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The power of denial. From denial to creation: creative resistance in the city of Athens

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ABSTRACT: The crisis leads to multiple denials in the face of everyday life and the conditions of reproduction of work it imposes. In this paper, I describe the basic denials in spaces of creative resistance in Athens during multiple crises. Through a systematic study of collaborative economy spaces, solidarity structures, and independent art spaces, I discern a progression of individuals from denial to creation and ultimately to action. I also strive to articulate the emerging modes of mobilization within these spaces. Faced with this reality, the act of denial emerges as the primary and transformative catalyst, sparking the forces of creativity and resistance. The denials of everyday life imposed by neoliberalism, as witnessed in Athens during the crisis, resulted in the creation of autonomous and self-organized spaces.
KEYWORDS: negative dialectic, creative resistance, self-organization, autonomy, Athens

INTRODUCTION

In the beginning, there was denial.

Open Marxism is an approach that seeks to liberate Marx's work from teleological revolutionary theories. It aims to integrate everyday life and resistance, not within a revolutionary project, but as agents of their own transformative potential. This is accomplished by reinterpreting Marxian theory through Adorno's Negative Dialectic, which ultimately facilitates a discourse on the significance of revolution as an everyday life struggle. Key concepts such as negativity and anti-identity are employed to

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delve into this dialogue (Cruz & Doulos, 2023, p. 285). The concept of anti-identity is an intention and an action of abolishing all oppressive practices and identities in the direction of anti-power, autonomy and "infinite identity" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). As John Holloway said, "As anti-identity we do not seek to define but move against- and beyond all definition. Or, more precisely, we define but go beyond the definition in the same breath" (Holloway, 2009, p. 98). The negative dialectic does not pursue totality; instead, it emphasizes the significance of the incomplete as an autonomous system of values (Holloway, 2010; Horkheimer & Adorno, 1996; Adorno, 2006).

Furthermore, it acknowledges denial as the fundamental force that conceptualizes this framework. Denial serves as an initial act of emancipation through which individuals challenge the oppressive realities of capitalism as manifested in everyday life. The concept of autonomy against the disciplines of everyday life is an ongoing, fundamental question for all the self-organized spaces I met in Athens.

For these spaces, the concept of emancipation should not be understood as a final and predetermined means of liberating an oppressed human nature but rather as a direction devoid of a specific model, emphasizing individual agency in the performance of this process. Emancipation entails a process characterized by negative dialectics (Adorno, 2006). It involves the practice of abolishing the dualistic relation between identity and non-identity. It constitutes an ongoing process of denials and confrontations with emerging or acknowledged forms of oppression. According to Dinerstain (2015), autonomy can be understood as the art of hope, manifesting itself through four distinct stages: negation, creation, contradiction, and overcoming. The synthesis of these four elements leads to political practices that bring subjects closer to their lost hope.

Acknowledging that any social research cannot encompass all possible answers to a research question is essential. Invariably, any outcome will be limited. Each researcher has a specific theoretical perspective, cultural perceptions, and experiences that shape them. Therefore, the research itself is an outcome in which the researchers themselves serve as the main prism for reading and analyzing the research question at hand.

Research is inherently influenced by the researcher's self-interest (Pels, 1997). Consequently, the pursuit of unrestricted conclusions does not revolve around the "objectivity" of the research but rather aims to provide the most valuable insights in response to the questions posed by the researcher and the individuals they reference. Therefore, a primary guiding principle of my research was the practice of "proceeding by asking", as articulated by EZLN's sub-Marcos (Alvarez, 2016). The bibliographic research, field research, and selection of methodological approaches are in continuous communication, fostering the seamless integration of contingency within the research process. Consequently, all stages of the research, including the writing phase, have maintained flexibility and engaged in direct dialogue with the dynamic context and research subjects. This approach allows for adaptability and responsiveness to evolving circumstances.

Through the crisis and the questioning of everyday life as it is shaped, there are not only capitalist-centred answers but also ruptures of escape (Holloway, 2010). Our fo-

cus is on exploring these diverse responses and ruptures, not primarily for the purpose of generalization but rather as evidence of the emergence of active subjects and the formation of communal, alternative spaces that strive to accommodate and support these responses. The spaces that were researched and those that finally participated in my research were obtained through a) literature research, participation in political networks and information about projects through social media and alternative information websites, b) personal contact with participants and personal participation, c) the Snowball method (Atkinson & Flint, 2001; Sapsford, 2007) as each project always led me to one more. This study is primary research as most of the qualitative data were collected during the period 2022-2023.

The Athens metropolitan area serves as a compelling illustration of the profound impact of neoliberal restructuring in recent times. Particularly, the years 2010-2012 witnessed a surge in social movements characterized by vibrant activism. During this period, a significant portion of the population engaged with various forms of resistance that sought to organize aspects of their everyday lives and address their needs through solidarity structures, People's Assemblies in the neighborhoods, and cooperative economy projects. A decade after this explosion of resistance and creativity, what are the dominant denials that lead to the mobilization of politically active subjects, and what form do they choose to express themselves politically?

Figure 1. Spaces of creative resistance in Athens are investigated in this research

This research explores the denials that have given rise to an open movement experimentation in Athens, examining these dynamics through 14 interviews conducted in 14 spaces of creative resistance. The interviews were conducted using an oral history

methodology. The primary focus of this paper is to explore the key motivations and denials that have driven the mobilization and participation of the interviewees in various endeavors of creative resistance.

CREATIVE RESISTANCES

Why do I choose the term creative resistances in my attempt to describe autonomous and self-organizing spaces that emerged in the city of Athens? The reason is that through the process of negative dialectics, I want to give a dominant role to the concept of creativity: "Dialectics seek to bring to light the power of human creativity that lies in all that negates that power, to understand the world and not just the capital–labour relation (understood in traditional identitarian terms) from the perspective of human creativity. That is why dialectics has to be at the core of the autonomist project and the autonomist project has to be at the core of critical theory" (Holloway, 2009, p. 16).

The term 'creative resistance' has its origins in Situationist International, where it is employed to characterize practices that successfully evade the spectacular reproduction of culture and society through resistance in everyday life (Vaneigem, 2012; Barnard, 2004; Papi, 2004). Additionally, it draws inspiration from Italian autonomous Marxism, describing practices of alternative political action and organization in contrast to traditional Leninist Marxism (Tronti,1980; Guattari, 2014; Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006). While the term has been applied to the case of Greece without a precise definition (Varkarolis, 2012; Petropoulou, 2018), it has not garnered much attention in the international literature of critical geography, seemingly due to the abandonment of the term "creativity" by anarchist and autonomist Marxist literature, as it pertains to other more dominant processes in the city. Instead, the concept finds utility in broader social sciences. Notably, it denotes artistic creative resistance in pedagogical sciences (Darts, 2004), political creative resistance (Hintz, 2021), and more recently, it is used to describe solidarity resistance in the context of care amidst the new condition of abandonment in the post-COVID-19 era (Dillard-Wright, 2021).

In my research, the selection of the term "creative" is intentional, aiming to underscore spaces and groups that, beyond mere confrontation, also generate new and alternative ways of understanding. This involves a creative counter-proposal that transcends initial denial towards the crisis experienced in everyday life. Instead, it endeavors to creatively overcome challenges by seeking new paradigms of everyday life within specific liberated spaces (Zibechi, 2010; Dinerstein, 2012; Escobar, 2018; Varkarolis, 2012).

After the 2008 crisis, numerous researchers have identified emerging forms of activist organizing and political resistance that prioritize localism, self-organization, and the pursuit of alternative models of communal existence within the city (Zibechi, 2010; Walliser & Andres, 2013; Kioupkiolis, 2011; Stavrides, 2016).

This transition to more "molecular" forms of political organization did not occur immediately; it unfolded following an extensive kinematic repertoire. The massive mobilizations of 2010-2012 served as profound expressions of popular indignation

against the memoranda. The prevailing mode of resistance and solidarity during this period was the Strike. Subsequently, as the culmination of this two-year mobilization, the movement of the squares emerged. Apart from its remarkable scale, this movement underscored the inability of organized political forces to channel the mobilizations in a specific direction, as was previously the case (Kaika & Karaliotas, 2016). For the first time, the mobilized masses were confronted with broader political questions (Hadjimichalis, 2013). These events triggered significant political upheavals, marked at the central political level by the collapse of PASOK and ND in the 2012 elections and the rise of other political formations such as SYRIZA and Golden Dawn.

The collapse of the political system of the post-independence era, which reached its peak with the "electoral revolution of SYRIZA", the rise of Golden Dawn, and the emergence of new political formations such as Potami and AN.ELL was evident in the January 2015 elections (Tsirbas, 2015). SYRIZA's subsequent entanglement with the memorandum bloc fostered a prevailing sense of disillusionment, highlighted by the direct contradiction of the popular desire for radical change as expressed in the referendum. This political shift of SYRIZA solidified the disenchantment felt by a significant portion of the population, particularly the Greek youth, towards traditional practices and structures of political influence. The denial of the political institutions and the rupture of the past is precisely the outcome of that period. As evidenced, the period of negotiation and the anticipated break alters citizens' trust in the state temporarily. However, the shift in attitude following the referendum resulted in a collapse of trust, returning it to previous levels (Public Issue, 2015).

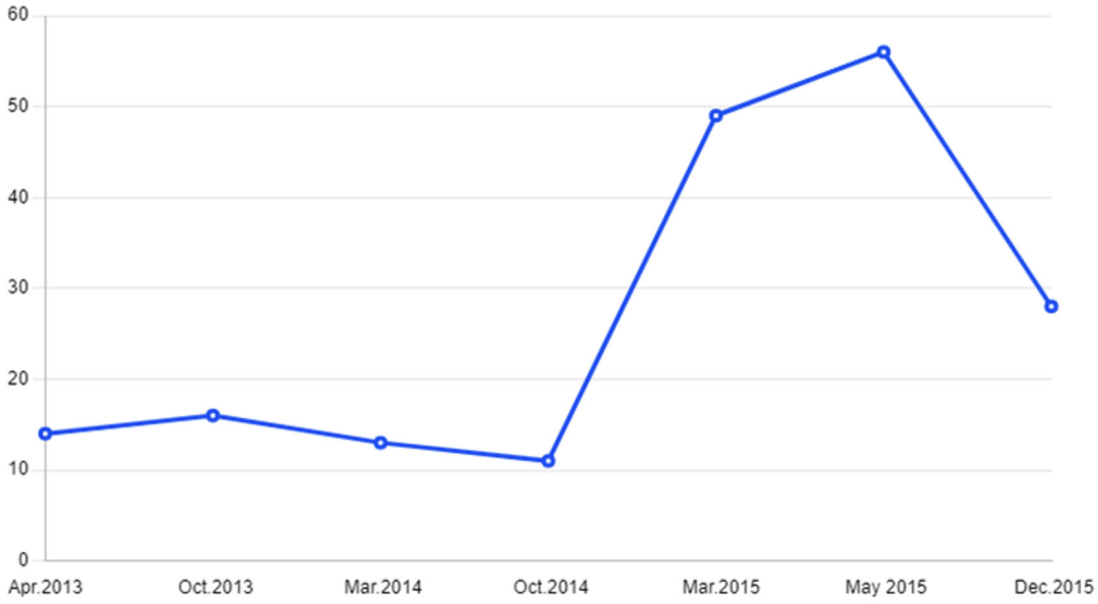

Figure 2. Trust the Greek state (%)

The SYRIZA government, particularly its handling of the popular mandate expressed through the referendum, caused significant segments of society to reject traditional forms of political representation.

The debate of the period 2011-2015 had mainly central-political characteristics,

and the debate was limited to the characteristics that a left government should have, the relationship it should have with transnational organizations and the ways of communication of state-movement cooperation. This whole debate collapsed after SYRIZA's change of attitude. This aversion to traditional forms of political organization and expression brought about the emergence of many new spaces of social solidarity and cultural expression.

Another crisis that Greek society faced was the significant refugee crisis of 2015. This crisis, alongside the rise of the neo-Nazi organization Golden Dawn and the preceding murder of the antifascist artist Pavlo Fyssa, which triggered extensive mobilizations, prompted the establishment of numerous anti-fascist assemblies and spaces. These initiatives were not limited to Athens but proliferated across Greece. Similar to the square's movement, these initial groups and gatherings catalyzed inventive reconfigurations, often evolving into hubs of creative resistance.

In one of their writings, the Zapatistas, a movement that continues to inspire with its alternative actions, recognize that: "there is now something that did not exist before or that we failed to perceive. There is a fiery creativity[...] If the world does not have a place for us, then we must create another world. Armed with nothing but our determination and unwavering dignity" (EZLN, 2008).

Autonomy, self-organization, horizontality, and open experimentation are fundamental features that define the functioning of Creative Resistances. To challenge the prevailing norms of social organization, daily life, and work, the only viable path is to collaborate with individuals who share our common concerns and denials. Autonomously organizing ourselves in this manner becomes essential. The uncertainty and ineffectiveness of the political system and traditional movement forms of organization (Zibechi, 2010, pp. 38-42) in representing and, above all, mobilizing the people's diffuse anger led to correspondingly uncertain lines of flight. Deleuze and Guadarri called these processes "lines of flight", which emerge through a process of deterritorialization. In this particular case study, with creative resistances, we are dealing with a political choice of the subjects who refer to them, a choice that emerged as a leap away from the norms and oppressions of the neoliberal model of work and the extractive capitalist processes of exploitation of space. They are "flight lines" from contemporary capitalist reality. However, a line of flight can serve as a pathway for creative possibilities, as it allows for the formation of new alternative realities. In Deleuze's philosophy, a line of flight represents a way to liberate ourselves from the limitations imposed by dominant power structures and to open new possibilities for our lives and existence (Guattari, 2015). Within this framework, autonomy becomes a central concept through which many of these possibilities can be explored and expressed.

Creativity, in essence, embodies a collective endeavor to seek alternative solutions to the denials we hold regarding the prevailing model of societal organization. It is through this collective search that we strive to challenge and transform the existing norms and structures that hinder our desired social arrangements. Importantly, the people at the core of such attempts are people with important cultural capital. They are the same people described as the creative class, except that they direct their creativity in the direction of resistance and autonomy.

The concept of creative resistance is chosen to be an open concept. Creative resistances, rooted in denial of the dominant, are antagonistic projects that, regardless of their ability to offer compelling answers, are fundamentally based on this denial. Creative resistances serve as a theoretical framework that aims to highlight the ongoing dependence of acts on existing denials. It seeks to challenge the notion of prefiguration as a teleological concept by emphasizing that "Our struggle is inherently and profoundly uncertain" (Holloway, 2006, p. 271).

In many cases, through these antagonistic structures created for the purpose of political expression and the desire to create, both a different sociality and a different normality are projected in the face of capitalist imperatives. They intend to act as active heterotopias (Zibechi, 2010; Gibson-Graham, 2002; Holloway, 2006; Stavrides, 2006). These antagonistic structures serve as marginal spaces of creative possibilities, where the collective forces of labor are harnessed for the common good. They represent spaces where something different from the dominant occurs, fostering open social experimentation (Harvey, 2012, p. 169). Therefore, we can conclude that creative resistances are active manifestations of denial, creating and establishing antagonistic practices within everyday life, delimiting their spatial presence.

What enables us to incorporate an attempt into creative resistance is the political energy collectively directed towards creatively transgressing conditions perceived as oppressive by the subjects. In this context, I categorize creative resistance into three groups:

(a) Cooperative Solidarity Economy.
(b) Solidarity Structures.
(c) Autonomous Structures of Art and Education.

The fundamental shared characteristics among all three categories include project self-management, autonomy as self-institution, equality among participants, independence from the state and its mechanisms, and the promotion of an anti-realistic bias.

FROM DENIAL TO PRAXIS: A DISCUSSION WITH SPACES OF CREATIVE RESISTANCE IN ATHENS

In this part, I will try to mention indicatively the dominant denials that I encountered in all the research sites through the words of the subjects themselves.

The conditions of austerity and insecurity resulting from the economic crisis serve as the primary catalysts for the mobilization of creative resistance spaces in Athens, attracting the participation of individuals. The stronger emphasis on economic impasses, compared to other forms of denial, experienced by individuals in the city of Athens is not due to any cultural specificity of the Greek social formation. Rather, it stems from the fact that the inhabitants of Athens, only a decade ago, were confronted with a major economic and social restructuring that signified the end of the post-dictatorship social contract.

In its compilation of participating groups, Solidarity for All[1] enumerates 91 novel projects that surfaced during the financial crisis, with 41 in the city Centre. Notably absent from Solidarity for All's map are several projects associated with the anti-authoritarian sphere, cooperative initiatives opting for distinct legal standings, and undertakings deviating from the political narrative and physiognomy of this network. Independent art and culture spaces also find no representation.

Konstantinos Maras (2022: 88, 104) conducted a comprehensive inventory spanning the years 2010-2018, revealing the existence of 53 distinct solidarity groups and 80 newly established self-managed social spaces in Attica. The count of cooperative and solidarity economy ventures in Attica surged from 47 in 2013 to 731 in 2020 (E.E.T.A.A., 2021: 26). A more qualitative analysis was carried out by the research of Social Enterprise UK, Nick Temple, and European Village in their 2017 report on the characteristics of the social and solidarity economy in Greece, encompassing 1,265 Social and Solidarity Economy actors[2].

The inability to find employment and poor working conditions played a significant role in the rise of the collaborative economy (Arampatzi, 2020; Daskalaki, Kokkinidis, 2017), the emergence of solidarity structures in neighborhoods (Petropoulou, 2014; Tsavdaroglou, 2018; Giannitsis, Zografakis, 2015), and the growth of independent art spaces in Athens during the crisis (Aliferopoulou, 2019). Following the crisis in 2010, cooperative enterprises, without any state planning or financial assistance, proliferated massively in the neighborhoods of Athens.

(a) Cooperative Solidarity Economy,

An unprecedented wave of cooperative enterprises is emerging, particularly in the services sector. One of the first cooperative businesses that emerged during that time in Athens, specifically in the area of Exarchia, shared the reasons and conditions for its existence. They stated: "This particular endeavor began in 2010, preceding the wave of cooperative businesses that emerged during the crisis. In Athens, we were likely the second cooperative venture that started at that time. We were a group of six people, with five of us having previous experience working in the restaurant industry as employees. Each of us had endured the difficulties and hardships of that job for several years. We decided to venture into cooperative work to create slightly better conditions for ourselves, enabling a sense of greater freedom. This form of work allows us to operate without a boss and reduces our dependence on wage slavery".

One member from another cooperative at Zografou mentioned: "At the age of 30, with a decade of work experience behind us, we faced a common need that most jobs were insufficient to solve our livelihood problems. That is, the low-paying jobs some were doing or the unemployment others were experiencing. In my case, I had just been laid off and was doing odd jobs. I have worked in public service programs. But one thing I couldn't bear was intensification. A job that promised me a position as a

[1]https://www.solidarity4all.gr/el/%CE%B1%CE%BB%CE%BB%CE%B7%CE%BB%CE%B5%CE%B3%CE%B3%CF%8D%CE%B7-%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%B1-%CF%8C%CE%BB%CE%BF%CF%85%CF%82 (12.6.2023)

[2] https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/greece_social_and_solidarity_economy_report_english_british_council_0.pdf

mid-level executive in a large Greek company. I couldn't handle the pressure within the eight hours, let alone nine hours, and continuing in that situation because the prospects always led towards greater intensification".

Besides the cooperative enterprises in the food sector, there were other sectors that had highly qualified personnel who couldn't find decent jobs in Athens during the crisis. As a result, they sought cooperative solutions to overcome personal and professional obstacles. M., a member of a cooperative based in the center of Athens working in the field of new technologies, shares with me that: "While searching for a job, I realized that in this particular field, human connection and values hold great significance. At a time when even the most obvious things seem elusive, this aspect became a crucial criterion for me in embracing a cooperative approach".

Moving to a different economic sector, the realm of art, we can observe the same oppressive situation. A., who teaches dance in a cooperative art space in the center of Athens, articulates this sentiment: "This space was established in 2017 by a group of young artists. It was born out of the need to find affordable rehearsal spaces. Large studios often come with high costs, and since space is essential for dance, we sought an alternative. Additionally, we were searching for a way to escape the issue of low wages. In the dance profession, there is no collective contract, so when we are called upon to teach at various schools, the pay can be unacceptably low. In some cases, it can be as little as 3-4 euros per hour for a dance class, which is inadequate considering it is not a job that can be done for eight hours a day".

In Athens, the cooperative economy has taken on unprecedented characteristics, particularly when considering the absence of a cooperative economy tradition in the city in recent decades. Apart from a few cooperatives and some cooperative enterprises primarily associated with petty bourgeois professions such as engineers and lawyers, which were driven by opportunistic motives rather than presenting an alternative proposition.

Many people, especially those connected with the movements, chose to follow the examples of workers' control with basic reference to the recovered and cooperative enterprises of Buenos Aires that became known in Greece mainly through BIO.ME but also examples from the so-called Zapatismo of the cities (Zugman Dellacioppa, 2009) to which the first cooperative enterprises (Pangaki, Sporos) that also functioned as political forms of organization were referred (Varkarolis, 2012, p. 65). This wave of creative resistance started to gain mass traction following the significant setback of organized social discontent. This setback was initially fueled by the successive reforms and rotations of neoliberal governments and later compounded by the neoliberal shift of SYRIZA after the 2015 referendum.

(b) Solidarity Structures.

The period of mobilization during the "movement of the squares" marked the emergence of a distinct mobilization logic within Greek contexts. The squares movement became focal points for the convergence of refusals, serving as spaces for the cultivation of the commons (Stavrides, 2016) and laboratories of radical democracy (Koupkiolis, 2011). This collective experience forged a novel relationship with politics (Kavoulakos & Gritzas, 2015), raising an imperative question of emancipation

for the mobilized masses (Hadjimichalis, 2013). Concepts like "horizontality," "direct democracy," and "popular assembly" are now entering discussions and undergoing conceptual negotiations, not solely within specific political groups and parties but also among significant portions of the mobilized Greek society. This trend reflects a broader sentiment of distrust in the structures of representation and the existing political system. Through this experience, many spaces of creative resistance emerged directly or indirectly, as D. says about a Social Centre in Kipseli: "In essence, I believe the model that gave rise to the Social Center originated from the squares movement. People's assemblies were held in every neighborhood, and many projects emerged through these gatherings. A.M. itself began as a grassroots initiative in 2012, originating in the Kipseli neighborhood. It was initiated by residents of Kipseli who identified certain concerns and recognized a collective need in the neighborhood and beyond".

This space was established as a response to the withdrawal of the state from essential areas, forming a structure of solidarity. Its creation aimed to address the needs of individuals who desired a sense of connection and support amidst the crisis. The organization provided a space where people could reach out to others, ensuring they didn't feel isolated during challenging times—a place where they could experience care and understanding.

A member from another social center at Patisia highlights the pivotal impact of the squares movement, stating: "I believe what propelled us forward the most were the squares during the Memoranda and the referendum. The reality is that the paradigm that evolved emphasized that entities like ours can be socially beneficial and can adopt a responsible and cohesive collective politics".

The attempts of creative resistance have aimed to reorganize the disappointment that emerged from the frustration experienced by a critical mass of individuals who took to the streets in previous years to fight against austerity policies.

As D. from a solidarity center in Kypseli tells us, "After the SYRIZA government there were a lot of people who realized that they can't hope for anything from the governments, so the idea was to do it ourselves. To do politics for the neighbourhood and to have a place to be. Talking with a doctor from a social clinic in the center of Athens, he says that:" such attempts were created, I believe, when many people understood that only solidarity can be a solution and not waiting for the government to vote and do you a favour. With SYRIZA, I believe it became clear that every government will follow what the markets, the lenders, the IMF and not the people tell them".

The disillusionment resulting from the conclusion of an insurgent cycle, which resulted in the decline of conventional political parties and the rise of both SYRIZA on the left and extreme right-wing formations as influential actors within the political system, had a profound impact on the entire politicized people. This led many to redirect their political energy towards more direct avenues, distancing themselves from large-scale political projects. The experience of the occupation of Syntagma Square, along with various other movement events (such as the occupation of ERT and neighborhood assemblies), brought the most politically engaged individuals into contact with social groups that had previously been detached from the movement processes. This interaction disrupted the logic of hegemony and confrontation between political

projects.

The antifascist struggle transcended mere political dimensions, serving as a catalyst for collective democratic refusals within neighborhoods. Following the activism in public squares, it represented one of the most extensive gatherings of diverse individuals united against societal fascism. The murder of Fissas prompted the formation of numerous antifascist assemblies across Greece, particularly in Athens, where Golden Dawn's influence was most concentrated in various locales.

A participant from one refugee shelter occupation emphasized the pivotal role of this refusal in inspiring their own project: "The denial is that you say, 'it's impossible that so many people live in this condition, homeless, and there is no basic structure.' It's simultaneously a moment when you sense that for us, working for years on anti-racism, it was an 'if not now, when?' phase. It may sound weighty, but it encapsulates that sentiment. Now, with a different proposition, we must implement it, not merely discuss it".

The denial of fascism and racism has sparked a movement of squatting spaces for refugees and migrants. One of these spaces was the refugee shelter occupation., which provided shelter for hundreds of refugees and migrants throughout its existence. As O expressed to me: "You cannot stand idly by while your neighbors embrace fascism. You cannot witness such violence and racism without acting. The squatting space was not only established to house refugees; it was also created to demonstrate, in a neighborhood heavily influenced by fascists like Victoria Square, that we can coexist with these people".

Additional refugee shelters emerged, particularly in the Exarchia area, functioning as meeting points for individuals who, until recently, had not collaborated on shared initiatives or policies. The collective denial in the face of the fascist threat became a foundational characteristic of the innovative resistance in Athens.

The most prominent neo-nazi organization of Golden Dawn attempted to infiltrate the realm of solidarity by promoting its political stance of "*solidarity only for Greeks*" (Koronaiou & Sakellariou, 2013). The refugee crisis of 2015 not only exacerbated fascist tendencies but also unveiled a significant surge in solidarity toward refugees and migrants, evidenced by the establishment of support structures such as feeding and accommodation facilities.

This experience and the subsequent disillusionment led to the birth in Athens of groups with characteristics of creative resistance, where the passage of political action from the central political scene to a specific space, mainly that of the neighbourhood and everyday life, finally gave an outlet to a part of the disillusioned people of the movement.

(c) Autonomous Structures of Art and Education.

The art scene and the people involved in it exhibited a mood of self-determination during the crisis, as they were among its primary victims. The main factor is the difficulty of survival for any cultural activity in this period, as it was considered a luxury from an economic point of view. Both the occupations of the squares and the occupation of ERT were nodes of meeting and diffusion of cultural capital in an egalitarian and non-commercial way. The denial of a commercialized and seemingly apolitical

approach to culture, although already present in Athens before the crisis, after the crisis, acquires specific spaces and practices of re-appropriation of space after this collective experience.

Cultural capital is circulated in crisis Athens through the creation of independent spaces and art groups. Theatre E. is an emblematic project of creative resistance that has hosted thousands of artists in recent years. In a conversation I had with one of the participants of the Theater assembly over the last seven years during the repossession mobilizations, he expressed the need for a space of freedom for artists: "The Theater occupation occurred because many of us could no longer tolerate the need to beg for space, pay exorbitant rents, and face censorship. We demanded a free space, saying 'no more,' and here we are once again, standing outside to defend the independence of art through this space". At the same time, another theatre group from Ampelokipoi emerged, aiming to express themselves politically through their own narratives and the individual resistances of its members: "What has shaped us as a group is our shared objective to communicate through theatrical language about social and political issues that deeply affect us. The stories we bring to life on stage are not merely adaptations or performances of existing plays. Instead, we create narratives based on our personal experiences, constructing performances around our own stories".

The resistance against the commercialization of leisure time, as well as the entanglement of sports with business and political interests, along with the need for antifascist expression, culminated in the establishment of the sports club A. This club emerged as a result of the organization of the Antifa league, an impromptu football league that was formed in response to fascism in the neighborhoods of Athens. The Antifa league, as its founding statement says: "we decided as a group of people who love sport in general, to organize a football league that serves the need of all of us for sport and not financial gain, for competition and not competition, organized by all of us - for all of us. An alternative football league in the neighbourhoods of Athens that will overturn the current football model, an anti-fascist league of non-discriminatory character, away from referees, away from compulsory fees, against the mentality of prizes, aiming, apart from pure sport and our pleasure, to promote the anti-fascist struggle". The coming together of individuals who share a love for sports, particularly football, fueled by their rejection of both commercialization and the presence of fascism within sports and Athens's neighborhoods, gave rise to the formation of the first self-organized, anti-fascist football team in Athens.

As G., one of the founding members of A., explains: "The idea originated from a group of four or five persons within the Antifa League around 2014-2015. While some of us had previous experience playing sports, few of us had specifically played football. We aimed to participate in a more organized league and demonstrate a grassroots, self-organizing approach to sports. Thus, three or four of us initiated the team, and in the second year of the Antifa league, A.A. came into existence alongside it. We filled our weekends with games, and around 10-12 people were heavily involved, which was quite overwhelming. [...] I had been playing football for years, and when I arrived in Athens as a student, I played for another three or four years. However, it was difficult to get much playtime without knowing an agent. [...] The idea of being independent

and not having anyone above us, without a coach, allowed each of us to shape the situation on equal terms, and that was enough to encourage everyone's involvement".

Many refugees and immigrants participate in A.'s football team to this day, as the phenomenon of fascism in society and the emergence of the neo-Nazi organization Golden Dawn as a parliamentary party for about a decade before it was recognized as a criminal organization and put in jail created a grim and dangerous condition of violence in the city for these people.

The above spaces, however, beyond the reasons and denials that led to their formation, meet with a common concern, as very nicely expressed by F, who participates in a solidarity space in Patisia. Speaking about the coordination and ways of communication between the solidarity spaces in Athens, he told me "These spaces, apart from being socially useful, also serve as our shelters, even if only for a few or many hours a day, against a city that spurns you and a daily routine that saps your soul. Here, I feel like we are creating a space and a time of freedom. After so many defeats that we have experienced socially in the last few years, and with Athens becoming something foreign and impersonal, I believe that all of us who are here need refuge. To meet with other people, not to go home. The most important is to feel that there is still hope".

CONCLUSIONS

Before the emergence of the neoliberal model, economic crises were a periodic phenomenon of capitalism. After the economic anarchy imposed by neoliberalism through the absolute domination of markets, the crisis is a continuous and global state (Chowdhury & Żuk, 2018). A key characteristic of a successful neoliberal model is the rise of specific locations as hubs for the accumulation of economic, cultural, and social capital. These places serve as platforms through which the accumulated labor that capitalism has acquired over time can be transformed into value and, ultimately, profit. These places of accumulation are the modern megacities, which, autonomously claim their place in modern capitalism and are pushed into constant competition with each other.

Capitalism seeks to maximize the utilization of accumulated wealth found within cities, primarily by harnessing the limitless potential for exploiting the individuals residing in them and the value they contribute to the space through their labor. This situation is particularly evident in cities situated in the so-called semi-periphery. These cities strive to establish themselves within the global division of labor and are currently undergoing a neoliberal transition. Consequently, they often experience heightened levels of exploitation due to the more significant opportunities available for capital accumulation.

Therefore, Creative Resistance should not be perceived as merely moral or abstract anti-capitalist initiatives but rather as genuine responses born out of necessity, as I previously mentioned. In the table below, I have attempted to categorize the various forms of denial I encountered during my research, juxtaposed with the principal mechanisms through which capitalism reproduces itself.

Denials	Responses
A new model of work/ Cognitive extractivism	Cooperative economy
Post-Democracy	Autonomy-Self organization
Commercialization of cultural capital	Free cultural capital
Discriminations (racism, patriarchy, exclusion)	Solidarity, Respect

What is important for us to understand is:

1. The groups involved in creative resistance focus on organizing aspects of everyday life rather than just pursuing political projects. They actively deny the prevailing notion of how things "are."

2. This denial is both creative and contingent, remaining open to new and unforeseen circumstances.

3. There is an anti-capitalist and autonomous logic driving their practices. A practice of creating a different everyday life that resists established certainties emerges. This creates a meeting place for diverse denials of norms and subjects, forming an attempt at creative resistance.

4. It is this collective political energy directed towards creative transgression and resistance against the prevailing denials, that individuals experience in their everyday lives that encompasses the essence of creative resistance.

If we wish to delve into the question of utopia, it would be crucial to begin by constructing an interactive list of denials. By examining the spaces of creative resistance, one thing becomes evident: any vision of a more promising future does not entail the presence of capitalism. The resistance against the reproduction of a life that prioritizes and revolves around the productive process, where subjectivity is solely recognized through the restrictive label of being "productive," establishes an irreconcilable opposition. This opposition is directed not only against labor but also against capitalist everyday life. As observed within the realm of creative resistances, these spaces facilitate the involvement of social groups that were formerly excluded, particularly migrants and individuals who preferred not to establish deeper connections with political groups characterized by a clear and comprehensive political program and ideology. The local and partial nature of creative resistances renders them an open cell for politicization.

Guattari describes spaces of resistance as existing on the margins, meaning they push the boundaries of what is deemed acceptable within the capitalist mode of production and societal organization. These marginal spaces represent sites of molecular revolutions that challenge the structured reproduction of capitalism. While capitalism

is adaptable enough to avoid questioning the fundamental nature of labor itself, there are instances of molecular revolutions that emerge and create new realms of freedom within these margins (Guattari, 2010, p. 155). Creative resistance further intensify this opposition by emphasizing various aspects of the community, such as organized mutual aid, cultural exchange, tolerance for differences, and alternative forms of work organization. However, these projects' social impact confirms that history is not inherently aligned with our cause, nor will it automatically bring about justice (Bonefeld, 2014, p. 222).

In response to capitalist barbarism, participants in these new creative spaces construct their own microcosm of support and communication. This resonates with Zibechi's (2010) concept of 'new territorialities', where contemporary movements foster a new pattern of organizing geographical space. These movements surpass the conventional focus on land as a means of production and instead view territory as a space for collectively constructing a new social organization. Through material and symbolic appropriation, new subjects emerge, shaping their own space.

In the context of creative resistance spaces in Athens, the primary motive for their existence is the necessity for political expression by individuals through these projects. The experiences and setbacks of the preceding period, culminating in the neoliberal policies implemented by the SYRIZA government, have prompted a shift in political objectives from the overarching (central politics) to the specific (everyday life). The politics within these spaces are organized through a negative dialectic, where individuals are mobilized based on personal refusals against the total (material and immaterial) exploitation they encounter in city life.

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