

**“The contentious common space in Greece: From the neoliberal
austerity to the SYRIZA left government”**

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Abstract

While the last years the discussion on urban commons is becoming increasingly popular among activists and radical scholars there have been few attempts to think it together with the notion of crisis. Following autonomous Marxists analysis (de Angelis 2010; Caffentzis 2010; Hardt and Negri 2009), conceptualizing the commons involves three things at the same time: common pool resource, community and commoning. Commons don't exist per se but they are making in times of social struggles and they are constituted through the social process of commoning. In this theoretical framework, I connect the spatial analysis of Lefebvre (1974): Perceived-Conceived-Lived Space, with the autonomous Marxists analysis, and I propose the concept of the Common Space. From this point of view, motions and reactions of capitalism can be understood as a response to the power of social commoning of commoners' communities that produce the common space. Capitalism seeks to distort (de Angelis 2009) commons and enclose the common space in order to maintain the permanence of the so-called primitive accumulation and the (re)production of commodity and surplusvalue. Following this approach crisis can be understood as the critical time of circulation of capital vis-à-vis the circulation of social struggles for the control over the commons. To approve this thesis I examine and problematize the paradigm of urban commons and enclosures in Greece in the era of crisis.

During the last years we are witnessing in Greece an unprecedented wave of new urban enclosures and at the same time there are emerging fruitful urban social struggles and a new common space. On the one hand in the era of crisis there are emerged several local neighborhoods assemblies, social centers, squats, communal gardens, social health centers, social kindergartens, cooperatives, social groceries, collective kitchens, and barter structures that constitute a common space in the perceived-conceived-lived urban space. On the other hand, austerity measures have as a result crucial implementations of material, immaterial and ideological urban enclosures. Nowadays a new left government promises to take steps against neoliberal austerity urban enclosures and promote democratic urban planning. The challenge is

great; hence this paper monitors the contentious commons space from the neoliberal austerity to the SYRIZA left government.

Closing, I argue that in the era of crisis commons are in the focal point of political, social and urban conflicts.

Key words: common space, urban enclosures, crisis

1. Introduction

Commons and enclosures are two interrelated concepts that reflect the social antagonisms and indicate the participation of communities to or their exclusion from access, use, reclaim and management of material or immaterial resources.

At first glance, it seems that the sphere of commons is the field of conflicts over the control around the so-called natural commons (air, seas, rivers, forests, flora, fauna), public commons (transport networks, telecommunications, education, health), cultural commons (languages, sciences, arts), genetic commons (genes), energy commons (natural, energy resources), communication commons (electromagnetic spectrum, internet) etc. In this archipelago of commons, several scholars (...) include the urban commons, which usually concern green-public spaces, public infrastructures, archaeological sites, social-public housing, educational campus, etc. Finally, other scholars argue that land uses, urban landscape and community vitality should be addressed as commons (Burton 2000).

In a more analytical examination, following the approach of autonomous Marxism (de Angelis 2007; Caffentzis 2010; Federici 2011) I wish to demonstrate that the range of the sphere of commons is not just claiming spatial quantities, but is determined by the fields and forms of social self-organization and the responses of systems of domination, oppression and discrimination in the fields of race, sex, class and culture through enclosures.

The method employed in this analysis is the open and systematic dialectic, which aims “to articulate the relations of a given social order, namely capitalism, as opposed to an historical dialectic studying the rise and fall of social systems”(Arthur, 2002:3). Consequently the open and systematic dialectic does not seek any lost, hidden or altered substance or truth. Besides, history, class, gender, nation, crisis, space or any other category is making in each concrete moment through specific articulations-negations-abstractions of the social relations and antagonisms.

Moreover I feel associated with recent postcolonial urban theory approaches that seek to surpass the dichotomies between West/East or North/South and focus on the examinations of the hybrid intermediate forms of production of space (Jeffrey et al 2012; Robinson, 2011; Roy 2011).

At the same time, I draw attention on the recent strand of thought on intersectional approaches (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins 2009; hooks 2000) that examine the crossings, interferences and diffractions of the multiple systems of domination, oppression and discrimination in the fields of race, class, gender, and culture.

In this paper, I first present the different approaches on the commons and examine the concept of enclosures. Then, I link the concept of space with the concept of commons and I introduce the concept of Common Space. Finally, I examine the Common Space and the enclosures in Greece in the era of crisis and sum up with a brief conclusion.

2. Different approaches on the definition of commons

The discourse of commons revolves mainly around two different approaches. On the one hand, there are approaches that support enclosures and understand commons only as recourses for economic exploitation. Therefore, they seek out the appropriation, privatization and commercialization of commons. On the other hand, there are the approaches that support the so-called “communism of the commons”, which means the creation of communal-social relations through which commons are self-regulated collectively with non-commercial ways.

2.1 Approaches for the enclosure of the commons

The approaches that support the enclosure of the commons are distinguished in three types: neoliberal approaches, state regulation approaches, and collective action approaches.

Neoliberal approaches are based in the theory of the “tragedy of the commons”, analysed by Hardin (1968). In the late ‘60s Hardin (1968) argued that if there is free open access and lack of ownership in a common pool resource, the users behave selfish as “free riders” and overuse the resource up to the point to destroy it completely. So, according to these approaches, the only way to cover the cost of use of common pool resources is to enclose and to privatize the access to them (Coase 1960).

State regulation approaches, like the neoliberal approaches, consider as commons only the common pool resources, while taking into account social antagonism, which seeks to be compromised with tactics of social contracts (Ehrenfeld, 1972; Heilbroner, 1974; Ophuls 1973). The state regulation approaches are opposed to privatization and argue that the state is the best guarantor of the protection and regulation of efficient use of common pool resources (Carruthers and Stoner 1981).

Approaches of collective action (Ostrom 1990) are opposed to privatization and state control and they are looking for a compatibility of capitalism with commons. They argue that the producers’ communities are able to self-organize and achieve effective business-economic results through participatory ways. These approaches do not challenge capitalism; hence they enforce institutionalization of common pool resources on behalf of the state.

2.2 Approaches for the communism of commons

Approaches for the communism of commons separate themselves from the dipole of private or state management of commons, and recognize in commons characteristics

that are based primarily on the dynamics of social relationships. Following the approach of autonomous Marxists (De Angelis and Stavrides 2010; De Angelis 2007; Caffentzis 2010; Hardt and Negri 2009; Federici 2011), commons involve three fundamental characteristics at the same time: common pool resources, commoning and communities. The people who, through commoning, constitute emancipatory communities that self-organize non-commercial ways of sharing common pool resources are called “commoners”.

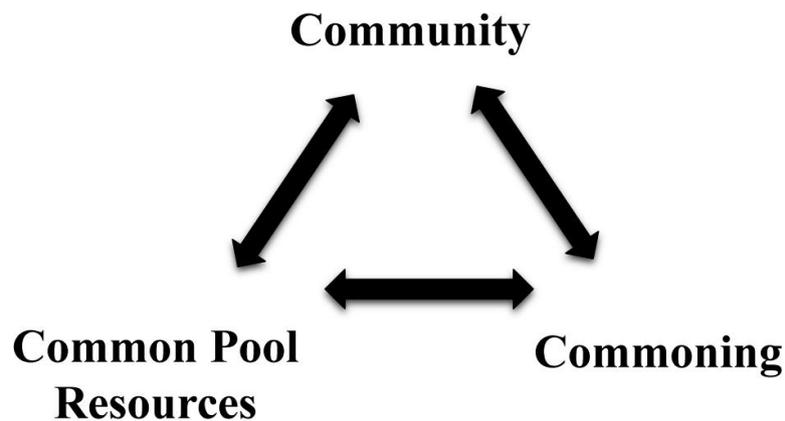


Figure 1. The composition of commons (De Angelis and Stavrides 2010)

Based on this three-part definition of commons, it can be argued that commons do not exist per se and they are not a nostalgic reference to the medieval past of the communities of commoners. As Harvey (2011:105) argues, “The common is not something extant once upon a time that has since been lost, but something that, like the urban commons, is continuously being produced”.

3. The permanence of the so-called primitive accumulation

The approach of autonomous Marxists on the relationship between capitalism and commons is based on the analyses of the permanence of the so-called primitive accumulation, which includes two basic concepts: the concept of the enclosures and the concept of the distorted commons.

3.1 Enclosures

The enclosures are analysed by Marx in *Capital* and concern the procedures of theft, dispossession and usurpation of communal lands through the so-called primitive accumulation during the transition of feudalism to capitalism¹.

According to Marx (1867:895)

“The spoliation of the Church’s property, the fraudulent alienation of the state domains, the theft of the common lands, the usurpation of feudal and clan property and its transformation into modern private property under circumstances of ruthless terrorism, all these things were just so many idyllic methods of primitive accumulation. They conquered the field for capitalist agriculture, incorporated the soil into capital, and created for the urban industries the necessary supplies of free and rightless proletarians”

This theft was intended to separate the users of communal land, the commoners, from the means of production, reproduction, and existence. The ex-commoners were violently forced to migrate to emerging industrial cities, were proletarianized, became wage labor workers and established the capital relationship, hence developed the class of proletarians and the capitalist class. (Marx, 1867:874) From the late nineteenth century until the last decades of the twentieth century, the dominant understanding within the Marxist literature, apart from few exceptions like Rosa Luxemburg (1913), has always considered enclosures and the so-called primitive accumulation as a precondition fixed in time. According to this approach, dispossession and expropriation happened only in the transition from feudalism to capitalism with the enclosure of communal lands.

However, in the last decades of the twentieth century, especially after the crises of the seventies and the emergence of post-fordism and neoliberalism, various scholars (...), mainly from the perspective of autonomous Marxism, have reconsidered the discourse on primitive accumulation. They argue that enclosures are constantly expanding and therefore they are not merely a pre-capitalist procedure. Autonomous Marxists recognize as “New Enclosures” a rich variety of procedures in the fields of race, sex

class, which focus on the separation of humans from their means of production, reproduction, and existence. Characteristic typical cases of the new enclosures are the human trafficking and the gendered oppression, biometrics, informational accumulation, land grabbing and dispossession, the Structural Adjustment Programs of IMF and WB in Latin America, Africa and recently in Europe, immigration, wars for raw materials, the debt crisis, environmental pollution and climate change, the fall of the Eastern bloc, the capitalist road of China and the decline of the post war welfare state of Western European countries. (Midnight Notes Collective 1990, 2009; Caffentzis 2010; Vasudevan et al. 2008)

Furthermore, during the last decade, several geographers, researching the spatial evolution of enclosures, have similarly argued that primitive accumulation is an ongoing feature of capitalism rather than simply a precapitalist phenomenon (Vasudevan et al. 2008; Hodgkinson 2012). Significantly, Harvey (2003: 147) suggests four main features of "accumulation by dispossession": privatisation, commodification, financialisation and the management-manipulation of assets.

The study of the permanent character of separation of the producers from the means of (re)production directed autonomous Marxists to concentrate on those emancipatory social struggles that undermine the separation and reunite people with the means of (re)production. Thus, the idea and the theoretical framework of commons is created. This point of view puts the permanence of social struggles on the center of the analysis and perceives enclosures and the permanence of the so-called primitive accumulation as the response to the constant movement and composition of commoning.

3.2 Distorted commons

Scholars for the communism of commons argue that capitalism, at the same time with the enclosures, accepts or needs commons both in the form of non-commodified common pool resources and in the form of social cooperation and non-commodified social reproduction. Autonomous Marxists (De Angelis 2009; Negri & Hardt 2009;

Caffentzis 2010) call “distorted” or “corrupted” or “pro-capitalist” commons that types of the common pool resources, communities and commoning, which are used, exploited and are essential for capital’s viability and sustainability. De Angelis specifies the relationship of capitalism with commons and calls “distorted commons”, those commons “that are tied to capitalist growth (...) where capital has successfully subordinated non-monetary values to its primary goal of accumulation.” (De Angelis 2009). Furthermore, according to Hardt and Negri (2009:160), the three most significant social institutions of capitalist society where the common appears in corrupt form are the family, the corporation and the nation. “All three mobilize and provide access to the common, but at the same time restrict, distort, and deform it. These are social terrains on which the multitude has to employ a process of selection, separating the beneficial, generative forms of common from the detrimental and corrupt”. Moreover, Caffentzis (2010:25) calls “pro-capitalist commons” those commons “that are compatible with and potentiate capitalist accumulation”.

Based on the above discourse on the relationship between capitalism and commons, it is implied that commons are in the focal point of political conflicts. Thus, two possibilities exist: “either: social movements will face up to the challenge and re-found the commons on values of social justice in spite of, and beyond, these capitalist hierarchies. Or: capital will seize the historical moment to use them to initiate a new round of accumulation (i.e. growth)” (De Angelis 2009).

4. The Common Space and its enclosures

4.1 The concept of Space

In order to connect the concept of commons with the concept of the urban, it is important to examine the concept of the space. While the historical overview of the concept of space is not the subject of this paper, I wish to mention the Lefebvre’s approach.

Lefebvre (1974:7) argues that space is not an empty container that is filled with actions, images, relationships and ideologies, but it is a social product or a complex social construction based on values and the social production of meanings, which affects spatial practices and perceptions. Lefebvre’s main method is the trialectic analysis, where space is diversified in the physical-mental-social space, spatial practice-representations of space-representational space and finally to perceived-conceived-lived space

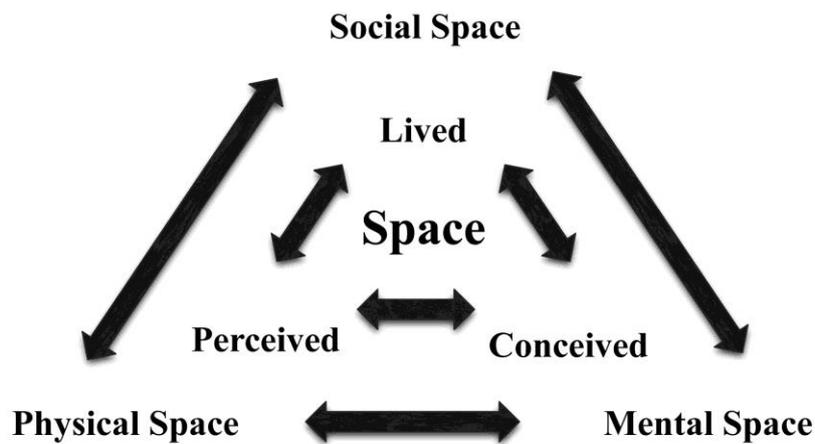


Figure 2. Lefebvre’s spatial trinity (Tsavdaroglou, 2012: 103)

According to Lefebvre (1974) the terms Perceived (Spatial Practise) – Conceived (Representations of Space) – Lived (Representational Space) mean:

- Perceived (Perçu): This is materialized socially – produced space, which is empirical, can be measured and described. It is the space secreted by society, recursively reifying it. It is a result of dialogue between human and physical space. Perceived space with spatial practise embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation
- Conceived (Conçu): This space is mentally constructed and influenced by ideologies. This is the dominant space in any society (or mode of production). As Representation of space, it is tied to the relations of production and to the “order” which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to “frontal”

relations. The conceived space is a mental space separated from physical space or abstract space imposed on concrete space.

- Lived (Vécu): This is directly lived space. It is alive: it speaks. Practically and directly experienced social space. It embraces the affective, bodily lived experience, the sense of passion, of action and lived situations, and thus immediately implies time. It is formatted from everyday life. This is the space of the everyday activities of "users" (or "inhabitants"). The representational space is the space that the inhabitants have in their minds.

4.2 The Common Space

Connecting the trialectic analysis of Lefebvre: Physical (Perceived)-Mental (Conceived)-Social (Lived) Space with autonomous Marxist analysis on commons: Common Pool Resources-Commoning-Communities, I propose the concept of the Common Space (figure 3).

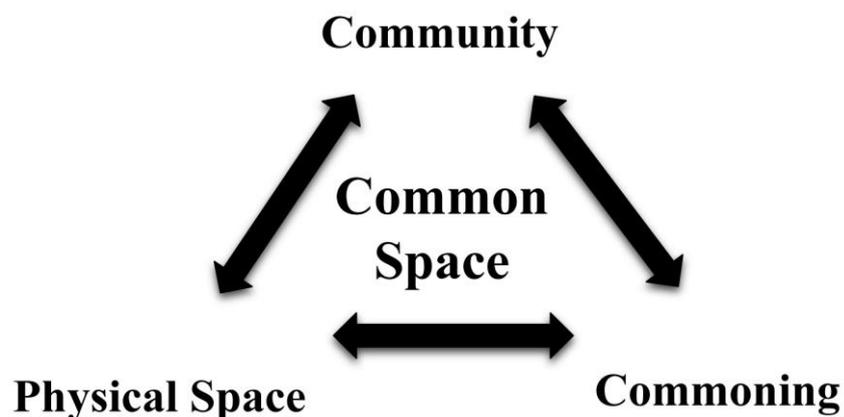


Figure 3. Common Space

As Common Space I propose the interaction among the Physical space with the Commoning and the Community.

The Physical-Perceived Space is the Spatial Practice of collective sharing of the means of (re)production and existence. The Physical Space of Common Pool Resources is

constituted, generated or reclaimed each time by the Commoning practises. Finally commoners through commoning practices establish their communities.

Thus, the key point of the Common Space is the interaction among the physical space of common pool resources with commoning and communities. The rupture and fracturing of the Common Space is imposed by enclosures. Depending on which of the above relations is the subject of the attack of enclosures in order to be separated from the other relations of the Common Space, there are:

- Enclosures of the Physical Space of common pool resources. These are the classical and new enclosures which separate humans from their means of (re)production with tactics of usurpation, appropriation and commodification of common lands, energy and natural resources, information, knowledge, genes; gentrification; urban renewal; gated communities, walled urbanism, rent policies and processes of dispossession.
- Enclosures of Commoning. These are the enclosed social relations, which rely on the usurpation of social cooperation and (re)production in favour of capital or other systems of domination, oppression and discrimination in the fields of race-gender-class, etc. Several scholars use the terms “distorted” or “corrupt” or “pro-capitalist” commons and commoning to describe the capital’s exploitation of social cooperation and activity (De Angelis 2009; Negri & Hardt 2009:160; Caffentzis 2010:25).
- Enclosures of Communities. These are the so-called “anticommons” (Heller 1998) and the social and political constitution of the so-called imagined communities (Anderson 1983), in which the enclosure of social relations, and common pool resources takes place.

5. The Common Space and enclosures in Greece in the era of Crisis

In order to show how the discussion on commons is articulated in the paradigm of crisis in Greece, I will pinpoint into two crucial procedures that took place the last years that is the socio-political polarization and the emergence of the new spatial enclosures.

5.1 The emerging common space and the socio-political polarization

In the era of crisis, commoning, social cooperation and social (re)production are in the focal point of social and political conflicts in Greece. During the last years the middle class and the welfare state structures tend to be destroyed and demolished step by step. This has as a result several social (re)productive structures and commoning procedures from different points of departures to be emerged i.e. radical leftist and anarchist perspective, neoliberal-creative class perspective, patriotic left perspective, conservative-fascist perspective.

The first great and symbolic appearance of this plural character of social commoning was the Indignados² (“aganaktismenoi” in Greek) movement. The flare that lit in Tunis, Cairo and Spanish squares during the spring of 2011 articulated with the Greek movement during the summer of 2011 in the two months occupation of Syntagma Square in front of the Greek Parliament in the centre of Athens. At the same time, Indignados occupations took place in central squares in more than fifty Greek cities. Athens central square “Syntagma” can be recognized as the physical-perceived place, i.e. the common pool resource of the indignados community. In fact, it was formed a fluid community with no boundaries, as concerns its members, but with specific forms of commoning and communication practices between them; hence there was emerged a variety of micro-communities and micro-squares inside the Syntagma square.

According to Stavrides (2012: 588):

“Each micro-square had its own group of people who lived there for some days, in their tents, people who focused their actions and their micro-urban environment to a specific task: a children’s playground, a free reading and meditation area, a homeless campaign meeting point, a “time bank” (...), a “we don’t pay” campaign meeting point (...), a first-aid centre, a multimedia group, a translation group stand, and so on”.

But there is a further analytic point that must be remarked. Syntagma square very soon was divided into two arenas; the “upper” square in front of the parliament with patriotic-fascists slogans, Greek flags, national anthem and the “down” square with the “democratic” general assembly of socialists, lefts and anarchists, where the majority of the people went from one to other. Analysing this process, a form of “hybrid commoning” is noted. Both parts of the square, “right” wing and “left” wing commoners were indignant, self-organized their micro-communities and had as a central slogan “the burning of the parliament”. Finally, Indignados movement lasted about two months and it was suppressed both by internal conflicts among the different micro-communities and by heavy police brutality.

After Indignados movement, several self-organized initiatives all over Greece emerged, trying to answer to the crucial question of social reproduction. Local decentralized neighborhoods assemblies, more than 60 in Athens and approximately 240 all over Greece, organize communal gardens, collective kitchens, give-away bazaars, barter structures, self-studying and social tutoring. Furthermore, autonomous labour base unions, squatted factories, networks of unemployed and immigrant, collectives and cooperatives as alternative forms of labour, agrocollectives and social structures as social self-organized health centers, guerrilla gardens, self-organized theaters, social kindergartens and social groceries emerged during this period. All these processes can irrefutable be seen as structures of networking common space in Greek cities. The commoners through commoning emancipatory and solidarity social relations reclaim, struggle and reunite themselves with their means of (re)production.

However, it is worth noting that many of these attempts are between the “left” and the “right” wing commoning, between patriotic and multicultural commoning, homophobic and queer commoning and many different kinds of new political and social hierarchies, divisions, discriminations and exclusions emerged through them. In particular it can be noticed the fascists blood donations campaigns and rations-soup kitchens only for Greeks, as well as the so-called “local residents committees” which demand the abolition of migrants from their neighborhoods. At the same time, it is worth mentioning the manipulation of neighborhood assemblies and other social

structures by ultra left parties' members, as well as the parliament protection by members of the so-called Communist Party of Greece in order to avoid the entrance of demonstrators during the general strike of 20 October 2011.

Concomitantly during 2010-2012, which was a great period of experiments in (re)production, massive struggles, eleven general strikes and hundreds regional and sectoral strikes against austerity measures happened. Following the heritage of the Indignados movement and the fruitful network of neighborhoods assemblies, a common space was constituted across the urban fabric of the Greek cities. Especially in the metropolitan complex of Athens it was established an antagonistic common space both in the periphery and in the city core. What is important for all these initiatives is that they mark forms of production of the common urban space, through the materialization of radical imaginaries of collective re-appropriation of everyday life. Moreover, the diverse struggles of the last years are highly connected to each other. For instance, struggles against the illegal castigation of HIV positive sex workers (2012) was evolving in parallel to struggles of solidarity to immigrants working under inhuman conditions in Manolanda (2013).

As outlined by Tsavdaroglou and Makrygianni (2013: 29):

“The austerity measures molecularize, deepen and stress the social and class antagonism in every part of the metropolis. We argue that the last years we have been witnessing a metropolitan spatial spread of the social movement tactics. Typical paradigms of such struggles in the metropolitan periphery were the taxi and truck drivers' blockades in the airport and in the port of Piraeus against the opening of their profession, in summer of 2011, as well as the Dockers who blockaded the port and the logistics zone against the privatization. Along with them, the “don't pay movement” fought against the privatization of road infrastructures and increases in tolls and opened several times road tolls in national highway close to Athens during the years 2010 and 2011. Concomitantly, in the inner metropolitan complex, local neighborhood assemblies blockaded hospitals cash desks against a new law that impose patients to pay for an entrance ticket to hospitals.

Furthermore, during 2010 and 2011, the same neighborhood assemblies blockaded metro and buses charged machines across the whole Athenian metro and bus network against the increases of transport tickets.”

The second symbolic appearance of socio-political polarization and “hybrid commoning” was the parliament elections results of June 2012. Left and ultra left parties took more than 35% of votes, however for the first time in the last four decades the fascist-neonazi party “Golden Dawn” took 7% and entered the parliament; and at the same time the eurosceptic and national-conservative party ANEL (Independent Greeks) took 4% and will be the partner of the future SYRIZA government. Since then, the rhetoric of both sides pinpoints in the social reproduction and both of them are trying to usurp, to manipulate and to distort the emerging new commoning structures and social relations. The left side argues that they will save Greece through the struggle to bring back the state Keynesianist regulation with social-participatory-collaborative ways (new social deal). The fascist-right wing side, following the routine of the Nazi-like pogroms of immigrants of the centre of Athens, argues that they will fight for the deportation of immigrants and lgbtq people in order to support the uniqueness of the pure and sexually straight Greeks.

5.2 The new enclosures in Greece during the crisis period

The second point is the emerging of the so-called new enclosures in the physical space, in the commoning processes and in the communities.

In Greece, during the last years (2010-2014), the processes of the so-called primitive accumulation are expressed by the Troika’s (IMF, European Central Bank, European Commission) and Greek government’s structural adjustment programs, memorandums and austerity measures which have as a result four crucial implementations.

The first is the drastic cuts, about 40%, in salaries and pensions; and approximately two million workers lost their jobs. Against these measures dozens of strikes and demonstrations were organized during 2010-2012 that joined hundreds of thousands

protesters in the centre Greek cities. Strikes and demos can be seen as a potential common space as the solidarity commoning gestures among the protestors constituted struggling communities. But most of these mobilizations were characterized of severe police brutality in the physical space and media negative propaganda in the conceived space that is the representations of space in Lefebvre's vocabulary. Concomitantly against them the government rediscovered policies from the Junta period of 70s as the so-called "civil mobilizations" against labour strikes; in this way the authorities achieved to suppress the struggles of tracks drivers (2010), of municipal clean workers (2011), of metro workers (2013), of dockers (2013), of high school teachers (2013) and of workers in the public electricity company (2014).

At the same time, new enclosures in environmental and in the so-called "public commons" are imposed that means commodification and privatization of public infrastructures as motorways, ports, airports, train network, etc.; hospitals; universities; public land, especially the seafront; public TV-radio stations. Against the privatization, the land grabbing and the environment destruction several transenvironmental¹ protests and struggles emerged. Typical transenvironmental protest are the struggle against the gold mining project in North-East Chalkidiki; against the landfill in Keratea close to Athens; against the privatization of public water company in Thessaloniki; against the public TV-radio shut down and much more. In all the previous cases residents rediscovered the meaning of commons and through commoning processes established struggling communities.

Third, urban policies for the dispossession-eviction-criminalization of squatters, immigrants, sex workers are imposed. During the years 2011-2013 urban renewal and gentrification policies had as a result a massive pogrom against immigrants, the eviction of more than ten anarchist squats and also HIV-positive sex workers are jailed and pilloried. It is worth noting that the gentrification policies in the austerity period in Greece are not only formally operated by police forces and real estate speculation but they are also informally pushed by the fascists Golden Dawn. When the Mayor of Athens, Giorgos Kaminis (2010), stated that key aim of this period is to "take the city centre back", it centrally targeted certain population groups as "unwanted", such as

the squatters, the migrants and the homeless. This kind of exclusionary urban politics are employed by Golden Dawn and are re-produced through the xenophobic discourse and urban practices. The support of police violent forces in strikes, the attacks at the theatre Chytirion and other radical cultural spaces, the kill of the anti-fascist P. Fyssas, the murderous attacks on the houses of Egyptian fishermen in Perama and on migrants on the streets, in their houses or in their working spaces (Psarras, 2012) are only some of the violent attacks on migrants, homosexuals and everyone not fitting into the ideological frame of its national purity. Through its exclusionary urban politics, Golden Dawn occupy the urban space in many Athenian (and not only) neighbourhoods and exclude (through violence) the targeted groups.

Fourth, 50% increase of the taxes in transportation, gas, petrol, water, energy prices and in home property took place. Especially taxes for households have as a result more and more people to be forced to sell their houses and to emigrate in order to find jobs and money. However the unemployment in Greece increased from 7% in 2008 to 29% in 2013, hence Greek people try to immigrate to western and northern European countries, Middle East and Australia.

All the previous tactics constitute a typical process of permanence of the so-called primitive accumulation that is the continuous process which separates humans from the means of production, reproduction and existence, aiming to force people to become wage labour workers and establish the capital relationship. According to Marx (1867) and the autonomous and open Marxists like Federici (2004), De Angelis (2002), Bonefeld (2001), Holloway (2010) etc., primitive accumulation is not simply a precapitalist phenomenon but it is an ongoing feature of capitalism and thus the condition and presupposition of capital's existence. The above line of argument suggests that crisis and the process of permanence of primitive accumulation is the capital's response to the previous social and political struggles, through which humans achieved or tend to reunite themselves with their means of existence.

The above analysis could be thoroughly uncovered through a range of examples in Greece during the last decades. During this period, people achieved to acquire some

important means of existence, such as public education, healthcare and housing, through many different ways of struggles and commoning procedures. Moreover, the employment rate in Greece is very low and the home ownership very high. Besides, according to Marx's (1867:270) analysis, the key point in capital circuit is that the only commodity that generates value and surplus value is the labour-power.

Thus, in the paradigm of crisis in Greece, the capital relation tends to change the previous situation through the processes of new enclosures. The goal of these processes is to make humans lose their means of existence and be dependent on wage labour. At the same time intersectional enclosures highlight the crossings, interferences and diffractions of the multiple systems of domination, oppression and discrimination in the fields of race, class, gender, and culture.

5.3 The new enclosures in the era of the left government

After the left party SYRIZA won the national elections last January, a enthusiastic refrain has been repeating in both greek and international media: *"Hope is coming to Greece, Hope is fighting in Europe, Hope has won."*

The first and highly symbolic gesture of the new government was the removal of the railings that had been installed in front of the tomb of the Unknown Soldier outside of the parliament in Syntagma square in 2010 during the height of the wave of the Indignados protests over the Memorandum.

Irrefutably SYRIZA made very positive declarations with regard to certain demands from the movements in the areas of education, health, with regard to the minimum wage etc (Stavrides 2015).

According to the Quincey (2015) the new government initiatives' list, includes the followings.

1. The government passed the humanitarian crisis bill, which will provide some 300.000 families with food stamps, free electricity, and a rent supplement.

2. It confirmed universal, free access to uninsured Greeks (not migrants) to the public health system.
3. Abolished the 5 euro public hospital entrance fee/ticket.
4. Abolished pension cuts (which were scheduled to take place automatically in February 2015).
5. Reopened the Public TV/radio broadcaster (ERT). ERT had been shut down two years ago, by the right-wing Samaras government.
6. Re-hired some 4.000 public officers who had been sacked by the previous government, among which the cleaning ladies of Finance Ministry (who achieved nation-wide fame thanks to their long and consistent struggle).
7. Canceled the "hood law", under which dozens, perhaps hundreds of people arrested during protests, were risking up to 7 years imprisonment.
8. Theoretically speaking, the government abolished the new maximum security prison where political prisoners were held (not all prisoners have been transferred to normal facilities).
9. Non-regularized migrants held in detention camps are –supposedly- gradually released (the extent to which this process is actually taking place is debatable); police controls on migrants are significantly milder.
10. Generally speaking, police repression of protest is significantly milder (compared to the previous governments, one could say non-existent).
11. The Greek Parliament introduced an Odious Debt Committee to control for the legitimacy of the public debt (a mostly symbolic move).
12. The government introduced installments and discounts to help citizens and companies pay their debts to the state and pension funds.
13. A new bill will grant Greek citizenship to second generation migrants.

14. A bill is about to be voted, which will expand civil union to cover homosexual couples, granting them equal rights to the ones married couples enjoy.

15. An educational reform has been announced. The reform re-establishes academic asylum (abolished in 2011), reduces high-school students' workload and allows for the so-called "perpetual students" (those who failed to get their degree on time) to retain their university student status.

16. The Minister of Labour, has just announced that a (most-needed) labor reform, which would re-establish collective bargaining and collective agreements (practically abolished in 2012) will be introduced in the forthcoming days. The legislative proposal should - logically - include another major SYRIZA electoral promise, the gradual increase of the minimum monthly wage from approximately 550 euros (gross) to 750 euros (gross), during a period of 18 months.

The unfulfilled SYRIZA electoral promises:

1. Cancellation and/or haircut of poor citizens' debt to the Greek banks.
2. Re-establishment of the 13th annual pension to poor pensioners.
3. Abolition of indebted citizens' house auctions/evictions ordered by banks (the measure has been de facto applied, but not officially).
4. Reduction of taxation to the lower income households.
5. Public debt restructuring/haircut.
6. Abolition of the anti-terrorist law.
7. Dissolution of the riot police ("MAT") and the motorized police involved in protest policing ("DELTA"). Both units have been accused of having strong links to neo-nazi Golden Dawn.
8. Taxing the Orthodox Church.
9. Abolition of the memoranda (bail-out programs) and the austerity measures associated with them.

Hence it is clear that the SYRIZA politics are characterized by a number of contradictions.

First of all SYRIZA form a coalition government with the national-conservative and right-wing party ANEL that is a typical homophobic, racist and populist party. Needless to say, that both of them came to power after the Indignados movement and appropriate the emerging common space.

Thereafter although on April 2015 the new government re-establish the so-called “university or academic asylum”⁴, which was abolished from the previous government, at the same time police units were deployed to the University of Athens to remove anarchists protesters occupying the administration building to show support for a hunger strike being carried out by their imprisoned comrades and demand that the government abolish maximum security prisons and repeal anti-terror laws.

Furthermore the detention camps for undocumented migrants still exist and police forces continue to attack the protesters who march against the xenophobic and racist policies of the new Minister for Citizens’ Protection.

Concomitantly during the left government era the biggest project in Greece is the enclosure of an ancient forest Skouries in Chalkidiki area, the extractivism infrastructures and the open pit project by the Canadian gold minning company Eldorado. During the past years SYRIZA supported the struggle of the local residents against the gold minning project, however the police violence and brutality against the residents continues to be a routine during the last months.

Yet it is clear that SYRIZA seeks to appropriate the emerging common space and aims to institutionalized it. The most characteristic example is the so called “re-opening” of the former state TV/radio broadcaster (ERT), which had been shut down two years ago, by the right-wing government. However it is worth noting that during the last two years the TV/radio broadcaster was transformed into a self-organized structure for the movement with direct-democratic processes, but the new formal program exclude the former informal activist program.

Finally the SYRIZA-led government proposes a referendum on 5 July 2015 to decide the greek society whether or not Greece is to accept the bailout conditions proposed by the European Union (EU), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Central Bank (ECB). Both of the two governing parties, Syriza and ANEL, would campaign for a "no" to the institutions new memorandum, although the counter proposal of the Greek government has little differences.

All in all after five months the so-called "left government" is confronted with its limits and confrontations, and according to Lapavitsas (2015) "The Syriza strategy has been - and it remains - that a change in the political alignment of forces in Greece, in Europe, or generally, would act as a catalyst in the Eurozone. This strategy has now come to an end."

This paper is written the day that the SYRIZA government has missed the deadline for a €1.6bn (£1.1bn) payment to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), hours after Eurozone ministers refused to extend its bailout. Consequently Greece is the first advanced country to fail to repay a loan to the IMF and is now formally in arrears. At the same time the Greek banks are closed, people will only be able to withdraw just €60 a day, any transfer of money to another country will have to be approved by the government, pensioners are credited with half their pension on and the Greek government had asked European partners for a two-year aid package to cover its financing needs, that means a new and more heavy memorandum and austerity measures. Hence the new enclosures are back and Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras on June 30th 2015 send a letter to the heads of the European Commission, International Monetary Fund and European Central Bank, in which he states:

"The Hellenic Republic is prepared to accept this staff-level agreement subject to the following amendments, additions or clarifications, as part of an extension of the expiring [bailout] program and the new [third] loan agreement for which a request was submitted today, Tuesday June 30th 2015," (Financial Times 2015)

6. Conclusion

Finally, the big question is that if we are the crisis (Holloway, 2010) how can we survive and reproduce ourselves out of the law of value, the labour process and the multiple systems of domination discrimination and oppression in the fields of race, gender culture etc?. Can we consider the new self-organized initiatives, collectives and alternative social structures as forms of commons that tend to be out of the circulation of capital, patriarchy and racism? Or the capture of these structures is the ground for new enclosures and the vital fuel for a new and more violent circulation of capital? Moreover, how can commons defend themselves without creating enclosed commoning systems in the fields of race, gender, class? Concluding, as De Angelis (2007:239) supports “capital generates itself through enclosures, while subjects in struggle generate themselves through commons. Hence ‘revolution’ is not struggling for commons, but through commons, not for dignity, but through dignity”. The distinction between the struggle for commons and the struggle through commons is crucial for the outcome of struggles. Common Space is better not to be considered as a measurable teleological utopia as an “exodus” or “telos” i.e. result. Rather it composes the junction in the continuous struggle for emancipation, and thus it is constantly tested, composed and recomposed by the values and social relations of commoners. Consequently, commoners ought to generate struggles, to collectively consider, contest, struggle, rise up and adhere against capital, patriarchy and nationalism, which seek to usurp the commons.

Notes

1. Marx clarified from the beginning of the chapter of the so-called primitive accumulation (26th chapter, volume one of Capital), that in fact there is not primitive accumulation but accumulation is an ongoing and constitutional process for the existence of capital. The capital relationship has not as a precondition the primitive accumulation, but the surplus-value. According to Marx “the accumulation of capital presupposes surplus-value; surplus-value presupposes capitalistic production;

capitalistic production presupposes the availability of considerable masses of capital and labor-power in the hands of commodity producers” (Marx, 1867: 873), and he criticized Adam Smith, who spoke of “a primitive accumulation (previous accumulation of Adam Smith) preceding capitalistic accumulation; an accumulation which is not the result of the capitalistic mode of production, but its point of departure.” (Marx, 1867: 873)

2. On 25 May 2011, one year after heavy strikes and protests against Greek government’s and Troika’s (IMF, European Central Bank, European Commission) austerity measures, was born the Greek Indignados movement. There was a call in social media for gatherings in the central squares in major cities all over Greece. The squares occupation lasted until 7 August when police removed the last demonstrators from Thessaloniki’s White Tower Square. This movement differed from almost all other demonstrations in Greece’s metapolitefsi era (1975–present) in that it was a protest organised without political or trade union affiliations.

3. By the term transenvironmental I refer to a “collective action that goes beyond the narrow environmental definition of the issue at stake allowing the environment to carry with it more meanings than just the narrow one of doing something good to nature” (Kousis and Eder 2001: 11).

4. The "academic asylum" rules were introduced to protect freedom of thought and expression on campus in 1982, when memories of Greece's repressive military dictatorships of the late 1960s and early 1970s were still raw. The rules made it illegal for police to enter university property without the permission of rectors and guaranteed students sanctuary from arrest or state brutality.

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