by obliterating the memory of what the state of need might imply. Certainly, to understand what is at stake with the austerity measures that are suggested for dealing with the debt crisis, we should not consider neoliberalism as if it is abstracted from everyday relations. To the contrary, we ought to confront the personal and collective institutionalization of accusation that strengthens the affect of possession within everyday relationships. Precisely because the austerity measures cannot but acquire their meaning within the self-referential narration of crisis, which encourages the subject to engage with fictions about success stories for surpassing crisis’s dystopian realities.

Within this narrative of accusation and promise, a politics of self-affirmation (both individual and national) becomes the recommended way to accept crisis and deal with the financial, social and psychic difficulties it entails. From this perspective, indifference becomes a privileged affective space in conditions of deprivation for those claiming a ‘deserved’ protection. It is an affective space institutionalized in order for the subject to free itself from the responsibility of the exclusion of others and make intelligible the affect of having as a desired eventuality. Indeed, the current debt crisis can be seen as a powerful colonizing force in ethics. It
is, certainly, a forcible way to embed a specific affect of having in the relationships of everyday life.

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During the last few years, while I pursued my ethnographic research on the formation of autistic subjectivities, I came close to autistic people, a minority group, with which I wasn’t biographically connected. Nevertheless, the roots of my search were deep in my psychic structures. As a woman, I had experienced feelings of exclusion, but my own experience was just not enough to deconstruct this subject position of not belonging. In a sense, no matter how critical my perspective was regarding the injustice of gender system, I could not avoid constructing my own identity, even excluded, abjected non identity. Still, what was at stake was the double edged knife of my ego and the power relationships that such narcissism, even traumatized, creates and reproduces.
My relationship with the autistic people I met during the last five years helped me realize some of the meanings that these feelings have for me and for others, but specifically raised two issues which now seem to me interrelated and which I need to discuss. The first concerns the notion of empathy, what anthropologist Veena Das refers to as “to feel the pain of others in one’s own body” (Das, 2011), which was crucial due to the fact that most of my informants don’t have speech. This intersects with Judith Butler’s concept of performativity, that is the psychic and embodied reproduction of the dominant discourse. As I will try to explain many autistics do not reproduce these structures. Since I had constructed certain cultural identities and, consequently, carried their political implications, I had to deconstruct these discourses and the power relationships, which I had internalized, in order to feel how autistics feel and how they are related to their environment. Thus, my communication with them regarded certain presuppositions that raised two questions: Why do we embody and perform the dominant discourses? Which language does not speak the structures of power?

I was formed in a political environment where gender, sexuality, disability, body are not natural facts, but political results of power relationships. With this perspective I read the genealogy of autism and realized the prejudices, projections and fantasies of many non autistic people that this history incorporates. (Nadesan, 2005) One of the most dominant approaches today, the Theory of Mind, suggests that autistics do not understand the minds of other people (Baron-Cohen et al., 1985). I believe that this way of rational communication is far from autistic experience indeed. The definition of autism which I prefer, has come out of readings of autistics’ people narratives, such as William Stillman and describes the neurological disconnection between language and the body, during which the body blocks brain waves (Stillman, 2009). No matter how different their sensory experiences are, what is
coherent in autistic life is the perception of information which cannot be generalized in conceptual schemas. Even for autistics who have speech, language is idiosyncratic and subjective, mainly affected by their senses, memory and experience, rather than discourse and representation. Temple Grandin argues that some autistics are thinking with pictures (Grandin, 1996), others smell in order to orient themselves, like my friend Barbara, who used to smell my hands every time we went on a different place than the one we used to hang around and I felt that this gave her a sense of familiarity and helped her calm down. Noises are sometimes painful, the senses of pain and temperature on the skin are extremely subjective, a touch can be felt as a slap. Some people need to see and touch their bodies in order to feel sure of their existence. Time is chaotic. John asked me once: “Have you lived in the 19th century?” “No, I said, I haven’t.” “Why not?” John continued, “What are the limits of time?”

I feel that autistics’ subject position derives from these incoherent sensory experiences, given that they are mainly sensory and affective, based on personal memories. This is of course common to neurotypical experience as well, but, still, as literature on gender hierarchies and performativity has shown, language and identities block the reconciliation with these inner feelings. Language is mostly a tool for us to become accepted members of society and thus manipulates our judgment and attention. As autistic writer Dawn Prince stresses “I learned very early that for most people, language was a kind of weapon rather than an amorphous mist of the birth waters of reality. It seemed that for most speaking humans, language could be considered a violent activity, in that it cut up the world, and its use also cut groups of people one from another. A knife was just a knife and bore no relationship to the cutting of language. A chair was just a chair where nothing sat. A breath was just a breath, a singular thing, apart from the heart, apart from the atmosphere, a thing separate from saying”(Dawn, 2010). Most
of the autistics I met do not internalize and thus do not reproduce 
the structures of dominant discourse that affect our worldviews. 
The disconnection from their body image, their communicative 
complications during social interactions, their idiosyncratic rela-
tion with language, symbolism and representations redefine the 
question of identity formation which is common place that is sub-
jected to discursive practices, cultural and social constructions. I 
intend to focus on this difference and examine what comes out of 
this conflict, between the discursive bodies that we neurotypicals 
perform and the sensory dis-embodied autistic lives.

LANGUAGE AND THE FORMATION OF IDENTITY

In his book *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty refers 
in the way “we find in language the notion of sensation, which 
seems immediate and obvious: I have the sensation of redness, 
of blueness, of hot or cold”. Merleau-Ponty finds that traditional 
analyses missed the phenomenon of perception because they ac-
cepted this sensation readily. The positivist account of accepting 
experiences as pure sensations corresponds nothing to our experi-
ence. Experiences have a bearing on relationships and not on abso-
lute terms. Merleau-Ponty says: “Each point can be perceived only 
as a figure on a background. The perceptual *something* is always in 
the middle of something else, it always forms part of a *field*. The 
pure impression is, therefore, not only indiscernible, but also im-
perceptible and so inconceivable as an instant of perception. If it 
is introduced it is because instead of attending to the experience 
of perception, we overlook it in favour of the object perceived” 
(Merleau-Ponty, 2010) In that sense, for non autistics, the *real* is 
not objective, since perception is always mediated by language, 
discourse and conceptual schemas. At the same time, this role of 
schemas is not visible. As non autistics we are not present in the 
emotional, cognitive, psychic and body processes that create our
ways of attention. This background is always present, although we don’t realize it. On the contrary, many autistics perceive stimuli as differentiate in time and space, as pure sensations actually. Their difficulty with tolerating sounds, for instance, arises from the fact that sounds are coming incoherently, while non autistics judge unconsciously and choose the sounds they will pay notice too.

The procedure of acquisition of language protects us (non autistics) from attending this experience of perception, as described before, but it creates a conflict between our personal feelings, our senses, our memories and society’s expected representations. Discourse hegemonizes the possibilities and perspectives of self-reflection. Unconsciously, we internalize the structures of power relationships as psychic necessities, as the work of Judith Butler shows. Her work enriches the foucauldian critic on discourse’s disciplinary effects and the normalization of subjectivities, through the clarification of the internalization processes or the appropriation of the discursive practices as psychic necessities. At this point the contribution of psychoanalysis is crucial, as it approaches the subject not as knowing and singural, but subject to unconsciously internalized modalities of power. The concept of internalization refers to certain processes, which precede the formation of identity, therefore they postpone and dismantle its complete fixation. The Freudian concept of identification refers to the continuous efforts to incorporate completely the imaginary norm given by the parental figures in a conflictual environment. Since the construction is always in process, what is left outside continues to define the subject, as the constitutive outside of its formation. Thus, the ‘natural’ body becomes “the naturalized product of discursive practices and power relations” (Athanasiou, 2008). The body materializes and is being materialized performatively as a procedure in the social time. It validates or not the hegemonic discourse which defines and restricts what counts as human.
Another crucial contribution of this critical thinking of identity formation and its connection with the acquisition of language is Austin’s Speech act theory. His work “How to do things with words” has been decisive for my perception of autistic language. I locate its difference from the neurotypical language at this point of the distinction Austin made between constative and performative utterances. The first are truth-value sentences, while the performative sentences do not just say something but perform what they name, they perform a certain kind of action. For instance expressions like “I swear” cannot be true or false, but felicitous or infelicitous.

The collapse of this distinction under the pressure of intermediary cases finally lead Austin to articulate the theory of speech acts. In this way, a three-fold distinction is proposed, between the locutionary act, the illocutionary force, and the perlocutionary effect, that is between the act of speech itself, the force that the speech act has to be interpreted in certain ways, and the material outcome that surfaced as a result of what was said; its practical consequences. One of the conclusions that Austin’s study reached was that even statements constitute acts, therefore the distinction on which the hypothesis of the performative acts, distinct from the statements or constative utterances, was based on, collapses.

Austin’s theory has been productively refracted from the influential critical readings by Jacques Derrida and Judith Butler. Derrida criticises the fact that Austin held the contextual framework within which signs acquire their meaning to be binding. He defends the “iterability” and the “citationality” of the sign, which has the capability of being the same and different to itself, and consequently to differentially repeat in other contexts, different than the one which provided it with its initial meaning, in a prospect of re-appropriation and new capabilities of articulation, which surface inside, but also in opposition with its history.

At this point, reading the philosopher Stanley Cavell, who
comments on Derrida’s essay “Signature, event, context” (Derrida, 1988) wherein all the above are analysed, is useful. According to Cavell (Cavell, 1995), the two philosophers (Austin and Derrida) have more in common than what Derrida admitted, primarily the fact that both are philosophers of the limit, who stand critically towards the tradition of western logocentrism, which Austin actually calls a “descriptive fraud”. Derrida includes Austin’s philosophy in the “metaphysics of presence”, while Cavell contends that Austin, like Wittgenstein, understands scepticism and metaphysics as forms of intellectual tragedy, but is not willing to turn the tragedy into a farce. With this, he means that one may abrogate their promises, the sign is indeed interchangeable and functions differently within different contexts, but despite this one becomes at any rate committed by the promises they give; if not by the environment of the language, then by its emotional sources. Austin refers to the tragedy of Hippolytus and their characteristically tragic phrase which includes: “My tongue swore to, but my heart did not”. We have the capability of being dishonest, says Austin, we do not have the capability of, in spite of this, not signing our words and actions, of not signing the promises we abrogate. “I am committed either way, even if my language vowed without my heart”, Cavell maintains.

Cavell rejects Derrida’s critique of Austin as regards the failures of language, as if they were external and not a structural condition of language. He contends that the French philosopher ignores Austin’s theory of excuses, which anticipate the vulnerability of human action, as subject to bodily wear, which is here approached as a “parchment of its displacement”. And while he says that excuses are for Austin what parapraxeses are for Freud, in the introduction of Shoshana Felman’s essay (Felman, 2003), who is inspired by Don Juan’s figure, which no word/promise can commit to anything, differentiates himself regarding this parallelism. Again departing from the theory of excuses, Cavell notes that
while for Freud man is a field of meaning, whose actions express wider meanings than the ones he cares to seek, for Austin the human being is a field of vulnerability, whose actions imply wider consequences and effects than what this human being is responsible. Cavell mentions two directions, which are different and yet converge. Both these directions are situated far from the self, and converge to the same source which they come from, to the trauma as that which eludes signification, the limit of language. If we have the responsibility of recognising our Freudian subconscious, in other words if we have the responsibility to strip naked of the representations that divide us in the neurotypical language and place us far from the relationship itself and its necessary pain, it is because the body, as a psychic imprinting of these displacements, will remind us how painful what prevents us from relating is anyway. Reconciling with this vulnerability is the precondition for experiencing the openness of meaning. In other words, the sign is not placed without a price in other environments of meaning, even if this is possible, and sometimes politically important.

VULNERABLE LANGUAGE

When we speak and involve ourselves in social relations, in the temporal and spatial dimension of public life and its conflicts, it is language again which conceals its corporeal and sensory sources. Moreover, the power that language has to fetishize and mysticize the antagonisms that reproduce the existing power relationships is invested with libidinal and emotional pleasure. During the procedure of language acquisition, we repress to the unconscious our primary vulnerability which preexists the formation of our somatic ego, the primary trauma of a passivity which preexists the distinction of passive-active and actually constitutes the distinction itself (Butler, 2005). This anxiety that causes the fear for the emergence of this excluded infancy coexists with language. The
anxiety for the loss of our discursively created selves is transferred to the reproduction of the hegemonic discourse, to the structures of hierarchical relationships. We perform these social categories to avoid this fear, but unless we come in touch with this fear, we cannot do otherwise but adopt and reproduce the hierarchies. In order to come in touch with the trauma of the existential gap with the other, in order to come in touch with the other and not with the reflection of our representations and fantasies, we need to go against the discursive limits of our body image which separated us in the first place. Although we can conceive it theoretically, this reconciliation is not an intellectual effort. We can only experience it through this gesture of mourning for our discursively constructed ego. We have to speak our trauma, or else our trauma speaks for us.

Since we learn how to speak in an environment of emotions and sensations, then these emotions revive through experiences, through our move in the world. In that sense, even if language gives us the opportunity to avoid our embodied selves, by creating a body image in its place, it is delimited from the body’s life. The body not subjected to power relations that brought it to discourse in the first place, but the body as the active subject of its own unique experience, subjected to the consequences of social mutuality. Most autistics’ language differs from the neurotypicals’ illusional privilege to take distance from themselves. On the contrary, it is usually contextual and sensory-based. As Dawn Prince writes “For me, language was blended inextricably to context and memory. This melding represented the most important thing in the world, and everything, from bathrooms to snails, to dogs, had language. If a thing existed, it existed as a living part of language and had a deep understanding of its place in the vibrations of speech, in the vibrations of existence.”(Prince, 2010) This language is characterized by this closeness with the self and, consequently, the anxiety and the suffering that causes the psychic
touch with the other. For autistics, painful is language itself since they always live on the limits of it, without belonging in its categories. My autistic friends ask me how do we buckle a button, why do women wear earings, what is “you are”, what is time? And I think I understand now that I need to travel the distance to communicate. More specifically, from the privilege and the certainties of common language and belonging to face to face relationships, personal contact, mutuality.

I believe that autistics sense this vulnerability which non autistics avoid to come in touch with and which is controlled by the fact that biopolitics locate us in certain power positions (gender, sexuality, health, race) where we transfer our feelings. In opposition to this reproduction of the social contract, empathy presupposes the death of our ego, of the world as we imagined it, of the imaginary spectacle of ourselves, which derives from our personal biographies. I argue that empathy and performing our social roles are mutually exclusive. In order to feel the pain of others on one’s own body, therefore in order to communicate with autistics is conflicting and incompatible with performing the dominant discourses which mediate our emotions, senses and relationships. Empathy presupposes the feeling and experience of abjection and exclusion from human society, it presupposes this loss of intimacy and the reconciliation with the pain of our inner existential loneliness, which we experience whenever we contact others. It presupposes the autistic feeling of not being able to avoid the affect, the body and its existential vulnerability. Language motivates the pain that stems out of these limits and it’s on power’s side when it covers up this vulnerability.

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The conflicting transformations of the city in the photographs of contemporary Moroccan artist Yto Barrada

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INTRODUCTION

Yto Barrada is a contemporary female Moroccan artist who uses photography to criticize the government policies concerning the city and its inhabitants. Her focus is on her hometown, Tangier, which she transforms into a series of pictures and forces us to perceive in a new way. In her photographs, Tangier is illustrated as a closed city, full of boundaries and walls. Its massive concrete buildings are similar and faceless; its new architecture is soulless and its urban development projects do not take into consideration the real needs of the community. In this chapter, I explore the way Barrada reflects on public space and the city in her photographs. Barrada’s work also includes films, publications, installations and sculptures, but my focus in this paper is on her photographs. Yto Barrada works with pictures and I work with words to engage in a debate concerned with urbanism and the city in Morocco.
There has always been a close link between art and architecture, especially in the early part of the twentieth century. City photography goes back to the beginning of the last century with photographers such as Walker Evans, Berenice Abbott and Eugène Atget. In *Cities and Photography*, Jane Tormey explains how “photographic representations translate the city for us and contribute to how we conceive it, as they visualize changing attitudes to the world and ourselves” (xiv). The themes urban photographer Barrada evokes echo those of important spatial theorists such as Henry Lefebvre’s ‘the right to the city’ and Edward Soja’s ‘spatial justice’. The theories of both Lefebvre and Soja provide essential tools with which to interrogate art and the city. Lefebvre asserts the right of people to a form of participatory citizenship. This is what he calls, ‘the right to the city’, a concept he developed in the late 1960s. It is “rooted in taking control over the social production of social space, in a kind of consciousness and awareness of how space can be used to oppress and exploit and dominate, to create forms of social control and discipline.”¹ The term ‘spatial justice’ refers to the attempt to explore the way the spatial perspective might open up new ways of thinking about justice, democracy, citizenship, community struggles and so on. Edward Soja based this urban concept on Lefebvre’s ideas about the city. He writes,

The political organization of space is a particularly powerful source of spatial injustice, with examples ranging from the gerrymandering of electoral districts, the redlining of urban investments, and the effects of exclusionary zoning to territorial apartheid, institutionalized residential segregation, the imprint of colonial and/or military geographies of social control, and the creation of other core-periphery spatial structures of privilege from the local to the global scales. (3)

Barrada’s photographs both provoke us and make us reflect. Familiar objects are shot from unfamiliar angles. Barrada does not use photography to offer documentary truth; she uses anti-realism
and breaks thus with the relationship between the work that guarantees the truth and the spectator. Her pictures are made in the spirit of Thomas Struth who began his series of street scenes, Unconscious Places in the late 1970s. They record what the eye does not see: social, political, economic and cultural inequality. They challenge the official narrative produced about Tangier and its people and replace the sentimental image of Western literature and art about the city with one that addresses the contradictions of Morocco.

In her artistic projects (A Life Full of Holes: The Strait Project 2004, Red Walls 2006, Iris Tingitana 2007, Riffs 2011, Mobilier Urbain 2012), Barrada uses photography as a symbolic gesture of defiance in the face of thoughtless urbanization which has engendered new forms of injustice in Tangier. Photography which is accessible to everyone nowadays is transformed into a tool to combat industrial and bureaucratic power, and to denounce the standardization of the city and its inhabitants. Barrada’s works give space to the invisible, the silenced, the displaced, the deformed and offer visual expressions of Morocco’s social unrest.

In this chapter, I question the use of photography as a means of resistance to dominant structures and show how Yto Barrada’s pictures reflect Morocco’s identity crisis and invent a visual space to those marginalized by urban planners and politicians. My focus is on the content of Barrada’s photographs rather than on their ‘aesthetic qualities’. I consider how they add to our understanding of certain conditions of space and the city in Morocco. The paper consists of four sections. The first section explains why it is important to take note of art photography to understand the city. The second section focuses on the way Barrada’s work reveals the fractures and incoherencies of Moroccan cities. I then show how Barrada’s pictures give voice to the forgotten collective memory of the city. And in the final part, I explore the way Barrada’s photography offers a visual narrative of failed, postcolonial, global cities.
1. THE SYMBOLIC POWER OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography is a very popular medium; it is easy and cheap. Everybody can take pictures without asking himself if this is art or not. As David Bate writes, “not only has the photograph permeated every corner of the earth, but the experience of the photographic image has in turn transformed our sense of identity and the social. It is hard to think about the modern world without the photographic image” (439). Still, photography is also a means of contesting dominant structures and practices. “The black box is not ‘neutral’ and … its structure not impartial” (Damisch 88). Photography can be used for contradictory aims; it is a means of revolution, an advertising devise or a family snapshot. It has the capacity to turn every experience or event into an image. Insignificant things become important when photographed. The camera captures the world, transforms it and miniaturizes it. In “What the Eye Does not See”, Ossip Brik explains that “the task of the cinema and of the camera is not to imitate the human eye, but to see and record what the human eye normally does not see” (90).

For Yto Barrada, photography is a critical enterprise that penetrates beneath the facades of things to reveal their true character. Her photographs challenge our schematized notions of reality and invite us to think about the world differently. Art in Morocco is often used merely to accompany the so called urban ‘renewal’ projects through aestheticization in the form of abstract sculptures or individual art objects in public places. Barrada’s art stands outside this definition. Her pictures interrupt the routine way we look at the city. The city in her work is much more than a collection of buildings beautifully photographed; there are no props, no fantasy scenes or exotic architectures in her pictures. As the artist says in an interview: “The city is modernizing but the people’s needs are not at the centre of the decisions – the triumphalist liberalism of the choices made in our national infrastructure projects is quite blinding.”

2
Barrada’s camera captures the personality of the Moroccan society. She is alert to the interaction of the different elements which compose an urban scene. As American urban photographer Stephen Shore explains,

There is an old Arab saying, “the apparent is the bridge to the real.” For many photographers, architecture serves this function. A building expresses the physical constraints of its materials: a building made of curved l-beams and titanium can look different from one made of sandstone blocks. A building expresses the economic constraints of its construction. A building also expresses the aesthetic parameters of its builder and its culture. This latter is the product of all the diverse elements that make up “style”: traditions, aspirations, conditioning, imagination, posturing, perceptions. On a city street, a building is sited between others built or renovated at different times and in different styles. And these buildings are next to still others. And this whole complex scene experiences the pressure of weather and time. This taste of the personality of a society becomes accessible to a camera.”

Barrada’s documentary, straightforward, frontal photographs investigate the urban everyday with the aim of criticizing and resisting the remaking of public spaces by powerful interests. Lefebvre writes that space has become for the state a political instrument of primary importance:

The state uses space in such a way that it ensures its control of places, its strict hierarchy, the homogeneity of the whole, and the segregation of the parts. It is thus an administratively controlled and even a policed space. The hierarchy of spaces corresponds to that of social classes, and if there exist ghettos for all classes, those of the working class are merely more isolated than those of the others.

Barrada’s work belongs to art and transcends it at the same time. Her photographs are unsuited for mass consumption and are
used to counteract the damage of mechanization. Barrada works against the folkloric representations of the “dominant regime” whose main objective is to market the country as an international tourism destination. Billboards and postcards depict a coherence which the Moroccan cities lack. Barrada’s photographs provide different perspectives from which to view social, political and cultural issues about the city and aspire to open up fixed positions of spectatorship. As Jane Rendell writes in *Art and Architecture: a Space Between,*

Art and architecture are frequently differentiated in terms of their relationship to ‘function’. Unlike architecture, art may not be functional in traditional terms, for example, in responding to social needs, giving shelter when it rains or providing a room in which to perform open-heart surgery but we could say that art is functional in providing certain kinds of tools for self-reflection, critical thinking and social change. Art offers a place and occasion for new kinds of relationship ‘to function’ between people. (3-4)

2. PHOTOGRAPHING THE FRACTURES OF THE MOROCCAN CITY/TANGIER

Central in the urbanization process are architects and planners who build cities, the citizens who live in them but also the artist’s whose work can provoke urban change. Barrada exposes the paradoxes at the heart of Moroccan cities. Her photographs investigate the contradictions and potentials of Morocco’s current urban concerns. They draw attention to the modern urban living’s fragile, often fragmented or dispersed nature and therefore its problems.

Tangier is a multi-faceted city; an intricate ‘picture puzzle’ that cannot be reduced or depicted in a singular mode. In Barrada’s pictures, Tangier is unmanageably varied and anarchic. Its disorder resists classification. Barrada questions the dominant myths
which surround the city.\textsuperscript{6} Tangier, like many other Moroccan cities (Casablanca, Rabat, Fez, Marrakech, etc.) is facing a multitude of crises and Barrada depicts it in all its confusion, its poor quarters, its decayed monuments, and its multiplying tall buildings. Barrada captures the contradictory character of the contemporary Moroccan city which is homogenous, fragmentary, and hierarchical, to borrow the words Henri Lefebvre\textsuperscript{7} uses to talk about the modern city. She explores critically the qualities of the streets, the squares, the parks and other aspects of the public realm in terms of how they are used, imagined and lived. The city is overcrowded; its streets are dull, narrow, steep and filthy. Piles of filth are everywhere. The interminable excavations of roads for sewer works, electricity or general repairs add to the disfiguring of the city. When the local authorities dig up a street, the cobblestones have to be pulled one by one and the work drag on forever. The dark surfaces of neglected, unpainted, fallen down mansions and the disordered heaps of houses and trees reveal an aging and impoverished city affected by the fissures and ravages of time.

The forms of poverty are everywhere visible: in the city’s narrow alleys and dirty thoroughfares, in the buses packed with passengers, in the crumbling city walls and past the houses of which only the facades are left. Photographic immersion in the city shows street’s life, its violence and its rituals. It depicts the fragility of people’s lives in Tangier. Street sellers wander among the crowds; beggars utter the same appeal day after day; the drunks and the homeless roam in the never-ending streets. Inequality is particularly high in Tangier and in the other big cities of Morocco. The shameful poverty of the city is cloaked from official reports and media but not from Barrada’s camera eye. Tangier lost its importance in the world\textsuperscript{8} and became a remote place burdened with social marginality, poverty and despair. Moroccan cities are inhabited by a rich minority and a frustrated, impoverished majority which struggles to earn a living. Youth unemployment is
very high. The lack of opportunities and the dim prospects for personal and professional advancement have destabilizing impacts; illegal migration is one of them.

Talking about the fractures of the contemporary city, Italian Architect Aldo Rossi states, “I believe that today we live in a world that cannot be repaired, a world of psychological and human fragments … I always say that our true invention as architects is to determine how to connect all these fragments together.” At the heart of Barrada’s work, there is a parallel search to the one mentioned by Rossi. Her photographs which are published and exhibited in a sequence that suggests thematic or formal resonances often omit clues as to what particular places they refer to. The buildings’ structural relationship to their setting and the relationship of the photographs to themselves help her create an imaginary city built of images.

Barrada’s photographs are not just substitutes for the already existing buildings. Her desire is to tell a story which offers meaning to the multiple fragments of the contemporary Moroccan city. She does not merely produce an urban still life which describes the incoherencies of the city. Her photographs are ordinary and complex; they transform the fragments of the urban space into a visual narrative. Her works are documents and art works. Barrada is a spatial story-teller who explores critically the cultural geographies of the Moroccan cities. Her art “shake[s] up our modes of perception and (...) redefine[s] our capacities for action” (Rancière 259).

Barrada’s work is also an incisive critique of modernity. The artist criticizes the simplification and standardization characteristic of modernist architecture. According to Lefebvre, “world urban space is a space of “violence”, where “a formidable force of homogenization exerts itself on a worldwide scale, producing a space whose every part is interchangeable (quantified, without qualities).” Barrada denounces the uniformity of concrete, func-
tionalist buildings. Reinforced concrete is a medium of architecture which is considered as responsible for modernist uniformity. Modern architecture was born with this material. Reinforced concrete factories emerged between the 1900s and the 1930s. As functionalist concrete buildings began to dominate industrial landscape after 1910, their credibility as cultural forms expanded.\textsuperscript{12} 

Barrada’s photographs capture ugly, gray concrete buildings with no ornamentation.\textsuperscript{13} Many of them have been built during colonialism and their facades are discolored by dirt, rust and dust. Other buildings three or four stories tall, also made from reinforced concrete and brick are built on the top of the Riff mountains.\textsuperscript{14} They look identical, odd and repellent. Even old, historical buildings are restored by concrete! Architecture and designed spaces including buildings, landscapes, gardens, interiors and public spaces have been transformed by concrete.

Barrada’s attention to detail is worthy of an architect. Her fidelity to everyday detail reveals another of the city’s flaws. She criticizes the privatization of public space and the associated passivization of city dwellers. Urban space in Morocco is becoming increasingly privatized and commercial. Thousands of hectares of valuable agricultural land were lost to urbanization. The new urban landscapes are dotted with commercial centers, car show rooms, urban highways and mass housing projects in the suburbs of the cities. Many dormitory towns miles and miles away from existing cities have been created.\textsuperscript{15} Urban planners, businessmen and municipal officials are responsible for the commoditization of urban life. Moroccan cities are quickly becoming a sterile, depthless space for a consumer society. According to Lefebvre, the modern city has become an object of consumption. “Space as a whole is consumed for production just as are industrial buildings and sites, machines, raw materials, and labor power.”\textsuperscript{16}
3. URBAN MEMORY LOSS

Barrada denounces the failure of architects and urban planners to connect to the human body in their designs and to locate the city in the fabric of the everyday. In his book, *Flesh and Stone: the Body and the City in Western Civilization*, Richard Sennett talks about “the sensory deprivation which seems to curse most modern buildings; the dullness, the monotony, and the tactile sterility which afflicts the urban environment.” According to him, this “sensory deprivation” is “a professional failure: modern architects and urbanists having somehow lost an active connection to the human body in their designs” (15). We define ourselves through our relation with space and architecture in its turn affects the fiber of our being and defines us. Architecture should reveal our history and culture. But as the photographs of Barrada suggest, Moroccan postcolonial cities are deracinated from considerations of history and place. The material history and memory of city space and city life are absent. As Aldo Rossi writes in *The Architecture of the City*, a book with enormous influence on architecture, and written as a rebuttal to the modernist redevelopment of European cities after the Second World War,

“The soul of the city” becomes the city’s history, the signs on the walls of the municipium, the city’s distinctive and definitive character, its memory (…) One can say that the city itself is the collective memory of its people, and like memory it is associated with objects and places. The city is the locus of the collective memory. This relationship between the locus and the citizenry then becomes the city’s predominant image, both of architecture and of landscape, and as certain artifacts became part of its memory, new ones emerge. In this entirely positive sense great ideas flow through the history of the city and give shape to it. (130)

The Memory of the old city has been eradicated by modernist architecture and the bonds of identity are therefore broken. This
led to a breakdown of its collective memory. The material traces of Morocco’s urban heritage are its historical buildings, the names of the streets and the old city’s architectural particularities. The past is an integral part of life which played an important role in the shaping of mentalities and identities. “The urban identity of a city is the collective expression of its various physical attributes indexed through its fabric of streets and neighborhoods, its significant historic and contemporary buildings, its everyday spaces and lesser-known built environment”.

The medina is bounded by an old urban fabric that contains, in a morphological sense, the memory code of the city. Barrada’s pictures document the old city in an attempt to preserve it photographically before urban planners and politicians gradually destroy it. Moroccan traditional cities have been hierarchically organized around the Mosque while the suqs were interconnected by streets. The living breathing city; its compact houses, its streets, its smells, the rich variety of its everyday life used to give their inhabitants a sense of security and an opportunity of spatial orientation. The central market square constituted the heart of the town. The circle of the ramparts and the narrow, winding, serpentine alleys which led to the patio houses determined a safe and familiar existence space, with which the inhabitants could easily identify. The morphology, the building materials and the architecture depended on climatic features and local resources and environmental conditions. The uniqueness of Moroccan traditional architecture was due to its capacity to respond to environmental, social and cultural requirements. Urban memory in the traditional city, as Anthony Vidler says, was ‘that image of the city that enabled the citizen to identify with its past and present as a political, cultural and social entity.’ The absence of people from many of the city photographs of Barrada highlight the impoverishment of the city and the trouble people have to feel at home in desolate, treeless spaces, full of concrete buildings.
4. UNMASKING THE URBAN FAILURE

Barrada’s photographs point at the erasure of a significant part of the memory of the Moroccan city. Colonial and postcolonial urban planners are responsible for the ugly transformation of the city and the memory loss and identity crisis which threaten its inhabitants. The architecture of Moroccan cities is the result of a planning process taking place as part of France’s late colonial policy. According to Paul Rabinow, “The colonies constituted a laboratory of experimentation for new arts of government capable of bringing a modern and healthy society into being” (289). Colonialism marked the emergence of a new form of architecture in Moroccan cities which started along with the imperialist expansion of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This led to the division of the architectural space into two parts: the historic, old city and the colonial city. The narrow and winding streets of the medina were expanded to fit the modern vehicles. Many old buildings were destroyed and the fabric of the old medina was deeply altered. Le Corbusier who is one of the founders of modernist architecture ignored the needs of inhabitants and their logic of settlement and paved the way for a universal architecture which made an abstraction of the everyday context. Urban planning moved from making plans for an individual city to mass productions.

Le Corbusier’s oft-quoted dictum ‘we must kill the street’ can be related to two preoccupations. On one level, Le Corbusier wanted to eradicate the dense, noisy, treeless and chaotic urban artery, because he thought he had something better to offer in the form of the ville radieuse, where high-rise apartment blocks would be set within parkland. Less attractively, his campaign against the street can be related to a political project, which was to convince the authorities that his reforms, like those of Haussmann in nineteen century Paris, were essential to avoid revolution. The street was where
the dangerous classes congregated: if they were tamed by wide streets in the nineteenth century, by no streets at all in the twentieth century a potentially restive urban population might be pacified.22

North Africa served as a laboratory for European modernization projects under twentieth century colonial rule. Big cities in the Maghreb were the testing ground for architectural projects. Thus, Casablanca for example, turned into a model of modern urban architecture by the French. “The master plan for Casablanca was designed in the 1950s by urban planner Michel Ecochard. The realization of the Casablanca plan depended on new ideas of architects, urban planners and engineers who regarded the colonial territory as a space of expansion and urban experiments.”23 The colonial city has emerged as an archetype fundamentally different from the traditional, old city. A new society and a new mode of life were imposed on Moroccans.

Since the independence in 1956, the Moroccan government faced a number of choices about how to manage its urban environment. Moroccan urban planners continued the policy started by the colonizers. They created various political projects that did not put Moroccan identity at the forefront. The desire to westernize and modernize, the obsession with urban renewal and land speculation and a willingness to publicize the achievements of mass production explain how architects and politicians negotiated urban planning. The need to enhance the city’s image and attract tourism and investment is also at the heart of urban policies. Today, 60 years after the independence, Moroccan cities are inevitably becoming universally banal by their sameness. Cities across the country are dominated by tall towers of steel and glass, rows of large cubist boxes and concrete buildings. The lack of reference to the country’s individual and unique culture is nearly absolute. Moroccan cities have lost any true regionalism as well as references to the ancient styles of architecture. As Lefebvre
writes, “the "city historically constructed is no longer lived and is no longer understood practically. It is only an object of cultural consumption for tourists, for aestheticism, avid for spectacles and the picturesque."24

Barrada’s images lead the viewer into unpopulated urban scenes. She depicts empty places where tall concrete buildings are being constructed. The materials of construction and demolition are evident and the buildings are shot at an angle, so that their entries are obscured. People are absent as are any signs of daily life. By stripping the buildings of their context, Barrada shows how the city and its people lost their individuality. The historical city is being dismantled and something new is emerging.

The informal settlements growing up on the outskirts of big cities mark the failures of urban policymaking. To confront questions of squatter neighborhoods considered overcrowded and illegal, mass housing projects were built. This spatial segregation was a legacy of the colonial regime to address the problem of improvised constructions by the rural populations at the suburbs of big cities. The settlements were reshaped by their inhabitants and new forms of urban life which could be considered as a return to the old compact city emerged. The Bidonvilles of Carrière Centrale (one of the largest shantytowns of Casablanca) even became sites of anti-colonial resistance. Similar housing development initiatives were taken by governmental urban planners and were rejected by the dwellers as neither affordable nor in accordance with their everyday needs. In her pictures of the Bidonvilles of Casablanca, Barrada highlights what Soja calls locational discrimination.25 In photographs that are far from being photojournalistic, she depicts squatting settlements in the city of Casablanca and shows how people have transformed these forms of spatial injustice by creating spatial structures that fit their daily needs and challenge urban exclusion.
CONCLUSION

Yto Barrada’s work is freighted with politically charged connotations. It brings into focus the daily problems and the spatial inequalities affecting the lives of Moroccan citizens. Barrada asks relevant questions related to the design of Moroccan cities and uses photography as both an artistic practice and a form of political activism. Her photographs invite us to explore the meaning of living in a city. Her artworks are ‘projects’, rather than individual images, which work as an extended discourse that engages with theoretical perspectives – visually. They speak beyond the literal reference to objects. They rewrite the city and its history and develop a new narrative of the Moroccan urban environment. However, her photographs do not tell a conventional story; they give us scattered clues which we have to assemble into a coherent narrative. Barrada privileges anti-realism, a mode of contestation and representation which goes against the grain of realism. The way in which the realist text places the reader in the position of guaranteed knowledge serves to conceal and naturalize ideology. Barrada does not just reproduce reality; she criticizes it. She uses militant documentary photography not in order to preserve the urban status quo, but in order to overthrow it. She metaphorically saves the city from her male politicians and designers and repossesses it by injecting a female point of view in its male buildings.

Barrada’s photographs can be read in the light of what Henry Lefebvre says talking about the interaction between art and the city and the role of contemporary artists in reshaping urban life and urban space: “the future of art is not artistic, but urban.”26 Her photos are both social documents and images for galleries and museums. Yto Barrada engages with and intervenes in the city through her urban artistic practices, contributing thus to a certain manner in enacting a new urban imaginary. Her art is a “means to defuse dissent.”27 Her artistic exploration of the city is a spatial
transgression and an urban resistance which she compares to the strategies of resistance used by those who are spatially marginalized. “I am attentive to what lies beneath the surface of public behavior. I am a big reader of Jonathan Swift. In public, those oppressed accept their domination, but they always question it off-stage. The subversive tactics, strategies of class contestation and forms of sabotage used by the poor is what I try to locate.”

Barra uses art as a device to stimulate the public toward a more active stance; she visually urges people to participate in the creation of a counter-space in order to take back control of the right to the city and to spatial justice.

NOTES

5. Mounir Fatmi, Hassan Darsi and Daoud Oulad Syed are the names of other contemporary photographers whose works are driven by the question of urban life.
6. Talking about and representing Tangier is a practice with a past. Barrada is not the first artist to talk about this city; not the first Moroccan to
think creatively about it; but maybe she is the first Moroccan woman to do so. Her art can be linked with other artistic practices about Tangier. Mohamed Choukri, Mohamed Mrabet, Jack Kerouac, William Burrough, Paul and Jane Bowles, Ronnie Kray, Barbara Hutton, Tennessee Williams, Henri Matisse, Joe Orton, Cecil Beaton are artists who lived in or passed through the city of Tangier and reinvented it in their writings and artistic works.


8. Tangier is a border Moroccan city located on the North African coast at the western entrance to the Strait of Gibraltar. From the mid-1920s to October 1956 it was an international zone, administered by a joint convention including France, Spain and Britain. During these golden years, Tangier was as glorious as London, Paris and New York. It attracted artists and writers from Europe and the United States.


10. Talking about the relation between photography and architecture, American cultural critic Frederic Jameson says,

“The project, the drawing, is … one reified substitute for the real building, but a “good” one, that makes infinite utopian freedom possible. The photograph of the already existing building is another substitute, but let us say a “bad” reification _ the illicit substitution of one order of things for another, the transformation of the building into the image of itself, and a spurious image at that … the appetite for architecture today … must in reality be an appetite for something else. I think it is an appetite for photography: what we want to consume today are not the buildings themselves, which you scarcely even recognize as you round the freeway … Many are the postmodern buildings that seem to have been designed for photography, where alone they flash into brilliant existence and actuality with all of the phosphorescence of the high-tech orchestra on CD” (35).
11. Henri Lefebvre, “Space and Mode of Production” 204.
13. “Concrete is always regarded as a dump stupid material, more associated with death than, life” Forty 9.
14. The Riff mountains refer to a mountainous region in the north of Morocco which extends from Tangier to the Moulouya river valley near the Moroccan-Algerian frontier.
15. Sla Jdid, Kenitra, Tamessna are some of these dormitory towns.
19. The renovation of a 1930s cinema in the old city of Tangier, la cinémathèque de Tanger, is an artistic project in which Barrada participated with the aim of engaging with the collective memory of the city.
Edward Soja writes that, “locational discrimination, created through the biases imposed on certain populations because of their geographical location, is fundamental in the production of spatial injustice and the creation of lasting spatial structures of privilege and advantage. The three most familiar forces shaping locational and spatial discrimination are class, race, and gender, but their effects should not be reduced only to segregation” (3).


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10

A European answer? Of continents, containers and un/domesticated movements

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1. OUT OF PLACE

‘This is not Italy,’ African farm labourers often say when complaining about the living and working conditions they experience in the many shantytowns, informal settlements and labour camps that dot rurban spaces of intensive agro-industrial production. Abandoned, derelict buildings or favela-style dwellings without running water and no connection to the electric grid, haunted, in some fortunate instances, by the sound of generators and usually cut off from urbanity by muddy, pot-hole-littered roads. But also container- and tent-camps skirting the outer layers of cities and towns from the north to the south of what, on maps, is marked as Italian territory. One kind of settlement morphs into the other: this is where the institutional meets (and tags onto) the informal, and vice-versa; where rural meets urban; and where political geographies blur.
The largest among those hybrid in-between places, the so-called Grand Ghetto, lies in the Capitanata Plain of northern Apulia, some fifteen kilometres from the city of Foggia. During the tomato harvest season the Ghetto hosts more than 1000 people, mostly from sub-Saharan Africa. Here, newcomers who recently crossed the Mediterranean meet longer-term dwellers and people with a history of reverse social mobility - from up- to downwards, from the country to the city and back again after losing their decades-long jobs as a consequence of the economic crisis. They co-exist with seasoned gang-masters, sex workers and petty traders for whom farm workers represent the main source of income. Workers live in shacks built with cardboard, scrap wood, corrugated iron, asbestos and plastic sheets, or in overcrowded, abandoned farmhouses with no facilities, hoping that gangmasters or farmers will recruit them for as many days of grossly underpaid and (more or less) irregular piecework as possible. The 40-odd women who share their living conditions sell sexual and other kinds of services - food, drinks and more, in the many eateries located at the front of the shacks. Roma gypsies and gagé locals come daily to trade in clothes, shoes, chicken, new and second-hand goods of all kinds. Stolen and illegal commodities, of course, ‘rightly’ belong here too. Locals also come by night, especially during the weekend, to purchase the services of the African ladies at highly discounted prices compared to the already cheap street fares. Journalists, film directors, politicians, trade unionists, researchers, activists, priests, scouts, other concerned civil-society members, safari-lovers, voyeurs and ‘experts’ from all corners of the country, of Europe, and sometimes beyond, complete the picture.

Expressing their surprise at the situation they encountered when arriving in such places for the first time, migrants would often confess: ‘I never thought a place like this could exist in Italy’. Such shock is of course a common feature in many migrants’ narratives, conveying their disappointment when they first realise
that their expectations about Europe do not match with a reality in which people beg, sleep rough, and have trouble making ends meet. And yet, places like the Ghetto, or the tent-camp-turned-shantytown located in the Gioia Tauro Plain, Calabria, carry a surplus of peculiarity.

On their part, some Italian citizens also (mis)recognise the exceptional, seemingly out-of-place nature of these dwellings: ‘If you want to see what Africa looks like, you should come here’ - such is the mantra one hears over and again from the scores of visitors eager to uncover ‘the dark side of the Italian tomato’, as one rendition would have it, or the ‘blood stains’ on the oranges and clementines sold across the continent and the globe, raw or processed. However, countering such representations, many ghetto/camp dwellers are keen to point out that ‘no such places exist in Africa, I have met these places in Italy for the first time’. Others, perhaps in light of their different biographical experience, seem less confident. In his book, Cameroonian citizen, short-lived media star and trade unionist, Yvan Sagnet (hailed as one of the leaders of the ‘Nardò strike’ that in the summer of 2011 saw several hundred African tomato and watermelon pickers in southern Apulia demand fairer wages and work contracts) describes his impressions of the camp where the wildcat strike would erupt: ‘[W] as Boncuri, we asked ourselves, Africa or Italy?’ (93).

Out of place, indeed.

So what are these zones of exception, what exactly makes them such, and where are they? Laboratories for the spectacularised, just-in-time exploitation, pacing and containment of a segregated, soaring and racialised underclass, they are also spaces where new formations of subjectivity and of struggle emerge. The strike in Nardò and the revolts that erupted in Rosarno in 2008 and 2010 (when the tent camp was not yet a reality, and migrants lived in
large informal settlements across different abandoned industrial and residential sites) poignantly demonstrated how the constant play of control against subversion drives change.

Yet, before asking the resistance question, let us start from the initial puzzle posed by those who encounter ‘ghettoes’ for the first time: where exactly are these places and the people they host?

2. CONTAINED: FROM THE GHETTO TO THE CONTINENT AND BACK AGAIN

Discussing the work of artist Ursula Biemann, titled ‘Contained Mobility’ (2004), Brian Holmes\(^3\) gives us some hints on how we might begin to address these questions. Biemann herself, speaking of the subject of her video installation (a displaced long-term asylum seeker filmed in his container-house, side by side with images of cargo ships), describes her subject thus: Anatol Zimmermann has ‘come ashore in an offshore place, in a container world that only tolerates the translocal state of not being of this place – nor of any other, really – but of existing in a condition of permanent non-belonging, of juridical non-existence’.\(^4\) Such condition might well be compared to that of migrant farm workers living in one or another container-form, in more or less metaphorical terms.

Containers may indeed be the forever-temporary homes for some African fruit pickers, for example in Saluzzo (Piedmont), or in Rosarno. In the same locations, alongside metal boxes, tent camps expressly built for seasonal(ised) labourers signal the latter’s even more temporary and yet often chronic condition, creating hierarchies of precarity and entitlement where time is frozen in an eternal and uncertain present. The labour-camp model is progressively spreading to other agro-industrial contexts that register the presence of sub-Saharan African workers, such as the Capitanata Plain (Foggia), the Bradano-Vulture region of Basilicata or the Trapani province (Sicily).
For Holmes, the container in turn embodies the social form of just-in-time production, where consumer desires are monitored and modelled by supply chains in which retail holds the lion’s share, and where mobility and its control are everything (from workers to commodities, through managers and consumers). Indeed, agricultural production in Italy as across much of the globe is no exception to this pattern, with large supermarket chains or wholesale retailers controlling ever more directly the entire process of production and distribution. And relying on a large and internally fragmented reserve army of utterly precarious migrant labour, segregated through racialised zoning processes that increasingly rely on the same humanitarian dispositif which regulates their survival, and extracts value from their very existence – from the sea to the camp.

Thus, aside from living spaces other forms of containerisation, of permanent displacement, are simultaneously in place. Some workers are undocumented, and hence non-existent in juridical terms (or, rather, existing in their exclusion from the right to have rights), suspended in that space of non-belonging that Biemann describes. Yet, many more do have some form of (often temporary) juridical recognition, ever more frequently granted on humanitarian grounds. But their condition seems nonetheless one of containment in places out of place.

After having displaced millions, the military-humanitarian complex - perfected in the aftermath of NATO’s Libyan war and carried forward by the (part EU-funded) Italian rescue operation tellingly named ‘Mare Nostrum’, then morphed into Frontex-led ‘Operation Triton’ - awards some of those arriving by sea (not in containers but in overcrowded boats) with an always precarious and revocable right to stay on the arbitrary grounds of exceptional circumstances, once again institutionalising precarity. And, incidentally, who is the subject of that pronoun, ‘our’, qualifying the Mediterranean sea, a borderzone? Can we reclaim a different ‘us’
for it? Is this a ‘European question’ as Nicholas De Genova⁵ posed it? We shall return to this.

Humanitarianism, like war, is (also) business. The recent bursting of the ‘Mafia Capitale’ scandal, involving public officials, fascist-leaning mafia cartels and third-sector organisations (where one cannot be clearly distinguished from the other), summed it all up impeccably: one of the main defendants, his phone tapped, plainly explained how ‘migrants are more lucrative than drugs’.⁶

Not only can the lives saved at sea be put to work in Italy’s ‘green factory’ at ever-decreasing rates - in fact, many agro-industrial areas also host long-term asylum-seeker reception centres (which, in turn, often outgrow into shantytowns) -, thus making the previous regime of migration regulation obsolete. As Dines and Rigo⁷ point out, it is no coincidence that since the ‘North African Emergency’ that followed the Libyan war no annual quotas for labour migrants have been issued by the Italian government. What is more, the entire lives of these ‘containerised subjects’ are increasingly monetised - by means, for example, of private contracts, sponsored by local authorities as in the case of the Grand Ghetto, for the provision of portable toilets and drinking water, or of entire camps where they are to be lodged. Once established, emergency, as we know, reproduces itself (and profit alongside with it). It becomes a permanent device of government.

Furthermore, humanitarian emergencies made ordinary also eclipse the reality of labour. The type of work migrants end up performing, as one of the few opportunities available, partakes of that non-belonging too, which is embodied by the containerised asylum seeker turned excess workforce. Or, rather, we may more accurately speak of differential belonging (to paraphrase Mezzadra and Neilson’s reconceptualisation of the inclusion/exclusion dyad as a continuum),⁸ whereby persons are increasingly categorised, labelled, contained and ghetto-ised according to an ever multiplying set of parameters and dispositifs.
Sub-Saharan Africans belong to ghettos or camps - like Roma people. They too work in the fields of Apulia and Calabria, often with their entire families, and in many cases move back and forth between Romania or Bulgaria and Italy, or other parts of Europe. And increasingly so in the last decade. Indeed, the spectacular exposure-cum-invisibilisation of the containerised black workforce masks a much more complex and nuanced reality, where the majority of agricultural day labourers in many areas are EU citizens, and not all of Roma descent.⁹

Whilst those who arrive by sea are contained in humanitarian-cum-labour camps, together with fellow black migrants who were displaced because of the crisis and with other populations made ‘nomadic’ or ‘seasonal’, an even more numerous, docile and readily disposable army of workers is in constant supply from Europe’s eastern peripheries. Given the availability of large reserve armies of labourers, after more than 30 years of restrictive immigration laws in the context of neo-liberal restructurings, all workers earn extremely low salaries. Often they have no work contract, or a fictitious one, which in any case is grossly infringed: working days are twice as long as prescribed, with no recognition of extra time; hourly rates are half the minimum wage, and in many cases during harvest workers are paid at piece rate; no social insurance is paid on their behalf, whilst intermediaries of different sorts (in some cases workers’ fellow nationals or even relatives) erode part of their salaries in exchange for transport and food, and on account of their brokering role with farm owners or companies.

Here, ‘the container’ is not only a geographical/physical space, but also a system for the organization and disciplining of work that functions through multiple dispositifs: legal and extra-legal, more broadly social and relational, sometimes physically violent and coercive. They may be predicated on kinship, on common origin or language, or vice-versa on complete misrecognition of common humanity. Sexual difference is one such dispositif, which
subjects women (usually from Eastern Europe) to a further form of exploitation in the form of harassment, binding work and salary to female employees’ willingness to provide farm owners with free sexual services. In other cases, as with the Africans, women are locked in the role of care providers – sex included, at appallingly low rates ranging between 5 and 10 euros. Their wages are locked to those of farm workers, and thus bind them to even higher levels of exploitation.

As far as the law (and its transgression) are concerned, different bureaucratic tools, and multiple, arbitrary breaches of ‘normal’ bureaucratic procedures and legal prescriptions, bar different categories of people or different individuals from accessing different sets of rights. People who are nomadic (by choice or by force, where of course the line between one and the other is anything but clear-cut), or who do not live in ‘proper’ houses recognisable as such by the institutional apparatus, are arbitrarily denied residency rights – and thus access to the national healthcare system (but for emergency care), for example, or the ability to obtain a bank account or a driving license. EU citizens from the peripheries can formally enjoy ‘freedom’ of movement similarly to their western counterparts, but in practice many are excluded from healthcare for residency or other reasons. And their greater inter-national mobility makes for their readiness to accept even worse labour conditions compared to their African colleagues, who cannot spend their yearly wages in their country of origin. Of course, immigration status is another such differentiating device for non-EU citizens, as mentioned.

Furthermore, the process of ‘containerisation’ is certainly not peculiar to the sphere of agro-industrial production, but part of a wider trend. Particular kinds of zoning invest many areas of the globe and many facets of production, distribution and consumption (where these phases cannot even be clearly separated any longer, for value is extracted from each of them). More broadly,
we might say they are tools of ‘government’ in the Foucauldian sense. Alongside labour camps and agricultural districts, we also witness the proliferation of different forms of spatial organisation (read enclosure): special economic zones, foreign trade zones, financial districts, offshore enclaves, new cities-within-cities, gated communities and much more. As a whole, they complicate any linear, continuous and totalising representation of territorial sovereignty and the law, and thus of borders. Indeed, borders are fragmenting and proliferating, whilst the state and its laws become an instrumental tool for government. National, continental, economic, cultural, ‘ethnic’ or ‘racial’ borders articulate to one another to form ‘hybrid’ dispositifs of control and regulation. As we have seen, such proliferation does not give rise to binary distinctions between inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. In other words, if no-one is immune from containerisation, some containers are more spacious, airy and pleasant (but also costly) than others. Some containers encapsulate others. Or, simply, containers might belong to different orders altogether.

Ultimately, human beings’ flows and movements are processed in similar ways to those of commodities, information, and money. In fact, they too can be channeled and containerized; they too are managed by law, made legal or illegal; they too yield a profit, when the media spectacle turns them into spectral, shallow characters, into mere examples of an undesirable life (where, in this alleged undesirability, lies the only difference between them and the commodified advertising people); they too are subject to economic gambling (for instance, they are the matter on which the derivatives of the military-humanitarian complex blossom). Sometimes they are actually imported, as it happens with the EU’s newer citizens; sometimes they live in extraterritorial zones; sometimes they experience both conditions together.

The Grand Ghetto which we described at the beginning of this chapter is one such zone. It arose and grows in the middle of land
owned by the Caccavelli Group, a consortium of agricultural producers, which “deals directly with the national and international large-scale agricultural retail trade”\textsuperscript{12}. The development of the Grand Ghetto, and of other ghettos in the area, is not at all a collateral effect as we are led to believe, but the result of a specific formation of capital which recalls plantation-style set-ups and at the same time is projected into the future of \textit{Made in Italy} export districts.

The new logistical geography of Europe, which in contemporary agribusiness is the very geography of mass distribution, is characterised by a polycentric development on a regional scale, by the creation of distribution networks, of hubs, of districts that are interconnected even at a great distance, and apparently disconnected from their immediate surroundings\textsuperscript{13}. We can already make out the contours of an economically and functionally integrated continental web. Large globalising capitals are eager to put it in place, and European institutions are supporting it, for instance through the funding of new Rail Freight Corridors and other infrastructure spaces. The EU is a dispositif for the production of space as well, in the sense that Henri Lefebvre gave to this expression. It is historical speed becoming space, dis-placing local balances, modifying people and commodity flows, digging new tunnels underneath the Alps. The EU integrates differentially. It is the process of creation of a new geography, a globalising force, perfectly synergistic with that of centralized capitals, which spatially expresses itself through a web of enclaves, terminals, and other zones where abstract, digital, economic-governmental thought becomes a(n) (extra)territorial configuration.

The Grand Ghetto fits perfectly within this new continental (and global) geography: or, rather, \textit{both share the same historical speed}. In fact, the Ghetto is the result of the combined activity of a changing form of capital and of continental policies in the economic and social field. People who transit from a node to another,
getting stuck in and beside the network of Italian agro-industry (and of humanitarian profit), are the mirror image of the incredible and (from the point of view of labour, health and the environment) irrational mobility guaranteed to agricultural products – and more generally to the flows of commodities or money.

The Grand Ghetto, like every other similar, ever-spreading form of dwelling, is often described as a margin. Now we can realise that, from a different point of view, it lies at the core of an eccentric typology of space, which is produced on a European (and thus global) level. The Ghetto arises in a nodal space not so different from a Free Zone or from a financial district. Then, to those African labourers who claim “this is not Italy”, we can answer “you are right: this is the EU”.

3. THE EUROPEAN DISPOSITIF: LABOUR MOBILITIES, DISPLACEMENTS AND AGRICULTURE

A specific containment device, the European Union appears as a significant dispositif, one which we wish to bring to the front, in the governmental chain that re-articulates places, peoples and the relationships between and among them. It exceeds any political and geographical border: the EU is not in Europe, it is a global machine which works within an expansive - and at the same time defensive - paradigm.14 This is so at the level of both migration and agricultural policies, of processes of expansion and externalisation of its frontiers and borders, through war as much as through bureaucracies.

Looking at patterns of migration in southern Europe, we are immediately led from tiny sun-burnt islands in the middle of the sea, such as Lampedusa - which serve as backgrounds to the spectacularised staging of an invasion (one which includes the zombified spectres of those the militarised sea has swallowed, who only in some cases shall deserve a last, wooden box to be contained in
for eternity\textsuperscript{15} - to the (themselves secluded) spaces in the heart of the containing-continent dispositif, where many decisions are made and lives shaped.

Remember Schengen?

Internal ‘freedom of movement’ (for those with the right kind of passport, bien sûr) re-positioned European borders towards the Community’s outer edges. The beginnings of migration to Italy roughly coincide with the implementation of the Schengen Treaties, initially ratified by France, West Germany, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium \textit{aboard a boat} (uncanny resonances haunt this choice of location) on the river Moselle, at the intersection of three national borders, in 1985 - but fully adopted only in the late 1990s. At the time of its initial sealing, signatories introduced further restrictions on migration which had to be abided by all adhering states, including a quota system and increasing border controls. Italy, like Spain and Greece, thus became European borderlands, and entry points for migrants \textit{en route} to northern Europe.

At the same time, restrictions in immigration made of asylum one of the few, indeed the main remaining channel to get legal status for non-EU migrants. And along came the externalisation of border controls and the Dublin regulations, once again confining asylum seekers coming from sea and land to Europe’s southern edges. Hence, we can link the out-of-place spaces with which we began to the post-Schengen Euro-Mediterranean borderzone. Camp-Ghettoes are ‘decompression chambers’\textsuperscript{16} for that excess of bodies that the sea, the air, the land carry to EU shores, driven by aspirations, desires, dreams and hopes stronger than any attempt at crushing them.

Then came EU enlargement to countries such as Poland, Romania and Bulgaria - and with it new patterns of labour mobility.
Seasonality could become Europe-wide, and not intra-national as with the yearly circuits of agricultural labour, where those trapped by the border regime (because they did not possess the right kinds of papers) moved from one harvest to the other. Whilst patterns of internal mobility have not disappeared (and might even have witnessed an increase in absolute numbers, as a consequence of the Libyan crisis and its production of ‘excess black bodies’), in relative terms intra-European seasonal mobility plays an ever more central role for the organisation of the agricultural workforce. Invisibilised by the military-humanitarian spectacle of non-EU bodies (rescued or buried first, examined, contained and subsequently put to work), European agricultural workers are, in some regions, the majority of the seasonal labour force. They are paid the same wages, and sometimes less – indeed, since their first arrivals, still as extra-EU citizens, salaries have lost half of their absolute value.

Whilst increasing numbers of potential workers might have contributed to the fall of wages in agriculture, several other factors, many of which also internal to the European dispositif, must also be considered. Chronologically, Common Agrarian Policies (CAPs) are doubtlessly the first, and they are quantitatively significant as well. This is one of the areas of European governance where a unitary direction has been in place for longest (since the 1960s), and has had the highest amount of common resources at its disposal: for the period 2014-2020, 362,8 billion euros have been allocated, corresponding to 37,8% of the total EU budget. Whilst agricultural policies have undergone several changes through the decades, analysts indicate that their effects have tended towards a progressive concentration of agricultural land in fewer hands, with a visible reduction in the number of small and medium farms. Concomitantly, the prices paid to producers have progressively fallen, also as a consequence of large-scale, global processes of industrialisation of the agri-food chains, in the context of just-in-time and to-the-point neo-liberal restructuring.
Heavy competition from subsidised EU products, as well as land grabbing and policies of structural adjustment have heavily affected small subsistence farmers in poorer regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Europe, who in many cases were (and are still being) turned into migrant wage labourers in agriculture and in other sectors. And, let us not forget, processes of large-scale displacement are also the result of another great European dispositif: that of war. The new European wars inside and outside its (shifting and ambiguous) borders - Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Libya, Syria, Somalia, Eritrea, Ukraine, to mention just the most blatant cases-, as much as the silent war against the poor the world over, waged also by means of EU austerity, have effects on migratory flows and attempts at their containment (where border control is itself part of a military-industrial complex, as we have already noted).  

At the same time, production everywhere is ever more directly controlled by large-scale retail players who compress wholesale prices and force small farmers out of business. Of course, the highest price is paid by workers, whose reproduction costs are also outsourced, first to their countries of origin and subsequently to the informal economy that we gave a glimpse on earlier.

‘The zone’, then, is a fully EU/ropean product.

4. STEPPING OUT - AND IN FRONT - OF CONTAINERS

Now for some good news and hopeful collective projects. Containers are not air-tight, and wherever they proliferate so does resistance. Of course, to fight against such gigantic machines as EU border policies, austerity, agri-business, military-industrial-humanitarian complexes and infrastructures of many other sorts is no simple endeavour. Even when struggles do spark up, in the situations we described here they could easily backfire - as it was
the case with the wildcat strike that involved over 400 casual farm workers in Nardò, southern Apulia, in 2011. After their requests were accepted, and some farm owners put on trial for gross violations of labour and criminal law, African workers could not find employment in the area any longer, and were substituted by Eastern Europeans. At the same time, undeniably, this was one of the most significant migrant workers’ struggles in Italian history to date, all the more so given the dire conditions in which it took shape. And it was not an altogether isolated incident: ever since 1989, farm workers’ struggles have marked the political significance of migrants as subjects of struggle and change. Villa Literno, Rosarno, Castelvolturno, Castelnuovo Scrivia, Saluzzo, Foggia: these are some of the places, across the length of the Italian peninsula, where smaller or bigger instances of resistance against containment of the agricultural workforce have occurred, and which have encompassed demands ranging from better working conditions to proper housing, recognition of legal status and the right to work, and physical safety from racist attacks. In many cases, these have been articulated together in single instances of struggle, which gave these mobilisations the character of truly social strikes, anticipating and in some ways inspiring more conventional social movements. They have inspired (and in some cases were inspired by) militant projects aimed at opening up these enclosures, at building counter-camps and alternative infrastructures, for which research such as the one we attempt to carry out is a crucial weapon, to be able to trace the workings of those chains that bind shantytowns at the southern European borderzones with supermarkets in large metropolises across the continent and beyond, through factories, warehouses, lorries and ships, ports and roads, identifying their weaker links. But our research as one aspect of the practices of mutualism and solidarity we have put in place, inspired by farm workers’ struggles, also serve to get out of
our own containers, the ones that contemporary precarity imposes on our existences.

We have learnt much about anti-containerisation tactics precisely from another crucial cycle of struggles involving migrant workers and containers, this time of the literal sort. Since 2008, logistics workers in different parts of Italy have engaged in multiple strikes, pickets, blockades, and demonstrations that exposed and made evident the importance of this aspect of capitalist value extraction in the present conjuncture, and consequently also the efficacy of struggles in this domain. To block the circulation of commodities has proved as a particularly effective way to hinder the interests of capital and gain some terrain in the struggle for a more just and equitable form of living. And it is with this hopeful and suggestive note, that brings us back to, or better in front of, and opposed to, containers of the literal and the metaphorical kind that we wish to end this paper, and continue the struggle.

NOTES

4. Ibid., p. 33.


9. In Italy as a whole, considering only those workers who were registered with the National Institute for Social Security (INPS) and thus who had some contractual form, in 2014 of over 320,000 foreign-born agricultural labourers more than 119,000 were from Romania, and another 44,000 from Poland, Bulgaria and Slovakia put together, cf. UNAR, 2014. Dossier Statistico Immigrazione 2015. Rome: Centro Studi e Ricerche IDOS.


11

Resistances and the emergence of a post-neo-liberal just city:
Social and seismic movements in the neo-liberal Chile after disasters

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1. THE RECONSTRUCTION PROCESS CAN BE VIEWED AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR WHOM?

The reconstruction process can be viewed as an opportunity for development. This leads to the following question: an opportunity for what and for whom? To answer this question, the conditions of neoliberal Chile in the face of the 2010 earthquake and tsunami must be analysed, by adopting a ‘vulnerability approach, given the central role it plays and especially its economic and political aspects in the process of a disaster’ (Oliver-Smith, 2002). In Chile, neoliberalism has been implemented and taken root; its social and
economic outcome further amplified the disaster’s impact, in the sense of synergies of vulnerabilities.

The 2010 earthquake thus operated as an indicator of Chilean society. It highlighted the spatial inequalities and injustices which have unfolded over the last forty years. It also revealed the crucial role of social players, especially the pobladore$^{2}$ movement, as they organise and resist to achieve better living conditions. The earthquake sped up social processes in a country which seemed to have been numbed by a seventeen-year dictatorship$^{3}$ followed by twenty years of never-ending transition to democracy$^{4}$. Since 2010 citizens have awoken to action. This telluric and social process, set off on February 27th 2010, has consistently gained speed since: first thanks to the solidarity$^{5}$ and mutual assistance provoked by the disaster, then because the earthquake and tsunami both revealed the inequalities of Chilean society and provided an opportunity for people to get together and organise. We have chosen to call this process the double telluric and social movement.

2. THE POBLADORES MOVEMENTS
AND THE SOCIO-NATURAL DISASTERS

The recent period – from 2010 to 2014 – is a point of inflexion in Chilean society (this process is still ongoing) and within the pobladore$^{2}$ movement. After the dual telluric and social movements in 2010 (Pulgar, 2010a), in 2011 we witnessed (Pulgar, 2010b) the eruption of a broader social movement that is the most “significant of the past twenty years”, after the resistance movement against dictatorship in the 1980s. This is related, according to our hypothesis, to the structural contradictions of the “model”. It is important to emphasize the spreading over the territory of the social movement, in which the pobladore$^{2}$ movement played a decisive role. We will study two social movements: on the one hand because they are different because of their sudden eruption and
novelty; on the other hand because of their interconnection at the national level and their ability to negotiate and make proposals in various fields. We talk about the FENAPO – Federación Nacional de Pobladores (Pobladores national federation) and the MNRJ – Movimiento Nacional para la Reconstrucción Justa (National movement for the just reconstruction): both of them operate as local movement federations.

Both movements, FENAPO and MNRJ, are “movements of movements”, “networks of networks that are building a new historical subject, pluralistic and diverse”. Concerning FENAPO and MNRJ, “from being strictly protest movements, they became movements proposing solutions, technically supported by NGOs, academics and people who are graduates from different fields. Their demands are also broad. Far from restricting themselves to matters specifically related to their local needs, many movements started to criticize the development model. The fact that they have a network-based organization partly explains the broadening local vision to a more inclusive and universal vision”.

Urban social movements at the same time turn into spaces of non-formal education in civilian society, as suggested by Gohn. The pobladores movements (including homeless people, or “allegados” who are deeply in debt and have suffered damage) gathered in the FENAPO were about to announce their proposals for the housing urban policies in March 2010 when Sebastian Piñera, an entrepreneur supported by a right-wing coalition, became president of the country. Nevertheless, because of the earthquake of February 27, 2010, they appeared few weeks before the change of presidency. Thus, their direct action, organization and growth have been built upon the humanitarian response that they provided to the people who suffered damages, what they called themselves a help “de pueblo a pueblo” (from people to people).
This action shows an organic resilience regarding resource mobilization. The public appearance of FENAPO took place in April 2010 during its first street mobilization, in front of the Presidential Palace when they demanded a meeting with the President of the Republic; then, in June 2010, in another street mobilization “to demand the commitments be fulfilled and to be informed about its position regarding social housing, debt and reconstruction”. After a series of major mobilizations, the movement succeeded in creating a group that worked directly with the minister and his closest advisors at that time, in January 2011. Thanks to the negotiations, the Ministry stopped its plan to liberalize housing policy and the grassroots organizations obtained its commitment to support them in developing self-governed social housing projects. This victory of a resistance strategy highlighted the capabilities of social movement.

Simultaneously, the movements of people affected by the earthquake and tsunami of 2010 joined a wider network called the National Movement for the Just Reconstruction (MNRJ) and this network turned into citizens’ main representative for the defense of those people affected by the earthquake. It enables all of these issues to be made visible at a national level. In the context of the emergence of these new collective actors, the FENAPO is the “heir” of a historical social movement, the Chile pobladores movement. However, the MNRJ appears to be a response to the reconstruction process, a response from the people affected by earthquake who are allied to components of the pobladores historical social movement. These new social movements emerge within the context of a subsidiary and neoliberal State that is contested. Faced with obvious limitations as a result of this type of State, new social demands are emerging in order to obtain more autonomy or self-governance.

Four years later, with the emergence of this “dual telluric and social movement” which induced a change in the government coalition, we observe some continuity in the action of the pobladores
movements. Without going in details about internal discussions, the reorganization of the forces that compose it, the splits of the movement of the people affected by housing debt and other problems, we can notice the FENAPO continued to progress throughout these years on both local and national scale\(^ 10\). Moreover, the MNRJ\(^ 11\) has become less important because the 2010 reconstruction (not to mention the neoliberal policies going on) progressed very rapidly, which made a large part of the grassroots activists go back to their territories in order to help further their projects; or they disappeared once their main demands were fulfilled.

3. THE RESPONSE OF THE POBLADORES AFFECTED BY DAMAGES IN IQUIQUE AND VALPARAISO BEFORE THE RECONSTRUCTION

Concerning the earthquake of 2010, the mobilizations for the reconstruction took months of organizing, while in Iquique in 2014, they were initiated few days after. This shows that the pobladores organizations had improved their empowerment and organization, which was due to the change in the country’s “social climate” since 2010. The main difference is that in 2014, no new pobladores movements had been created or consolidated, nor were any federations, in either Valparaiso or Iquique, except for some groups of people who were affected by the earthquake and who became allied to either FENAPO or what remains of the MNRJ.

In Iquique, demonstrations started three days after the earthquake\(^ 12\) and they went on until September. During our fieldwork in Iquique and Alto Hospicio, six months after the earthquake, we could observe that the reconstruction process had not yet begun. As the people affected have actively joined forces, the government responded by providing rapid aid for renting during the emergency period, which enabled them to calm people and avoid potential resistances. A large proportion of the victims of the earthquake in
Iquique, as in Alto Hospicio, lived in social housing that had been built over the past thirteen years. We can assume that lots of them preferred to deal with the current approach, a “top down” solution that is the result of many years of alienating subsidiary politics. Indeed, this strategy consisting of providing case-by-case solutions was a trap for collective organization. In Iquique, we managed to develop of a public-private alliance with a mining company, which offered 240 emergency houses of good quality. In Alto Hospicio, the context was less praiseworthy, as six months after some families were still sleeping in tents. The lack of mobilization in Iquique as in Alto Hospicio may be due to the vulnerabilities that already existed, in addition to the vote-catching approach. In addition, as the damages were mainly concerned with social housing, reconstruction faced obstacles and mobilizations faced neutralization attempts.

In Valparaiso, the main difference with Iquique-Alto Hospicio is that there is a social fabric and a very significant form a social production of the city, as proved by the “urban phenomenon of the tomas de terrenos in Valparaiso ravines”, in the very area where the huge fire took place. As soon as the emergency phase started, self-governance played an essential role in Valparaiso, which allowed thousands of volunteers to clean the debris and build emergency dwellings. The authorities were overwhelmed by a myriad of volunteers who were moved by the violence of the fire and thousands of them went to help the harbor. The preexisting territorial organizations such as the social and cultural centers, but also inhabitant organizations etc. helped channel the aid. At the beginning, the State relied on grassroots organizations but rapidly decided to forbid volunteering because it would start turning into an authority in parallel to the institutional authority. Contrary to Iquique, the Valparaiso pobladores started to rebuild via their own means only a few days after the fire. Six months later, we could observe on the field the continuous process of self-governed re-
construction. Mention should be made of the initiatives such as conflict mapping or the collaborative projects, which – not only because of the fire – demonstrated the capabilities of organizations in Valparaiso and their bottom-up way of functioning. This allows them to anticipate long-term resistances.

4. DIGNITY AGAINST RESILIENCES AND THE RESISTANCES TO THE NEOLIBERAL CITY IN CHILE

Dignity is a process that is socially constructed and from our perspective, this construction is enhanced especially when resistance processes rise and become alternatives. We can comprehend this resistance under the Foucauldian perspective of power relations, while stating that “where there is power there is resistance”. From this approach we find the existence of a “disciplinary society”, consisting of a network of devices and applications that produce and regulate both habits and customs as social practices. Today we understand this disciplinary society from the perspective of the hegemonic neoliberal society and the political project behind it, which it imposes globally. We must also understand how resistances are brought out in the context of a concept of power understood as a «network of relationships» rather than an object.

Resistance is nullified or made invisible by those in power, preferring to talk about resilience, especially under the official rhetoric, both from governments as international organizations like the UN. The poor should be “resilient” is constantly repeated, but the poor themselves are repressed and contested when they seem «reluctant» to the austerity policies (or structural adjustment), abuses, lack of democracy, corruption, ultimately to oppression. It is then that collective action processes can be understood as resistances, in different degrees. Resistances to an ideological, political, economic, social and cultural model. Social movements besides often also acting resiliently, while adapting and recovering from various
situations of oppression initiate “practices of resistance” from everyday life. Resistance is not reactive nor negative, but an ongoing process of creation and transformation.

The concept of resilience in many cases neutralizes the potential for conflict, therefore we confront the concepts of resilience and resistance especially from the action of organized social actors: social movements. To understand these dialectical relationships between resilience and resistance in the territory, it is necessary to identify the practices of the actors, especially understanding conflict as an opportunity for transformation, as a process of emancipation.

There is a time when social movements «evolve» and move from protest-welfare logic, and begin to develop practical alternatives to the hegemonic model, always starting from the territories, as a true self-determination of dignity. These processes could be understood as collective alienations, which are often linked to “dignifying” practices rendering the construction of autonomy and self-management processes. There are many worldly examples, especially since 2011: the occupation of squares and streets in protests in Tunis, Cairo, Madrid, Barcelona, New York, Santiago-Chile, Lis-bon; land occupations of the landless in Brazil, of the people in Chile, Dakar; factory recovery and self-management by workers in Argentina, Greece and France; the housing cooperatives in Uru-guay, Canada and Chile; rallies in high schools and universities by their students in Chile, Quebec, Spain, Greece, Portugal, among many others. Central to all these processes is space, territorial organization, therefore we are referring to territorial emancipation. Finally when we speak of dignity we refer to the exercise and the conquest of justice. There will be no dignity without resistances, these resistances build alternatives from the collective alienations and emancipatory processes, from the territories of dignity.
5. THE NEO-LIBERAL CITY IN CHILE

The “neoliberal city” concept is important for our analysis of the construction of vulnerability as well as for understanding the role of social actors and the pobladores movement in particular. Analyzing the processes of synergetic vulnerabilities in a context of socio-natural disasters augmented by neoliberal policies, we will concentrate on the case of Santiago, Chile’s capital, as a model of the neo-liberal city. As we will see below, this “[tr.] process of neoliberalization” was reproduced in other cities and areas of the country, “[tr.] but there are few cases like that of Santiago that show as clearly what happens in a city and to its inhabitants when neoliberal policies are implemented.” (Rodríguez, 2004: 4). We are starting from the idea that “[tr.] neoliberalism is not an ideology of State disengagement but the mobilization of the State in a plan for the generalization of market mechanisms” (VVAA, 2012). Using Brenner and Theodore’s (2002) neoliberal destruction/creation model, Rodríguez (2009) identifies four periods of neoliberal destruction and creation in the city of Santiago:

1. Discipline: The elimination and dismantling of organizations in working class neighbourhoods was carried out during the dictatorship by means of repression, suppression of the traditional political space, and the creation of a general climate of terror. The poblaciones\textsuperscript{14} organizations disappeared due to the disbanding of political parties, the change in the nature of the State and repression of the poblaciones’ leaders and activists. As for urban administration, municipal governments were infiltrated through the appointment of mayors who were most often members of the military. The institutions in charge of urban matters were reorganized and a new population control function was entrusted to the city governments.

2. The market acts as a (de)regulator with the creation of a real estate market, the elimination of city limits as well as an subsidiary State housing policy.
3. A blend of discipline and the market: land regularization. Unlike other similar processes implemented in Latin America that defined land regularization as the transfer of ownership of land to the occupants, in Santiago, this meant retroceding land to the previous owners. To this end, the families occupying informally occupied land (the *tomas de terrenos*\(^1\)\(^5\) and *campamentos*\(^1\)\(^6\)) were moved to partially subsidized community housing on the city’s periphery (or they had to create new campamentos on the periphery). Thus, this land regularization was much more than a solution to special cases. It was one of the foundations for the restructuring of the urban real estate market. This was called the “sale of the poor” phenomenon entailing the forced removal of more than 150,000 pobladores to the periphery of Santiago (SUR, 1984).

4. The reorganized city (at the administrative level): The previous administrative and territorial structure of the municipalities disappeared. Santiago, which had been divided into 14 administrative districts, was broken into 32 territorial units. The former municipal territories were modified and their boundaries redrawn. They were subdivided for the purpose of achieving socio-economic homogeneity allowing the administration to function better as well as political control of the inhabitants. The management of public services such as education and healthcare was partially transferred to the municipalities as one phase in a process culminating in the privatization of these government services. New labour legislation was enacted, reducing workers’ ability to negotiate. Privatization of social security then made possible the creation of large investment funds – the AFPs (Admin-istradoras de Fondos de Pensio-nes), pension fund administrative bodies – which today have a major role in the urban real estate market and the expansion of the city. These funds are the driving force of real estate development to the extent that they expand the long-term capital market, making it possible for households without capacity for indebtedness to finance the purchase of housing.
6. NEOLIBERAL URBAN POLICY IN CHILE: SEGMENTATION AND URBAN INEQUALITIES

“[tr.] Urban policies depend on specific situations. At given times, they also have overall characteristics that cannot be boiled down to a single society. The policies correspond to the contingent interpretation of transformation models, in situations and periods. Each development model has a corresponding urban model, and each development policy has a corresponding urban policy” (Massiah, 2012: 11).

The intensity of the realization of neoliberal reforms in Chile is to be blamed on the iron hand of a ferocious dictatorship. Sabatini (2000) analyzed how the reform of real estate markets in Santiago had significant effects on the price of land and on residential segregation. This liberalization policy was based on three key principles: urban real estate is not a limited resource; the market is best placed to assign various uses to the land; land use must be governed by flexible provisions that are determined on the basis of market requirements.

Evident in official MINVU documents between 1978 and 1981, the liberalization of city land brought about by the 1979 elimination of “city limits”, sought to use the market to lower land prices by increasing the supply - according to the official narrative. But the effect was the opposite, since prices went up. Land speculation, which an overnight administrative decision included within the city limits, was crucial in the evolution of the prices. Social housing was gradually distanced from more central locations toward areas outside the city due to the phenomenon of speculation that still exists today.

7. HOUSING POLICY IN NEOLIBERAL CHILE

According to the argument put forward by Gilbert (2003), Chile’s
housing policy was not imposed through the Washington consensus. To the contrary, the radical neoliberal Chilean technocrats – the “Chicago Boys” – went beyond Washington’s policies to make Chile the model that was copied and disseminated by international organizations. Gilbert explains that after the coup, “[tr.] the military government immediately got rid of the socialist housing program, even if it didn’t replace it with anything. However, in 1975, a new housing model was beginning to take shape. The new system would be guided by the market and would be integrated into much more competitive economic and financial systems. On the supply side, public housing would no longer be sponsored by the state but built by the private sector based on signals sent by the market. Rather than the developers building based on orders from the public sector, they would be competing to produce what consumers want-ed. The State would therefore be reduced to a “subsidiary” role (Gilbert, 2003: 138).

The subsidized housing system, which is still topical, represented a major change because it directed the demand of those in need to the market. In addition to the necessary indebtedness of the beneficiaries, this system introduced the idea of targeting according to which “[tr.] housing would be a good that could not be obtained except through individual effort; the State subsidy would be reserved for the neediest in the guise of compensation for their efforts” (Chilean chamber of construction, 1991: 90-91). Rodríguez and Sugranyes (2005) affirm that subsidized housing in Chile does not constitute a housing policy per se, but “first and foremost a financial mechanism supporting the private real estate and construction sector”. Undergoing full structural adjustment during the 1980s, the Chilean government’s top priority was to stabilize the private construction sector. The strategy for doing this was the privatization of the entire housing production system. The Chilean Chamber of Construction, an employers’ association that brings together the largest construction companies, played (and
continues to play) an essential role in determining and implementing this policy.

The massive construction of housing for the poor – although of poor quality and located in the periphery – managed to quiet social demands for many years. Sugranyes (2012) asserts that between 1990 and 1997, the MINVU managed to “[tr.] build as many homes as Germany after World War II, achieving an absolutely outstanding annual rate of ten units per 1,000 inhabitants. This record level was maintained for a number of years, providing home ownership to most applicants from the poorest sectors”.

In the last 30 years in Chile, public policies on subsidies have succeeded in converting the poor – considered marginal, vulnerable and excluded – into simple, assisted beneficiaries (and not actors) of social programs, and target-objects (and not subjects) of public policy. However, the housing policy generated a crisis by creating ghettos of urban poverty, areas of “non-homeless” pobladores (Rodríguez, 2005): “[tr.] The world of marginality is in fact built by the State in a process of social integration and political mobilization, in exchange for goods and services that it alone has the power to give” (Castells, 1986).

This housing policy reflects the concept of alienation, understood as the result of public policies and as a situation “[tr.] imposed on all facets of the individual’s daily life by institutions and organizations that do not allow participation in the providing of services” (Ruipérez, 2006).

8. THE RECONSTRUCTION POLICY: SAME RECIPE?

Various reports (MNRJ, 2011a; Rolnik, 2011; INDH, 2012; UN Mission-HABITAT, 2010) by human rights organizations after the earthquake have shown “[tr.] the reconstruction ideology”, a topic that has also been addressed in certain articles and even in special interest stories in the press. In “[tr.] The ideological failure of
reconstruction”, Perez (2011) suggests that this model (of reconstruction) is shown to be an approach that the State dismantles, transferring its powers to private actors, deemed to be “[tr.] brilliant, powerful and prominent”. In the reconstruction process, emphasis was placed on the allocation of subsidies, simplification of the bureaucracy and private sector facilitation, while the victims were to be assigned housing of mediocre quality, were segregated, far from their daily and social lives, and designed as an emergency solution.

These various components underscore the importance of the role played by social movements in general in Chile today, particularly by the pobladores movement, in resistance to a hegemonic development model.

2- Social movements and the struggle for the city, between power and action

It is our theory that the earthquake served to detonate urban social movements that were rebuilding in an advanced neoliberal setting. We will examine the mobilization and resistance process by considering the spatial aspect of the collective action and by taking the example of the two pobladores movements at the national level. This process can be understood as an illustration of “[tr.] social movement resistance and the emergence of counter-models and debates on the just post-neoliberal city” to echo the call for contributions for this issue.

9. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Reconstruction processes, and therefore the production of Chilean cities, must be understood as a conflict. A conflict between on the one side agents who take the money and who take advantage of the transfer of public wealth to the private sector through the real estate market and subsidies; and on the other side the majority, who resist this logic and who defend use value against market exchange
value. Social movements propose to move forward towards spatial justice in order to go beyond the subsidiary model of housing and therefore reconstruction, in order to build cities with a social function of the land and self-governance, and to stand up against the current market supremacy. It is clear, therefore, that through pragmatic initiatives, we can actually build post-neoliberal cities.

However, we ought to set the emergence of these urban social movements in a broader historical context and understand that the current movements are a part of the historical pobladores movements in Chile. Our assumption of the dual telluric and social movement is based on this: the earthquake was actually a catalyst or mobilizing call for processes that were in action but underground. The proposals and projects, in particular FENAPO’s, wanted more autonomy based on self-governance and questioned the welfare-based dependency relationship to the State which was increased by neoliberal policies. This conflict demonstrates the dialectics between alienation due to neoliberal policies and the emancipatory processes that started to emerge within the territories. The resistance and resilience processes entwine and this increases the dialectical complexity of the issue.

In some previous work we studied one of the movements that founded FENAPO: the MPL. We want to draw attention to it because of its knowledge of how to vary its action modes, from urban housing to education, proving its resistance and resilience capabilities during a struggle. The definition of the MPL is to manage “struggles without the State, through territory control and self-governance, against the State, through direct action in order to crumble the leading order; and from the State, as a build-up of anti-system forces”. The MPL proposes a complex and autonomous strategy capable of being on several fronts at the same time in order to go beyond welfare-based demands. It is interesting to notice how this proposal is consistent with the analysis of Lopes de Souza on the autonomy of other Latin American social move-
ments, which grow “together with the State, in spite of the State, against the State”. Especially, indeed, in the case of the Movement of the Workers without a roof in Brazil, or the *piquetero* movement in Argentina.

So, how do we combine the concepts of right to the city and spatial justice with the action of the urban social movements in Chile? Soja explains the difference between both concepts as follows: spatial justice is an analytical approximation that can “be operational” in various ways locally, whereas, the right to the city can be understood as a common global and political horizon, which combines several demands. We note that the neoliberal agenda is still in force: while the MINVU is discussing the new urban development policy, simultaneously, the *pobladores* movement is fortifying its vision, which, as we have seen, evolved from claiming a right to housing towards a broader horizon, based on right to the city to produced the emergence of a post-neo-liberal just city based in autonomy and emancipatory practices.

NOTES

1. The earthquake caused 521 casualties and 56 missing people. According to the figures published on March 29th 2010 by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning (MINVU), 370,051 homes were damaged by the earthquake, of which 81,440 were destroyed and 108,914 severely damaged. Numerous equipments were damaged as well. An uncommon tsunami occurred after the earthquake, reaching the shore at different times with varying levels of intensity, thus worsening the damage caused by the earthquake.

2. **Poblador(es):** Inhabitants of a población [city]. In Latin America and especially in Chile, this term has a social, and often political, connotation that the work “inhabitant” doesn’t. Pobladores refers to communities living in working-class neighbourhoods fighting for a space, to have their own neighbourhood, their own street, and their right to the city. The iden-
tity of the poblador is closely tied to the history of the production of space.
4. From 1990-2010, four governments were democratically elected, from centre-left parties in a block called “Concertación de partidos por la democracia”, [joint action of parties for democracy].
5. Based on what we were able to observe, there were many more demonstrations of direct solidarity and especially mutual assistance than looting or other antisocial behaviour which although lesser, was nonetheless played up by the media
6. Allegados : a word for the people who, because they don’t have housing, are obliged to live in their families’ or rent a room in a house
7. Ayuda de pueblo a pueblo : assistance provided directly by grassroots organizations to the victims of the earthquake and tsunami, with no intermediary (government or NGO)
8. «700 pobladores de la FENAPO se movilizaron en Santiago» [700 pobladores from FENAPO rallied in Santiago], El Ciudadano, 4 junio 2010.
9. This work was supported by Chile University with the « Consultorio de Arquitectura FAU » [Consulting agency of the Faculty of Architecture and Town planning of Chile, architecture, housing, community and participation]
10. In 2014, the FENAPO experienced another year of strong mobilization. The major one concerned the occupation of Mapocho riverbanks in the very center of Santiago, during 74 days in the middle of winter. After this brilliant action, which the media completely eclipsed whereas more than 4000 people had gone there to support the occupation on August 19, FENAPO decided to occupy a building in the center of the capital, in Bellas Artes district, a gentrified and very touristic area. Families were living in this building, they were demanding to exercise their right to the city and the pledges of subsidies for housing finally fulfilled. After occupying the building during three months, the police violently evicted the families on December 3, 2014.
11. Even though one of the spokesperson takes part, as a representative of civil society, at CNDU [Consejo Nacional de Desarrollo Urbano = Na-
tional Council for Urban Development], grassroots are not mobilized anymore, nor organized.

12. “Habitantes de Iquique encienden barricadas para protestar por falta de ayuda” [City dwellers of Iquique set fire to barricade in order to protest against the lack of assistance], EMOL, April 4 2014.


14. Poblaciones: Term used in Chile to designate neighbourhoods created by the occupation of land, mainly in the 1950s and 60s, or land that has been precariously developed. Most poblaciones development is done by its inhabitants, the pobladores, and by public policy intervention (Pulgar, 2011).

15. “Tomas de terreno”: illegal occupation of land to build houses for oneself or to exert political pressure to obtain housing

16. Organized shantytown arising from the illegal occupation of land (toma de terreno) by a homeless group organized into a “sin casa” (homeless) committee.


18. Movimiento de Pobladores en Lucha, Movement of Inhabitants in Struggle

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1. INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this article is to study the relationships between social movements and the academic community. Therefore, these terms are intentionally used in an “open” way, in order to be able to include various aspects of both fields.

Strictly speaking, the academic community cannot be regarded as merely a single, homogeneous body, since it is permeated by various oppositions and conflicts, all of which concern the relations among its heterogeneous parts (professors, administrators, students). At the same time, there are crucial connections between the students and the precarious workers in the universities, as far as their class interests are concerned.
This article focuses on these social movements that are formed and developed in a non-hierarchical way, outside and against the dominant institutional framework, since the structure and activity of such movements challenge the strictly hierarchical institutional fields—such as the academic one—and thus provoke tensions and contradictions of great theoretical and practical importance (Shukaitis, 2009; Katsiaficas, 2001). Unlike the traditional class movements, the movements of social antagonism are not formed exclusively in the realm of production, but on the basis of various social confrontations, that refer to Michel Foucault’s critique of power relations (including the power relations that are re-produced within the academic environment) (Melucci, 1996; Foucault, 1990). Specifically, Chantal Mouffe’s analysis is particularly useful, since she refers to Carl Schmitt’s classic “friend / enemy” distinction to highlight the antagonistic dimension of social relations and consequently of the political phenomenon. In this way, while agonism is perceived as a “we / they” relation, in which the opposing sides are adversaries who accept the legitimacy of the other side, antagonism is perceived as a “we / they” relation, in which the two sides are hostile and have no common ground; they are “enemies” (Mouffe, 2005; Schmitt 1996).

Therefore, the movements of social antagonism usually develop self-education projects, outside of and against the academic institutions, since they perceive them as integral ideological mechanisms of the dominant system and thus as institutions which are hostile to their values and purposes. However, there is an undeniable timeless function of the student subject as a basic “link” between social movements and the academic community.

2. THE STUDENT AS A SOCIAL SUBJECT

In the 1960s, social struggles interacted with student protests in an international level, including Greece (“1-1-4 Movement”, “Lam-
brakis Youth Movement” and “Iouliana” / “July Events”) (Papanikolopoulos, 2015). This interaction was equally characteristic in the case of the anti-dictatorial movement, where the students’ role in the overthrow of the Greek military junta was very important, especially during the Athens Polytechnic uprising (1973), which is probably the most emblematic social event that took place inside university premises (Kornetis, 2013).

Stergios Katsaros presented an extremely crucial parameter for that period: “Through the events of the School of Law it had already become obvious that without mass participation, the student movement was completely ineffective. A significant part of students were aware that the student movement should be connected with the labour movement. There were lots of discussions on the matter. Various solutions were proposed. But some preferred to solve it in the simplest way: They chose to work in factories or construction sites”. Katsaros argues that from such procedures emerged a new type of proletarian subject, which pioneered along with the student movement, both during the anti-dictatorial struggle and in the massive demonstrations of the early period of the Third Greek Republic, and clarifies that “most of them were middle school graduates, students of technical schools, scholars and even graduates who preferred to work in factories rather than to “kiss ass” and “sell out” by taking a “decent' job” (Katsaros, 2008).

In the above quotations, the interpretation of such radical choices –such as to willingly abandon the safe academic environment and its prospects of class advancement for the sake of a conscious accession into the working class– was attributed both to a kind of political strategy that attempted to bridge the gap between students and workers, and to a kind of cultural predisposition that seemed to favour personal independence at all costs.

This predisposition –in the sense of *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1998)– was gradually strengthened through the impact of the “Situation-
niste Internationale” (S.I.), the emblematic theoretical-practical collective that decisively influenced the events and the whole spirit of May 1968 and became a reference point regarding various issues for the movements of social antagonism at an international level. During the last years of the Greek military junta, the anti-authoritarian publishing group “International Library” translated and released *Society of the Spectacle* (Debord, 1972) and the brochure *On the Poverty of Student Life*, which had caused the so-called “Strasbourg Scandal” in late 1966 (heralding in a way the events of May 1968). The effect of the Situationniste Internationale’s approach on the Greek antagonist movement resulted in the prevalence – for nearly three decades– of a particular concept of the student as a subject that is organically dependent on basic “sovereign” institutions, such as the family and the State, and therefore as a “reactionary” and “counter-revolutionary” subject (Situationniste Internationale, 1973).

3. THEORY AND PRACTICE

When assessing the consequences of the “Strasbourg Scandal”, the S.I. stressed that its unequivocal condemnation by the majority of professors and the judge Leabador was more rational than its approval by famous French social scientists, such as Alain Touraine, Henri Lefebvre and Jean Baudrillard, which in their view was a somewhat cunning attempt of an unauthorized applause. After having dismissed academic education as a ritual initiation in the system of commodification and criticized science as yet another social sphere that was separated from everyday life, the S.I. promoted a negative attitude towards both university professors in general and the possible appropriation of radical ideas in the academic establishment (Situationniste Internationale, 1973).
At this point, however, it should be noted that this furious critique was not produced solely within a theoretical framework, but also through important social experiences at a very intense period. In particular, it is worth noting that during the academic year 1957-1958, the founding member of the S.I., Guy Debord, and the subsequent member, Raoul Vaneigem, attended the presentations of Jean Baudrillard and Henri Lefebvre in the Institute of Sociology of Nanterre (Paris). Friendly ties and interactions had been developed among the four of them, especially as regards their critical approaches on daily life (Shukaitis, Graeber & Biddle, 2007). However, given S.I.’s opposition to the concept of intellectual property, Lefebvre’s initiative to present in the text for the Paris Commune (Arguments, #27-28, 1965) the conclusions of their collective processes as his personal work, would inevitably end their relations (Home, 1991).

Nevertheless, the interaction between some leftist professors and the crucial social protests of this period reached its peak during the “global 1968”. The top case is that of Herbert Marcuse – although it should be noted that Marcuse himself refused the role of the ideological leader of the New Left and even pointed out that such a role is unnecessary (Marcuse, 2005).

However, it is common sense that the spirit of this period influenced theoretical production, as many thinkers focused on the events and some of them were actively involved. For instance, Michel Foucault acknowledged that the experiences of that time acted as a catalyst for further theoretical elaboration of a wide range of issues (Rousselle & Evren, 2011). These issues included the fundamental distinction between “political” and “politics”, a typical issue within the social movements, and their accumulated experience did in fact affect the relevant theoretical discussion, which was developed to a greater extent after 1968. In practice, this discussion is connected with the feminist groups of the 1960s and the 1970s and with their famous slogan “personal is political”.
It could also be argued that the incorporation of the theoretical discussions of the feminist movement in the academic literature in the form of “gender studies” is a prime case of fruitful connection between social movements and formal knowledge.

On the other hand, at the dawn of 1968 (31/01/1969), the administrators of the Social Research Institute of the famous neo-marxist “Frankfurt School” called the police to suppress the students that had occupied their Institute. This initiative caused a particularly interesting theoretical debate between emblematic members Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse, which dealt with the limits, the oppositions and the connections between social movements and the academic community, between practice and theory, medium and purpose, violence and social emancipation (Adorno & Marcuse 2012).

4. ON SELF-EDUCATION

Such cases as the denounced Lefebvre’s plagiarism or Frankfurt School’s collaboration with the police seem to reinforce an “anti-academic” (but by no means “anti-intellectualistic”) tendency within movements of social antagonism. Thus, these movements usually develop self-education projects that are formed outside of and against the academic institutional framework.

However, this tendency seems somewhat confusing, since while these movements scorn the status of the professor and the formal education system in general, they selectively adopt pieces of academic theories and quite often identify themselves as individuals who move between social movements and academia.

Specifically, it is claimed that while a lot of activists often refer to professors with radical political activity, such as Cornelius Castoriadis (founding member of the group / journal Socialism or Barbarism), they maintain an ambiguous attitude
towards the work of theorists who are –quite abusively– categorized as post-structuralists (Shukaitis, Graeber & Biddle, 2007). So, there is the paradox that while post-structuralism is usually rejected as a kind of academic defence against “surrendering” before the existing system, Baudrillard’s critique on the media or Foucault’s analysis of contemporary forms of surveillance and power are often incorporated without hesitations in radical self-education infrastructure. It should be noted that such collective theoretical-practical elaborations of these analyses often have interesting results, confirming those interpretative approaches of social movements as fields of cultural production (Souzas, 2015).

Such a “paradox” –as the simultaneous rejection / adoption of academic knowledge– can probably be interpreted on the basis of an –either way– contradictory attitude towards the academic community. Specifically, while many activists consciously reject university institutions, they often rely on them for a series of crucial personal and collective activities. In Greece, it is quite characteristic that a lot of activists are students and that the university premises are fully utilized for the social movements’ purposes. To a great extent, this fact is connected with the spatial positioning of universities in the centre of the cities, as well as with the academic asylum (now abolished), which reinforced the perception of the university as a socially protected area. So, it is worth noting that the majority of the squats in Greece were public buildings which are legally owned by academic authorities and that a huge number of protests and events take place inside the university premises. It could reasonably be argued that the history of social movements in Greece has been largely written exactly there; in 1973, the uprising started with the occupation of the Athens School of Law and exploded some months later with the occupation of the Athens Polytechnic; in 1979, the autonomous student occupations spread nationwide;
in 1985, the double occupation of the School of Chemistry (May and November) appeared to be a big deal for the Greek public sphere; in 1985, 1990, 1991 and 1995, the Athens Polytechnic was occupied by the movements of social antagonism for various social-political reasons of great importance; in June 2003, university buildings were occupied in Thessaloniki by protestors against the European Union Summit; in 2006-2007, a lot of universities were occupied by the massive student movement; in December 2008, the occupations of university and other public buildings were integral parts of the revolt (Souzas, 2015; Kitis, 2015; Evangelinidis & Lazaris, 2014, Vradis & Dalakoglu, 2011).

After the crisis has emerged, the issue of self-education seems to become even more complicated, since the devaluation of the university is henceforth linked to policies that disintegrate social achievements. Under these circumstances, the timeless rejection of the university as a supposedly “public” institution that actually “serves” capitalism, somehow seems anachronistic and needs to be reorganized in order to avoid being a “left alibi” for the utter commercialization of knowledge. In this context, the university could be approached as a common good under threat and the movements’ great experience could articulate –and not separate– mobilizations around crucial social issues such as education. Given the fact that there is a growing research interest for collective action, the overcoming of various ideological filters and the collective recording, analysis and theoretical-practical elaboration of social movements seems to be a highly necessary task. Pierre Bourdieu’s proposal on forming reflective collective scientific subjects seems extremely interesting for a country in crisis, where there was never an influential “School” in the field of humanities, as there have been in other countries (e.g. the above-mentioned Frankfurt School) (Bourdieu 2004).
5. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, it could be argued that the limits between movements of social antagonism and academia are sometimes clear and sometimes a bit obscure. In particular, there is an evident opposition to the institutional framework of the university, since these movements are formed outside of and against the dominant political and economic structures. A kind of collective and horizontal self-education is opposed to the hierarchical division between “experts” and “non-experts” and to the neoliberal education system.

At the same time, however, crucial connections indeed exist between social movements and academia. With regard to their theoretical production, there are various interactions with fruitful results for both communities. Indicatively, Michel Foucault was inspired by the spirit of ’68 and in return he inspired social movements about crucial issues, such as the microphysics of power.

In the midst of a very intense period, constructive criticism on the students’ social roles—who often move exactly around the limits of these communities—and of the academic knowledge—that is similarly often utilized for controversial purposes—is called to be the case study of a collective reflective theoretical-practical elaboration that will focus on the encounters and conflicts in the cities in crisis.

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INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS MUSIC DOING HERE?

In October 2015, a spoof news article was published on submediant.com, a satirical, self-deprecating site largely concerned with classical music and the toils of formal musical education. About six months later, and in typical viral fashion, the original English article was translated by an unknown source into Greek, then earnestly shared and reposted as a serious, legitimate bit of news, across social media platforms and mailing lists.

According to the headline, physicists had proven that classical music inhabits its own “separate realm, inaccessible to humans”. “Physicists from CERN”, the article claimed, had revealed that “classical music exists in a field of reality entirely removed from the four-dimensional spacetime inhabited by human beings”. At
the end of the news, a supposed commentator was quoted as stating: “It’s exciting that science has finally proven that classical music inhabits an independent, autonomous realm, detached from our mundane experience… But the question remains, what is classical music even doing in our universe in the first place?” (Submediant, 2015).

A few months earlier, in June 2015, our study group had visited the UniConflicts 2015 conference to present its work on radicalizing music & sound historiography. Much as we stressed our emphasis on music as an everyday practice and our group’s explicit detachment from the masterpiece-based norms of classical music history, we received the same kind of perplexed response quoted in the article above. What could a music historiography group even be doing in the universe of radical criticism, in the first place? “I don’t really know about music, so I can’t really talk about it…” begun one of the first comments following our presentation. And, echoing the thoughts of several other audience members in the School of Architecture auditorium, it continued: “but music is a pretty narrow, specialist topic, anyway. How exactly do you think it could relate to social movements and activism?”

Fair enough. We did, however, feel compelled to point out that music is not so specialist a topic, it seems, when it comes to the daily online consumption of music industry standards, and the voluntary generation of data this yields for a growing digital economy. Nor would it be considered too specific or specialist a topic for a global artist-activist like Ai Weiwei who would, a few months later, have a piano brought over to the swamped fields of Idomeni, Greece on a rainy day, and ask a Syrian pianist sheltering among thousands of other refugees, to “perform for him” (as the real, not in the slightest bit ironic BBC headline read). After all, “this is not a performance or a concert”, Weiwei rushed to explain, in one of the many meticulously staged videos and corresponding photos of the event, that quickly found their way into every con-
ceivable online platform as well as the artist’s own blog. “This is life itself” (BBC 2016).

“Life itself”, it seems, is therefore a space where every mode of performance and mediation is welcome, but only so long as it lends itself to sustaining an economy of undervalued production and overvalued consumption. It is easy to understand how food, for instance, and the way it is produced, prepared, marketed and consumed can be a directly political matter and a field for social mobilisation. It appears much harder to understand how music, and the way it is made, conceptualized, documented and valued, can be a big political deal as well. After all, food relates to a basic human necessity, it is a prerequisite for survival; music is a bourgeois, leisurely kind of activity. No matter that the way food is consumed in post-industrial societies has little to do with survival, and that the supposed autonomy of music as an artform has undergone a dramatic transformation since becoming a mobile, on-the-go commodity (Bull, 2005; Gopinath & Stanyek, 2014). While we may still be having trouble making a case for this in academic conferences, it appears that other environments, more intimately attached to a global creative economy, are finding the political implications of music much easier to grasp, reify and instrumentalise (see e.g. Buitrago, 2013 on the opportunities of the so-called “Orange Economy”, Hesmondhalgh, 2010 on the problems of arguing for paid labour in the culture industries, and Howkins, 2002 for the very definition of how mere “ideas” can become currency, if appropriately co-opted by a creative industry).

1. HISTORICAL MUSICOLOGY
AND “THE MUSIC ITSELF”

To study music in its historical sense is to study music as a metonymy. The meaning that the word “music” has come to hold among particular circles of power across different times and places, is as
telling, if not more so, than “the music” under investigation on each occasion. And to begin with, music is not singular, nor can it be so neatly accompanied by a definitive article. Just what “the music” entails is always a matter of social, political and ideological contestation (Small, 1998; Attali, 1985). In academic circles, the term is usually accompanied by an equally charged, essentialist concept of “the music itself”: music as an ideal “thing”, an immaterial object whose elusive content may suffer fatal contamination if studied in contextual, social, practical, or bodily terms.

Taking an arbitrary essentialist view of an otherwise ill-defined concept also enforces a paradoxical binary. One is either an expert, and therefore by definition a marginal elitist with no recourse or point of entry into the real social sphere, or an ignoramus, with no capacity or reason to discuss or conceptualize music in any form. One knows either everything about music, or absolutely nothing at all. The former has the privilege of talking about all things musical, and the second has this privilege revoked. There is no need to even mention all the kinds of shades of grey between this black and white dichotomy – self-taught musicians, improvisers, street musicians, etc. The alarming issue, however, is that nobody from either edge of this grey spectrum seems to be aware of the spectrum itself. If they are, they seem unwilling or unable to explore it.

The authors of this text all belong to a study group, recently formed within (or perhaps against) a context that hardly deviates from the binary norm described above. Confusingly entitled School (not department) of Music Studies in its official translation, this School is almost never referred to by students and locals as a Music Studies department, but as “Musicology”. For the local community, it is often seen as a metonymy of everything that is theoretical, “all words and no acts” about music studies in Greece. “I study Musicology”, students tend to say, and they mean it pejoratively: “I study Musicology instead of Music” or “instead of the music itself” is what they tend to mean. “I do theory, I don’t
do practice”, is another way of putting it. “I’m not very musical”, some of the students complain, but usually these don’t tend to be the ones caring about what “the music itself is”. More than likely, they are the ones who feel left out of that core, who struggle to somehow make it “into music” while feeling distinctly under-equipped to do so. Many of these students enter the department during years where the intricate system of national exams allows those with extremely low grades, to accomplish the chimeric quest that is University entry in Greece. High-ranking education officials never miss an opportunity to complain about this phenomenon, publicly referring to low-grade entries as “a disgrace”. Some of these “disgraceful” students still manage to endure, and even to successfully exit this hostile system. Those that do, sometimes realize that they are perfectly musical if they choose to be that; maybe then, on occasion, it’s the School, in all the connotations of Scholasticism that this word may bear, that’s failing them.

Scholastic Musicology. Bureaucratic Musicology. Administrative Musicology. We often joke with colleagues about new alternative buzzwords that could stand in for what seems, by all means and accounts, a dying discipline, not only in Greece, but across University departments worldwide. With more and more music departments shutting down, forcibly merging with departments in every other conceivable arts & humanities subject to keep themselves going, or struggling to rebrand themselves as centres of excellence in sound technocracy, there is something vampiric about the very discipline of musicology in global academia right now. Tenure-track professorships are scarcer than needles in a haystack, and with departmental budgets stretched to their limits, unpaid voluntary work for overqualified PhD holders, with the pretense of accumulating some kind of symbolic capital, is becoming the norm that few can dream of entering, much less escaping (Hall, 2014).

In terms of the so-called knowledge industry, we fare no better in our local bubble, the School of Music Studies, A.U.TH..
With an intake of barely a few dozen students per year and an annual output of many times less than that, the School may at times appear like a crumbling factory. Fresh, high quality produce is coming in from secondary education; then it appears to get stuck in an antiquated processing grinder, only to come out stale and "useless". Why would we be comparing A.U.TH. music students to some kind of meat? Only because in the current context of a neoliberal knowledge economy, they are expected to be little more than that. In the words of Panagiotis Kanellopoulos (2015):

Here we are, in a wider context where ‘finance (and the monetary and fiscal policies that go with it) is the politics of capital’ (Lazzarato, 2015: 13) … The resultant economization of education - masked in the jargon of “structural reforms”, “efficiency”, “accountability”, relevance to “real” life’ - is, in Arendtian terms, nothing but the result of this structural change, whereby the social marginalizes the political and hence any real possibility for human action.

Here we are, in a wider context where everyday thinking tends to become almost thoroughly instrumentalised, frozen and unreflective, allowing for the re-emergence of certain discourses that depict certain people as having the right to rightness as their exclusive property, and certain people to be construed as incompetent, living in incompetent countries, run by incompetent leaders.

Given the contexts highlighted above, the critical contributions of a study and research group dealing with music historiography are hopefully somewhat easier to consider. Our efforts are not so much concerned with the articulation of competent historical insight on "the music itself"; nor with advocating the market benefits of critical historiography in a University context. Our aim is to provoke critical thoughts on noise and silence, and to explore muted, untold stories that are being left out of education and research, or more worryingly, left out of everyday life, too, because the practices they
refer to and the agencies they involve have been construed as incompetent, trivial, aesthetically worthless, morally wrong.

2. CRITICAL MUSIC HISTORIES: AN OVERVIEW

Critical Music Histories has been active since 2014. At first we were not sure what kind of form this group would take; one thing we did know is that it would be pointless for it to be a research group built by “professionals” trying to educate “novices”. Some of us already had experience with groups originally launched by students sharing an interest in a particular class or subject, then gradually being hijacked by the “professionals” among them, only to be slowly turned into instruments of self-promotion and symbolic value. We therefore structured the group a little differently, by involving students and alumni at various stages of their research and started calling on interested researchers from outside the university, to give open lectures (see http://criticalhistories.web.auth.gr/category/talks). We also set out monthly reading group meetings, with texts proposed by each member on a rotational scheme; so far, texts have ranged from more traditional musicological sources, to sociology, philosophy, and biographical fiction.

Our research interests span across several different subject matters, genres and historical eras, but our work is informed by three shared objectives:

● To historically trace and map multiple, subjective and/or lesser known aspects of music, with a special interest in unexplored musical practices
● To expose and problematise the ways and contexts through which dominant narratives on the History of Music are constructed and enforced
● To maintain and systematically engage with essential questions of epistemology, such as: What constitutes a valid / reliable / noteworthy historical account? When? Where? Why?
From whom, and for whom? (Critical Music Histories, 2015)

We thus aim to provide radical, and sometimes boldly revisionist perspectives on music, sound and noise, on high and low culture, on the role and representation of the musical body in society, on the significance of musical (auto)biography, on the value of oral, undocumented or socially “invisible” histories of music-as-practice, and on the relationship between art and everyday life in different cultural contexts.

At the same time, the group responds creatively to a number of broader academic needs and challenges, primarily to do with the shortcomings of active academic hierarchies and severely underfunded structures for research within Higher Education Institution settings. The group initiative aims to encourage, promote and disseminate original student research across all academic stages, from undergraduate to postdoctoral level. This is established by fostering individual, collaborative and group initiatives between students of different levels and between students and staff, with a view to developing interdisciplinary, inter-university and international collaborations with researchers interested in cognate fields. In so doing, the group aspires to an effective, bottom-up contribution to the local musicological community, through the application and establishment of purpose-built methodologies for current research, while also documenting, and in some cases safeguarding the role of lesser known, contested or controversial musical practices, institutions and agents, on a local and international basis.

3. CRITICAL HISTORIOGRAPHY IN ACTION

Current work by CMH group members covers a broad, but interconnected nexus of historical topics, epistemological issues, and attempts to document and theorise current practices. Georgia Pazarloglou’s recent re-casting of French fin-de-siecle cabarets as a counter-cultural movement (Pazarloglou, 2015), Evdoxia Ragk-
ou’s exploration of bourgeois self-censorship and its role in the lukewarm reception of Debussy’s and Nijinsky’s sexually explicit ballet Jeux in 1913 Paris (Ragkou, 2014), or Anastasia Peki’s look at Gabriel Fauré’s songwriting as an unclassifiable alterity in the history of French modernism (Peki, 2016), are examples of how canonization, and the high-low divide traditionally propagated in 20th century historiography, can be blurred and relativized to expose significant side-plots to The History of Modernist Music. This also involves re-examining the role of institutions, as a crucial, and sometimes grossly understated, parameter in the documentation and legitimization of some historic practices and movements over others. Critically making use of existent work in the above domains from the paradigms of New Musicology and Critical Musicology (Kerman, 1985; Bergeron & Bohlman, 1992; Kramer, 2002; Maus, 2011; Mantere & Kurkela, 2015), the group attempts to formulate critical insight from positions located in between the canonic divisions of centres and peripheries, west and east, art and popular music.

A significant strand of our work focuses on improvisation, the last terra incognita of emancipatory discourses within the University, which is becoming rapidly (mis)appropriated by business-oriented academic centres, hoping to find in jazz and free improv, a new set of marketable skills, for all the wrong reasons: virtuosity, an impact-based assessment of spontaneity, and an emphasis on music not as an autonomous practice, but as supportive of other modes of consumption (mall jazz, unpaid jams in bars etc.). A considerable bulk of the group’s work has therefore focused on exploring and problematizing the role and status of improvisation and experimentation in everyday life, and in offering de-instrumentalised accounts of improvisation in various contexts.

Ongoing and forthcoming work by CMH members Danae Stefanou, Anna Papoutsi and Panos Ladas combines fieldwork and micro-historical archival research to expose ways in which cur-
rent policies have consistently served to overlook, or deliberately attack and silence, a vast range of practices associated with non-profit and amateur music-making in Greece, particularly in cases of freely improvising musicians. Experimentation that does not lead to marketable products, informal learning outside of institutions, and DIY contexts for the reception and dissemination of music are some of the most negatively targeted modes of musical production right now, both in terms of legislation and press management of public opinion. In short, looking at how such practices are being accounted for and historically represented over the past few years in Greece, reveals a latent, intricate system of biopolitics, expressed on economic and legislative terms through the seemingly “soft” domains of cultural and creative policy, as highlighted in the excerpt below, on the diminishing number of spaces for live experimental music in Athens:

A consistent, dominant and state-enforced rhetoric is currently impacting against experimental and improvised music-making in Athens […] if it is not mass-reproduced, if it does not enjoy mass acclaim, if it does not cost anything to make and communicate, if it does not generate an income, if it is not produced by people who see it as a profession, music simply does not deserve to be thought of as music. It has no legal status as such, its practitioners do not receive social or legal recognition in that capacity (not even as amateur musicians), and the venues that host it cannot legally operate in accordance with any local or state authority legislation (Stefanou, forthcoming).

A substantial part of the research carried out by CMH members thematises, or revolves around, questions of orality and authorship. We are not so much interested in writing history, as in listening to untold stories, and telling them anew, often by participating directly in collective processes. Micro-histories and oral narratives, as well as collaborative, practice-based writing are preferred over single-authored, monolithic cataloguing or archival work that
purports to present “definitive” accounts of composers’ “life and works” (Papoutsi, 2014). The stories we envoice are not monumental histories, but provisional accounts, ready to be critically re-interpreted and differently re-cast.

It is also not merely circumstantial that the thoughts gathered in this text have been collectively put together by five female researchers of somewhat different ages and backgrounds. Making muted stories audible sometimes brings up uncomfortable, not-so-pleasant realities to the fore. Sexism, racial and social discrimination, not always in that particular order, are slowly but decisively becoming thematised in local critical discourses, and it is one of the group’s aims to expose, problematize and relativize such questions as male-biased gendered speech, tacit expressions of class or financial privilege, and the promotion of discriminatory policies of all kinds on a state or institutional level. ImproVersities, an ongoing project, looks at the tensions and dynamics of student-initiated and campus-based free improvisation in and around Greek universities. Traditionally an emancipatory, bottom-up practice that favours subjective expression and fosters critical political thought more than any other, free improvisation is not always that in the University. All too many female improvisers, for instance, will consistently refrain from taking compositional initiative or organizational credit in such groups, while their male counterparts are all too eager to assume leadership and be nicknamed “teacher”, “maestro” or “boss”, even in groups where no teacher-pupil dynamics were ever formally in place (Stefanou et al., forthcoming).

Taking up the role of workshop coordinator or convenor in spite of the above gender-specific baggage, and beginning to document the processes and experiences brought about by this act, has been nothing short of emancipatory for some of the group members. Getting involved in an initiative that engaged non-musicians -in their majority- with experimental music, improvisation, and guided improvisation through verbal and graphic scores, setting up
weekly group meetings and collectively deciding on their content, for example, enriched and enhanced the musical experience of one CMH member, leading her to assume the critical importance of those weekly-based sound-meetings in successfully completing her own “formal training” in piano. Although she was in charge of organising the meetings and finding all the appropriate material, she never thought she could manage the “whole thing” without the “collective energy” of the people taking part and support the action. She never received –or thought she could ever receive– such a deep, and multifaceted musical experience as a “student” in the teacher-centered environment of the institutions providing a formal music education. For another CMH researcher, the very act of setting up a free musical improvisation workshop on the island where she temporarily resides, was originally met with extreme suspicion from the director of the local amateur theatre group who would be sharing a space with the endeavour. The question “who will benefit from this process”, perhaps more easily imagined coming from the lips of a corporate outreach officer, was a chief concern, and ultimately a reason for the collaboration to get stalled before even materialising. “I can understand music experts wanting to experiment with music... But what would a non-expert gain from all that?”, the director asked, quite in spite of her insistence that this was an opportunity primarily for non-musicians to form groups, and make music together from scratch. When the workshops did eventually begin in a different venue and format, they involved a notably varied range of participants including children and pensioners, and are still running on a regular basis.

EPILOGUE: CRITICAL NOISE

Implementing the above work in the aforementioned context of Greek-speaking musicology has been anything but easy. The newly launched Greek Musicological Society, for instance, per-
sistently refuses to allow students of any level to submit, let alone present, research presentations at its conferences. After a mammoth talk during a previous society meeting, it was only agreed that “doctoral students and postgraduates, only after permission from their supervisor”, may submit their proposals, which should be accompanied by extended abstracts and detailed CVs, something not deemed necessary for Musicology Department staff or PhD holders.

It is not only that the existent local structures for supporting and promoting research are encouraging a musicology of perpetu-al disempowerment. The proverbial introductory question, “what is a music researcher doing in this universe in the first place” is also an everyday reminder of the supposed redundancy of theoretical and historical discourses about music, in a context where the best a music graduate can hope for is two or more ad hoc, per-hour teaching contracts in secondary education where they get to “engage” disinterested pupils with the rudiments of western art music and its masterpieces, only to be reminded that the relationship of these pupils to music is rarely, and will probably never be, an active, engaged relationship. Rather, much like their peers and parents, they only get to consume the immaterial object that is music as a non-descript commodity, bundled together with a vast load of other digital content and used primarily as an accompaniment to boost other activities of production and consumption.

What does it take to engage critically with such contexts? Looking at recent history and the distant past, and examining local micro-histories side-by-side with globally dominant narratives, the common element to all of the aforementioned work is dissent. No historical account or currently dominant narrative is taken at face-value. No text or artifact is taken as proof in itself. A mistrust of positivism, formalism, historicism and decontextualized information is at the core of all our ongoing work. In that sense, what we aspire to is not a historiography of music, but a historiography
of relations. Between and around rigid binaries and essentialist structures, a distinctly deconstructive noise.

Noise … deconstructs the binary oppositions that generally channel our attention towards a discrete and isolated aspect of expression: form or content, for instance, or medium or message… there can be no absolute separation between content and form in a relational ontology, and it is precisely the deconstruction of such binaries to which noise points. (Hainge, 2013: 17)

By deconstructing the binaries that appear to have confined music as a whole to a realm of abstract, specialist objects with dubious social relevance, and by examining history as a bottom-up, real-time process of narrative formation, critical music historiography contributes to a reappraisal music’s multifaceted role in shaping and sustaining social structures, and in performing and communicating different kinds of subjectivities, not only privileged or sovereign ones. Collaborative work currently underway by members of CMH includes ethnographic, participatory research with migrant street musicians, archival investigations into legally contested and defunct concert spaces, and interviews with non-professional and non formally-educated music practitioners, alongside ongoing research into lesser known musical practices and institutions of the last century.

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The planning [of the space] of Transport was established as a multidisciplinary field, academically and in operation, in the post-war era of economic euphoria, and in complete alignment with the hegemonic model of the “Trente Glorieuses” of reconstruction of the so-called Western world: a rational state-economy relationship or more accurately the subordination of profit to the [national] political power. Therefore, the origins of the planning tools in Transport are not accidental. They have their roots in the military applications that were to serve the military logistics of American troops in Europe and the Pacific during the 1942-1945 period.

The credo of planning [the space] of Transport is the maximization of the functionality of the transport system. It is a hegemonic model of planning not only for Transport but also for the
space as a whole in all of its scales, and even in harmony with the echo of modernism. The dialectical relationship between hegemony (ideology and politics) and economy is fertilized, at different shades but also with commitment, from both sides of the Atlantic, and dominates as an imported planning act (or also inaction/“laissez-faire”) in the Western-less “sophisticated” European hinterland and the so-called third Asian, African and Latin American world.

The models of analysis and forecasting of demand for movement, products of mathematical formalism for the simulation of production, attraction and processing of moving flows, are prominent features in the planning [of the space] of Transport aiming to create low viscosity flow conditions. There are already indications that the simulation of movement flows, i.e. human flows, acquires a mechanistic nature, is reified to the effect that it is studied in terms of Mechanics of incompressible fluids (Bernoulli law) or in terms of classical (Newtonian) Mechanics of solids (law of gravity).

Low values of viscosity in fluids (or measurement for solids repulsion) are achieved in pipes, (or in other infrastructures) with high geometric and operational standards. And in terms of vehicle flows in the city, this condition is satisfied in [enclosed] urban motorways. From their structural constitution, therefore, the models of Transport planning have a rather finite capacity to cope with the often chaotic complexity of typical urban roads with varying cross sections and sidewalks, intersections with other roads at irregular intervals, the coexistence of various types and volume of vehicles, intersections with pedestrian flows and ultimately the frequent saturation symptoms. Or to put it in another way, these simulation tools were set up to serve the sovereignty of motor movement flows (and not only flows of passenger cars but also of public transport with absolutely distinct infrastructure such as subway systems) in a “fast” city, under the doctrine of functional-
ism. De facto, therefore, the models are adapted to the aspirations of the automotive lobbies, heavy urban rail industry and heavy urban transport infrastructure developers. The fact that the usual practice of simulation, more or less, fails in the usual urban road environment, is overlooked. So, this is not a simple cognitive and thus pardonable error, but a conscious one.

A few words on functionalism are useful at this point. It is well known that its applications are aimed at optimizing the resources–effect relationship. Especially in the field of transport and more specifically of road transport in the city, this theory besides that is based on debatable for their correctness assumptions, leads to tautologies and recycling of these assumptions, almost in terms of self-fulfilling prediction: High assumptions of motoring evolution → high assumptions of mobility growth → need for spatial decompression of activities and land use → dependence on privately owned cars → development of new high-standards road infrastructure → and anew high assumptions of motoring evolution, and so on. In fact, in the field of urban transport the attempted optimization of resources–product places emphasis on the quantitative aspects of transport, namely the insurance of high capacity transport for the pursuit of high speeds, which already from the Interwar period is the object of desire of generals, businessmen, and other speed zealots like futurist Marinetti, not only in the capitalist but also in the then existing socialist world.

Let us now see a socioeconomic issue, which in terms of corporatist slang, that of the [transport] planners / modellers, is attributed as [unit] value of time, λ, which is a dependent on the socio-economic state of the transported person. High values of λ push for high speed of Transport that is consistent with the popular saying “time is money”. So, high incomes push for the creation of generously dimensioned transport infrastructures, for a modern, “fast” city, and accept to pay for it, knowing well, that the low incomes, which obviously do not share the same willingness to pay,
will practically release part of the road that normally, that is without payment, corresponds to them. Here rests the mechanism of the so-called urban saturation toll in London, Stockholm, etc., so as to ensure attractive flow conditions to the private cars. In fact, if also taken into account the very high fare of the basic subway ticket (4.30 pounds) in London, low incomes are either repelled to cheaper but much slower buses or curtail their mobility and as a result are forced to exclusion. In contrast, that is for the «slow» city for all, some few dare to speak up (within the frame of social ecology perceptions) and as “marginals”, like Ivan Illich (1974), are held in contempt by the mainstream planners and by all agile by default modellers.

THE TRANSPORT PLANNING TO EXERCISE HEGEMONY: COGNITIVE ERRORS AND FALSE CONSCIOUSNESS

It is necessary at this point to discuss the fundamental notions of economy and hegemony and of their relations. The dialectical thinking of D. Kotsakis (2016) is utilized, as it unfolds in the forthcoming work “Class conflicts and hegemony in the social space. The dynamics of the common”.

**Economy:** Production of social life in a social system, including the according to Engels (2010) production of means of subsistence, see *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.*

**Hegemony:** Reproduction of social subjects as constituted persons and reproduction of the social relations amongst them. The hegemony corresponds to, according to Engels [see above], *the production of the people themselves.* The hegemony, therefore, according to the Gramscian analysis (Gramsci, 2008), refers to the reproduction of the social system. In the capitalist state, the [state] reproduction of social subjects is *ideology,* and the [state] reproduction of social relations is *politics.* Therefore, hegemony is *the unity of ideology and politics.*
By the end of the so-called “Trente Glorieuses”, the national capitalist state (its inter/transnational versions included) exercises sovereignty in accordance with the dialectical relationship of economy-hegemony, where political power has the primacy. And in the field of transport, economy [infrastructures, machinery and labour] ideology [reproduction of social subjects, namely transport operators i.e. owners of means of production - managerial techno-bureaucracy - workers and the transported persons] and politics [reproduction of relations of social subjects] are dialectically synthesized. Thus, up about to 1980, also in Transport, economy subjects to hegemony, in other words, the political power is predominant.

Without doubt, even since the mid-1950-60, the emerging universality of concepts and practice is detected in the planning [of the space] of Transport too, foretelling the new supranational hegemony that is constructed on the basis of an economic-ideological sovereignty after 1980 and consolidated after 2000. Transport, thus from a space of economic production of social life and ideological-political reproduction of the social system, which according to the first constitutional texts of the 18th century is recognized as a fundamental right, is converted into a space of supranational economic-ideological sovereignty with real subordination of the political power to the economic power, i.e. to profit (Kotsakis, 2016). The satisfaction of latent demand (that is the unrealizable desire of vulnerable persons for movement) is deemed irrational by economic criteria. Movement from a right shifts to a tool of [economic] negotiation of social exclusion or integration. And especially for immigrants and the other outcasts, indigenous and foreigners, the administrative [ensuing economic] ban on movement is the primary against them exclusion measure, reaching even to cruel incarceration.

Movement: Transport now becomes an act of economic transaction in terms of profit, therefore, extracting a significant propor-
tion of surplus value, to the extent that Transport even today, and
definitely in the medium term, remains a labour intensive sector,
even with the reversal of the relation demand-supply, or in other
words by replacing the “orthodox” perception that demand dic-
tates supply, from the full liquidation of the demand following
the changes of supply: supply creates demand. Hence, the prima
facie irrational choices, such as the Thessaloniki submerged mo-
torway (finally cancelled), the Thessaloniki Metro, Via Egnatia,
the Betuwe Line (German and Dutch Rhine to the North Sea) and
of course the field of digital services for the demand management
via [hyper] information.

Especially in the field of aids for travel information and for
demand management (typical sample of completion of energy
with information) the production of digital tools (supply) antici-
pates the demand, provokes and binds it. So, Transport follows
at this level too, the market trends, often excessively, since many
“smart” aids have marginal value of use (and disproportionately
high exchange value).

And the scientific events adjust accordingly. The Transport
Conferences nowadays ignore the [basic] research and focus on
innovation. Most “scientific” conference papers approximate
information leaflets and household appliances manuals. Even
the titles of conferences play the game of seduction to attract
financiers and (paid) delegates e.g. “Transport Research Arena”
(sic). And the institutions of management of research and innova-
tion programs (usually of mixed composition, state and private)
amongst them state-owned universities, set as a basic criterion
for evaluating the performance of the scientific staff the proceeds
to be received by the institution from the development and sale of
innovation; or in more vulgar terms, how much money the pro-
fessor / researcher (original publications and conference papers
are now deemed as secondary criteria) brings to the University.

Naturally so, academia joins the uncritical, almost aphasic,
adoption of methodological “mainstream” models and tools from the field of the market: theory of consumption, return on investment capital and exploitation Co-BA\textsuperscript{3} and IRR\textsuperscript{4}, “bankable transport projects”, “willingness to pay”... The professors-researchers eagerly see to the consolidation of marketable, perpetuating rights through the most lucrative market of continuously updated licenses of proprietary Transport planning software. The University, already estranged from society because of traditional academic elitism, becomes a lever for the market, and claims recognition of that role (poles of excellence, incubators and innovation centres).

Academia now serves grand designs, which consolidate the supranational economic -ideological sovereignty: creation of major supranational Transport networks with prominent examples the so- called Trans-European [multimodal] Transport Networks (continental scale) and Metropolitan Transport Networks (urban - suburban - peri-urban) fully or partially assigned to private funds and with a declared objective of reduced direct government spending, even if the associated external and broader social (non-monetary) cost increases exponentially e.g. the rail link TAV Lyon - Turin, the planned new airport of Nantes (ZAD Notre-Dame-des-Landes), or the urban and rail infrastructure renovation project S21 in Stuttgart (with a budget of almost 7billion euros!) just to mention the most prominent examples from the social-ecological movement’s standpoint but also the “Rethink Athens” project. All these projects do not have a sufficient justification for their main transportation purpose, and there is an attempt to counterbalance this deficit by invoking anticipated external economies of the rehabilitated or renovated space.

Ultimately the planning [of space] of Transport as a field of exercising hegemony, especially in the academic aspect of production and transmission of knowledge, does not only entail serious cognitive errors looming (there will be comments on some
of the important ones) but also the *false consciousness* according to Marx (Marx and Engels, 1976) - see *The German Ideology*, which is necessary for the preservation of social relations, thrives (the way will be substantiated). Therefore, it does not constitute a cognitive error but a deliberate [ideological] concealment of the truth since:

- The simulation of movement, from its origins, is divided into 4 successive stages: the decision taking to move for a specific purpose, selecting a destination, choice of a transport mode, and lastly route assignment. It is obvious that this division does not correspond to the intellectual function of the transported person or to his/her actual movement behaviour.

- We have already talked about the mechanistic and deterministic type, according to Newton or to Bernoulli, of simulation models (often weakened at their interpretative capacity, with emphasis on the descriptive aspects) of the so reified movement behaviour. But reifying movement behaviour not only it is not abrogated but to the contrary is strengthened by the shifting preferences of the planners / modellers towards description-narration models of the predicted movement behaviour, as consumeristic- market like behaviour, with stochastic credit, according to the standard-theory of consumption by psycho-sociologist Luce, already from the 60s. This strategy wonderfully includes, i.e. expropriates, fundamental concepts such as the right to movement and the right to the city -H. Lefebvre (1968). These concepts are reduced to slogans-normalized in the society of the spectacle -G. Debord (1972) and delivered, as fashionable, products in the consumer society - J. Baudrillard (1970).

- Calibration of the numerical parameters of Transport planning models to the presently existing data. It is a critical
process of spatiotemporal reduction, often with no (or in the case that this is attempted, it is done with an extremely shallow view of a typical time series analysis) reflection at all on the process that leads to the projection of “today” into the future. Future is bound by the present and is planned aiming at verifying the commitment. And this is accompanied by the proper arrogant certainty of expert elite of planners / modellers (Habermas 1972). Here lies the breaking point of passing from the pardonable, perhaps, cognitive error to the unpardonable, to ideology, to according to Marx, false consciousness. There are two possible scenarios: either the resounding failure of predictions (the techno-bureaucratic hegemony sustains a setback, e.g. the case of the submerged tunnel in Thessaloniki, but is not discouraged; how could it be anyway?), or the predictions prove accurate, because they reflect the ongoing commitment to effective targeting of planning, with dynamic small-scale adjustments and gradual implementation of the planning. In this scenario, the techno-bureaucratic hegemony is recognised, takes for granted the emergence of external economies (increase in the land rent, increase in the profits of the invested of private and public capital in construction, etc.) with symmetrical diminution of the ability to exercise the right to movement and to the city, and concomitantly strengthens the exclusion. There is always also the less noble practice of “creative” adjustment of results, as long as it appears to have resulted from a scientific tool either one predicting demand or Internal Rate of Return (IRR) or both. Here the perpetuation of false consciousness is entrusted to misappropriation. And academia characteristically stays ashamedly silent...
WHAT TO DO?

First we rethink the importance of basic concepts and their derivative (cognitive) conceptions. Here the dialectical analysis of D. Kotsakis works as a motivation as well as a solid base for rethinking.

1. To recapitulate what was previously said about the dialectical relationship between economy-hegemony in the national-inter/transnational and later in the new supranational dimension:
   - Transport in the second half of the 20th century: Local, i.e. state (city, municipality, country with its inter/transnational relations) field of production for means of production of the social life on the one hand, and field of reproduction of social subjects and relations in the dialectical relationship between the economy-hegemony on the other.
   - Transport Today: Supranational (global) field of economic-ideological sovereignty and therefore of bio-political production with subordination of political power to economic (or more accurately economic-ideological) power (primacy of profit over politics). The right to movement from an institutionalized recognition of a human existential need turns into a marketable service, and definitely shifts into an exchangeable value.

2. Adding the concept of social space of Transport:
   - The space of Transport as a social space: The physical (primarily material that is) space of Transport consists of extension, time, and energy. This three-dimensional physical space constitutes the physical potentialities that along with the social ones make up the objective potentialities. Those, together with the subjective abilities, complete the social forces of the social space of Transport. So the space
of Transport is not limited to its physical dimensions, as the so-called resource-centred economistic views about space that lead to the univocal, techno-economic planning of Transport systems, maintain. And not just that. The physical space is a force of the social space of Transport. It is contained in it. And certainly Transport, as a social space, is completed with the social relationships developed between social subjects and their way of communication.

3. Concluding with the revision of mathematical formalism:

   • Mathematical formalism and simulation: Revision of the compositional capacity of the existing representation tools of the space of Transport as a social space, in accordance with the above, so as to avoid abstract formulations and simulation amalgams with concepts of either classical mechanics or capitalistic production and [market] consumption.

   With the above three conceptual arguments, I will attempt, in all modesty, the first outline of a charter for the planning of the space of Transport.

CONDITION

Following the dialectical approach of D. Kotsakis (2012) in the “3+1 texts-The Common and the Democracy”, the *topos* [of Transport] is the lived social space that is contained in it. Though, as aforementioned, the physical space is contained in the social space of Transport, as a physical potentiality. Let us specify this dialectic sequence: The street - *She is a street girl...He is a man of the street, etc.*, is the topos, the social space of which are *the adjacent to the street land uses and activities*, while the physical space is the road or, more fully, the *road infrastructure*. Similarly, the square is the topos [of meeting] containing activities [social
space] supported by the natural environment and urban equipment [physical space].

In the teaching of 2000-2010 “Praxis and Space. Space and Topos”, D. Kotsakis (2014) says: “The turning of social space into topos is equivalent to the realization of social relations of space in communication relations and, conversely, the emergence of social relations from communication relations.” Seen in that light, the latent demand for movement stated earlier, is equivalent to the unrealized relations of the [contained in the topos] social space of Transport.

If praxis is two synthesis, firstly synthesis of conception and action, and secondly synthesis of theory and practice, spatial praxis [also in Transport] is the realization of relations that turns the social space to topos, and how the physical space is lived when the social space turns to topos. And surely, the spatial praxis is inherently interdisciplinary and critical [Ibid.]. Based on the above, what is a [transport] planner /modeler? He/ she is part of the social subjects of the spatial praxis in the space of Transport. He / she holds a position in the relations governing the respective spatial praxis in the space of Transport. And not the top (this is held by the owner of the project) or even the central one. So to the composition of the social forces that produce spatial praxis, objective potentialities collaborate with the subjective abilities of social subjects, which as freely constituted persons cannot be substituted by the skills of techno-bureaucracy as carrier of the new hegemony either by assignment or by grabbing. They do not subdue to the power of knowledge nor to the economic-ideological sovereignty, i.e. to profit.

The collective creative conception and action in the planning of social space, or more precisely of the topos of Transport, derives as a spatial praxis. The collective experience culminates in theory and leads to transformation of relations:

-between social subjects and objects that make up the produc-
tion of the means of production of Transport (that is economy, as defined above) and
-amongst [reproduced] social subjects of the space of Transport (that is hegemony, as defined above).

POSITION

A. Understanding the existing potentials of methodology
The systemic view was introduced in the Transport planning, turning it inconspicuously into the planning of the space of Transport in 1970s-80s. It is true that it goes far beyond the search for instantaneous supply-demand balance in terms of flow movements according to the microeconomic models, where the balance is uniquely translated to the market price of a commodity.

The system of Transport is composed of three subsystems: 1st a subsystem of activities and land uses, 2nd a subsystem of transportation infrastructure, of machines and labour and their management, and 3rd a subsystem of mobility and spatial effects. It is governed by interactions amongst the subsystems ignoring, however, the acting social subjects. The scholar is called upon to detect and analyse these interactions, as potential combinations of actions and feedback, which due to their complexity are not considered in pairs but in subgroups of more items. The systemic logic does not accommodate two, by that time, standards in the Transport planning: the time reference of instantaneous value (target year) and, single-branch approach, that of the so-called Transportation Engineer (hybrid branch of so-called spatial sciences. Given the opportunity I’d like to point out the inappropriate use of the term “spatial sciences”, as if there are sciences defined in non-space, in a vacuum or even as if they were distinct from the spatial ones, “sciences of time”, and lastly, distinct from both of the previous categories, «sciences of energy»!).
The systemic view leads to the observation of time series (time continuum: past → present → future) and the study of thus evolving relations that only a multidisciplinary approach can meet, and consequently only a group of interdisciplinary composition can actually attempt.

The methodological advances brought about by the systemic view of the space of Transport is essential to the classical, analytical, original view but up to this, since the computational tools remain subject to the mathematical formalism of the corresponding simulation school (hydro-mechanic, econometric, deterministic, stochastic) bound in any case by the “unavoidable” concepts of the value of time $\lambda$, and the subsequent generalized transportation cost ($C_g$), the IRR, etc.

It could be argued that ultimately, the systemic approach of the space of Transport is typically homeostatic and therefore, a conservative methodological approach of the reproduction of relations within the same [established] system. In fact, the most representative planning exercises of the space of Transport, with stated or latent invocation of the systemic logic, are urban transportation projects that function as locomotives and navigators of wider urban renovation/rehabilitation projects / urban gentrification e.g. The Docklands line in London, project S21 in Stuttgart and similar plans on the tram network in neighbouring Karlsruhe, the known “Rethink Athens” or even yet the incomparably humbler rehabilitation project for the St.Sofia’s axis, in Thessaloniki.

In any case, the systemic approach to the planning of the space of Transport allows, under certain conditions, the understanding of the structure and operation of a Transport system, especially of an urban one. It has, to some extent, good diagnostic capacity. However, the most basic factor for a productive use of the systemic methodology is the beyond the diagnosis overcoming of the systemic approach, the release of planning, as a spatial praxis from the resource-centred and technobureaucratic economism and the
fertilization of the social space of Transport as it turns into a topos of Transport.

B. Transcending commitments

If, as discussed earlier, the systemic approach focuses on the system of relations of the space of Transport, as a social space in a homeostatic manner, what is required is the ensuing. That is transcending, as a change of the relations in the space of Transport. Transcending, the change of relations in the space of Transport is subject to the analytical study of the social subjects and the social forces of the space of Transport as well as the communication mode of the social subjects.

Transcending intimates:

• Release from the restrictive classic confrontation of demand and supply, which constitutes the economic-ideological pedestal for the reifying of movement/transportation.

• Release from the concept of the value of time as a measure of the exchangeable value of transport, which thus from right switches to intermediate consumption service to perform personal or collective social activity, of economic, political or cultural purpose.

• Release, by extension, from the logic of negotiation and especially from the logic of trading, the right to transportation; redefinition of it as a sine qua non component according to H. Lefebvre’s right to the city of the people-creators in the production of social life and the reproduction of social subjects and relations in the city.

• Release from the simplistic mathematical formalism and (re)search of suitable tools for the study of movement as a right and not as a commodity. This is translated into: a. Unified (not segmented to four, three or even two stages) view of movement as praxis (unity of conception and action). b. Replacement of the theory of the consumer preferences for
transportation of *individuals* from a certainly much more complex and demanding view of the social forces and the movement of *persons*, as means of their communication.

All these to revisit, as we conclude, the condition with the constitutional view that the [social] space of Transport, turning into a topos (lived social space) is subject to planning exercises for the transcending of [intra] systemic relations. Then and only then the planning of the space of Transport ceases to be field of technobureaucratic hegemony and economic-ideological sovereignty. It is humanized (in contrast to reifying) as a collective creative action of social subjects, constituted as free persons to exercise their right to movement and to the city.

NOTES

1. Greek text translated into English by Elisavet Kostaki - Psoma
2. These concepts and relationships will be discussed below.
3. Cost benefit analysis.
4. Internal rate of return [of investment and operation of a system].

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κοινωνικό χώρο. Η δυναμική του Κοινού. Θεσσαλονίκη: Εκδόσεις των Ξένων.
Departing from our personal experiences, our presentation tries to discuss and conceptualize the “in-between positionality” of the feminist activist-researcher, who attempts to analyse the reality in which she’s implicated in, in order to better explore the nomadic movement between the spheres of the university and the social and political struggles and to focus on their borderline. We would like especially to share some of our first experiences and reflections that have inspired some discussions between
us when we went down into the militant and political sphere as a field-work. So, today we are not going to discuss our research-results or some specific case-studies, but we aim just to open a debate on the role of the researcher starting from the contributions of some theoretical and epistemological feminist approaches.

As the central axe of our presentation is the feminist epistemological tool of positionality, we find it important to introduce ourselves, before developing our main points. We are two white students and young researchers without an academic status of researcher, — so we can say we are in an “in-between” status — we come from two countries of south Europe (Greece and Italy) where we took part in feminist and student movements. After a training in different disciplines, law and contemporary history, we decided to join a master on socio-anthropology and feminist transnational theory, having as one of our major concerns the methodological and political achievement of transdisciplinarity.

In the first part, we discuss shortly a genealogy of the feminist epistemological theories of positionality. In the second part, we are going to discuss the role of the researcher considering her “coming and going” between the academic sphere and the movements arena. In the last part, we are going to propose some specific points to open a debate on the role of the researcher in the era of crisis and precarity.

We consider the feminist epistemological tool of positionality as one of the main contributions of feminisms in the scientific discussions on objectivity of the science and the neutrality of the researcher. So, to begin with, what is positionality? The term describes the process during and via which each one of us and, in what interests us here, the researcher becomes conscious about his/her position within the imbricated power relations, but also the process during and via which she/he finds her place in the world, her point of departure, this point from which she watches the world. In fact, it is an invitation to think about the existence
or inexistence, the construction and the articulation of our multiple identities that mainly reveals the reality that we, people and researchers, experience dominant and dominated positions at the same time. Positionality refers at the same time to an empirical reality that (feminist) scholars should necessarily deal with, and to a theoretical concept. We would like to mention three waves of thought that have contributed in a significant way to conceptualize positionality. All of them emerged with force back in the golden era of late 1970’s-early 1980’s, that is to say that once we figure out the variety of their birth contexts, we might be conscious about their possible inter-influences:

1) The feminist tool of positionality, before being one of the most important methodological and epistemological contributions of feminist theory, needs to be contextualized as the most important political and theoretical contribution of the collective struggles led in the last century by Black Women, Third World Women and Women of Colour, geographically disseminated in both the Western countries and the Global South. Afro-American women’s movements of 1970s, trying to achieve the concrete goal of eliminating inequalities/discriminations and implementing social justice, challenged both the hegemonic, white, middle class feminist movements, and the antiracial movements controlled by men and biased by sexism. The evocative title of the famous volume edited in 1982 by Barbara Smith, Patricia Bell-Scott and Gloria T. Hul Black, *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men: But Some Of Us Are Brave*, expressed forcefully this unspoken truth: Black women’s struggles, shaped by specific historical and material conditions, couldn’t be anymore encompassed or represented by these movements. They needed to create their own movements, and to affirm their own epistemology that they closely articulated in connection with their «lived experience». Assert-
ing that Black women as a group possessed a unique standpoint and a critical insight of society, Patricia Hill Collins’ book *Black Feminist Thought* revealed how knowledge is produced in reference to the social, racial and gendered position of every group and every subject [Hill Collins, 1990]. Epistemology and Intersectionality are thus intimately interconnected according to the black feminist thought, which provided a sociological definition of the standpoint theory. The concept of “Intersectionality”, coined by the jurist Kimberlé Crenshaw, refers to the simultaneous effects of the different systems of oppression and exploitation related to sex, race and class, among which is not easy to establish a hierarchy (Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality, as both praxis and theory, is thus a critical tool that, even if it has emerged historically from specific and situated struggles, aspires and provokes everyone, especially dominant and privileged people, in the self-awareness of our location in the social relations of power.

2) Chicanas feminists, communities of struggle of women located on the Mexican-USA “frontera” that resisted the Anglo-American hegemony, adopted a specific epistemology that derived from this particular geographical and political location “on the borders”: they reclaimed their existence at the crossroads of different power relations, stressing the challenges they faced across the multiple lines of gender, ethnicity, race, class, and sexuality. In Gloria Anzaldúa’s powerful image of the “border”, as well as in her theory of “Mestiza Consciousness” that discussed her life growing up on the Mexican-Texas border, one can find an epistemological account of the social, cultural, and historical conditions that produced her thought (Anzaldúa, 1987). Chicanas feminists’ reflection is also particularly interesting if one aims to examine the way we make theory, as well as our responsibility as producers of knowledge.
Cherrie Moraga, emblematic figure of Chicana feminism, artist and lesbian theorist, co-author with Anzaldúa of the pioneer *This bridge called my back*, developed the concept of “Theory in the Flesh” to express Women of Color’ place in the world and their political project: “theory in the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives—our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings—all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity. Here, we attempt to bridge the contradictions in our experience” (Moraga, 1981: 23). She conceptualized the “Flesh” as the site within which Women of Color experienced the material effects of living in their particular social location (Anzaldúa and Moraga, 1981: xviii). As Chicanas explicitly outlined, it exists a close relationship among social location, knowledge, experience and identity. Any feminist political theory precisely derives from a certain racial/social/cultural background and experience.

3) Another ‘source’ of the concept of positionality can be found on a Marxist/socialist.radical feminist perspective. Nancy Hartsock in 1983 introduced the *Feminist Standpoint theory*, to point out the epistemic privilege of a feminist political position — and not of the ontological one of woman — as she described in her text *The feminist standpoint: Developing the ground for a specifically feminist historical materialism*. Her work has been developed by Sandra Harding who seeks to do the “good science”, a science that aims always to the objectivity or what she had finally called in a revisited version “strong objectivity”. Objectivity can be seen here as the terminal of a process that starts from the subjective experience of those who have been traditionally left out of the production of knowledge, the marginalized people (especially women), to end to a knowledge that, rather than blinding the power relations in order to pretend an objectivity, it takes them into consideration.
Following their traces, Donna Haraway, melting her Marxist roots with a certain postmodern approach, speaks in terms of feminist versions of objectivity ("feminist empiricism") which is based on limited and situated knowledges, see for example her emblematic text *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective* published in 1988. These are knowledges that are explicit about their positioning, sensitive on the structures of power that construct these multiple positions and committed to make visible the claims of the less powerful. It is worth mentioning here that we talk about different feminist standpoints (according to the imbrication of power relations), and that we can see standpoint theory as an epistemology of permanent partiality. We could probably identify the vision of these feminist authors into Benedikte Zitouni’s reading of Haraway’s *Situated knowledges*: ‘a desire to call for better taking into account of the world, a quest for better ways to see, a wish for constructing more reliable stories, in short “a call to real worlds”’ (Zitouni, 2012).

We decide to use this conceptualisation of “In-between” feminist positionality to point out the very fluid, changeable and permeable borders that exist between the spheres of the university and the social and political struggles, spheres traditionally perceived and treated as separate entities. Specifically, we reflect on the troubled interconnections, contradictions, continuities, barriers and impasses that exist between the two. In our discussion we make reference to two different levels: the first one related to epistemological/methodological issues that a feminist researcher has to face to, and the second one more related to her personal and political implication in feminist movements.

Concerning the first level, we are going to bring to light two kinds of specificities mutually articulated in the militant-feminist
approach. As we know, it is within the academia that certain strict criteria of validation of knowledge that demand an authentic objectivity are fixed. Firstly, feminist approaches, developing uncompromisingly new epistemological and methodological tools, have troubled the mainstream orthodox and positivist approaches, even the more radical, challenging what was traditionally considered theory in the dominant academic community. Secondly, what we are interested in here is the particularity of the feminist researcher who decides to analyse the political realities in which she’s implicated in. We can affirm that the militant social world is a difficult research field, especially in the case of proximity with the research field/object (in the so-called case of “auto-ethnography”) that may not always be an advantage or a benefit, but something that troubles. In this frame, we propose to discuss some of the concrete difficulties someone may meet:

1) The theoretical tools and knowledge we acquire into the academia can become a rigid theoretical and ideological posture when we, as activists, go down to the arena of movements, since very often a “gap” exists between theories as conceptual models and analytical observations. This gap derives from the fact that social movements and social processes are much more polymorphous, fluid and contradictory than any analytical theory can fix or catch.

2) The displacement between the two spheres implies for the researcher a certain challenge that can be a fruitful opening and a risk at the same time; this one of taking distance, mainly from the militant environment where she/he is implicated. To give just some examples. Firstly, the theoretical and methodological tools acquired within the academia can enrich the agenda of a group but can also create a “knowledge gap” between the researcher-militant and other members of a group. Secondly, the
research on activism requires a task of interpretation and it’s not simply descriptive. As a consequence, this can include the adoption of a critical perspective which goes hand in hand with a process of taking distance from a familiar militant field. For example, the intersectional critical prism that a white middle-class researcher embraces through the reading of radical theories focused on power relations, can allow her to revisit both the social/political history and the activist context in which she’s implicated.

3) Another point we consider as crucial is the question of the institutionalisation of both knowledge and experience that originate from social movements. We ask if in this case, bringing research on our own movements within a neoliberal and capitalistic academic system of production of knowledge, can lead to an undue exploitation and appropriation of those movements, having the risk of de-politicization of the radicalism and complexity that belong to movements. In such a case, is it legitimate to speak about a “betrayal” by the part of the researcher, especially if we consider that sometimes movements/social minorities don’t want to be observed and enter into the theory since they perceive theory and the academia as a cage? At the same time, as suggested by the sociologist and materialist feminist Colette Guillaumin, observing “the anger of the oppressed” and promoting their epistemological entry in the theoretical field (not a sterile integration or domestication) produce a crucial subversion of perspectives, as it reveals the power relations always there but (un)willingly hided by the researchers in social studies (Guillaumin, 1981).

In the era of the expansion of radical and critical studies and in the European context of the economic and political crisis, it is crucial to revisit these troubled trajectories. We wonder if the young, pre-
carious activists-researchers, relaying on intersectional feminist knowledge and on their own experiences, have something new to bring to light concerning the ways we make theory in, within and for the struggles. Precarity has not just impacted the living and material conditions of the new generations but has also changed the boundaries that separate the two spheres of academic research and activism. Taking into account the Italian case, one can observe that precarity has recently become an important political laboratory for social movements, including feminist movements. The concept of precarity has emerged as a field of tensions that registers the exercise of power, as well as a powerful site of resistances and appropriations “from below”, in which activists cultivate alliances and build the possibilities for new practices and imaginative actions. Activism has thus turned precarity into an instrument of struggle through which they re-imagine and re-conceptualize their lives and subjectivities. Some young Italian feminist scholars have largely discussed the effects of such precarity on new generations, affirming the necessity to see female precarity via the intersection of some fundamental key topics like gender and sexuality, migration, diaspora, racism, social welfare and reproduction, in both their local and global intersections. In doing so, this “new wave” of feminism has destabilized the universalism assumed by the 1970s generation, more focused on the sexual difference concept, by pointing to a necessary generational change (Fantone, 2007; Di Cori, 2007). The common feature that unify the different experiences told in the 2007 special issue of Feminist Review dedicated to Italian Feminisms, as Sconvegno in Milano and Punto di partenza in Firenze, is the attempt to think about precariousness not only in relation to a flexible job market but also in relation to other less flexible social structures affecting women’s lives, such as heterosexual marriage, maternity, social reproduction, care-work. The political urgency of the present is opening a fruitful dialogue across differences between native and migrant women, and crisis and precariousness
can finally provide in this regard a good ground for a confrontation between different positionalities.

We consider crucial the process through which the feminist researcher takes consciousness of his/her position within the power relations — which is not once for all as we are always in process of being — and in-between academia and movements, in the perspective of taking into consideration and treating the whole of the ethical and political questions that emerge during the field-work. Writing this reflection and giving space to our ideas as young researchers and activists, has been for us a way to retrace and back over what we have learnt in our paths, but also a way to give voice to something new that doesn’t exist yet in our communities. What we need is to assume new cross-borders positions and produce new empowering and challenging theories in this ‘in-between’ — theories and positions sensitive to positionality, and committed to the articulation of the analytical categories of race, class, gender and ethnicity, in order to change the way we perceive the world. The high stake that we have is rethinking the part we take in the production of both knowledge and political practices that may perpetrate those exclusions, marginalisations and silences that the epistemologies of struggle we presented tried to unveil and challenge. After all, making theory as researchers-activists in the dominant academic community is not a neutral or an uncommitted process, but something connected to a political project of transformation, as reminded again by Anzaldua when she loudly said: ‘We need to de-academize theory and to connect the community to the academy’ (Anzaldua, 1990 xxvi).

REFERENCES


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