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HETEROPOLITICS

Refiguring the Common and the Political

D1.d HETEROPOLITICS INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

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N.B. This preliminary version of the 'Proceedings' has been prepared immediately after the end of the conference in 15 September 2017, only for the purposes of the deliverables of WP 1. The contributions of individual authors and panellists have not been edited. They are presented here in the form in which they have been submitted by the authors. A fuller and edited version of the 'Proceedings' will be published on-line, at heteropolitics.net, in February 2018.

Video recordings of all sessions of the conference, from 13/09/2017 till 15/09/2017, are available at http://heteropolitics.net/index.php/2017/09/20/video-recordings-from-heteropoltics -international-workshop-13-15-September-2017/

SECTION 1

ABSTRACTS

1. Alexandros Kioupkiolis, 'Introduction to the *Heteropolitics* project'

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Heteropolitics seeks to contribute to the endeavour to imagine, elaborate and expand alternative forms of politics and collective self-organization fostering inclusion, participation, sustainability and a symmetrical distribution of power. We will inquire thus into heterogeneous commons (natural, social, digital etc.) which work out feasible processes of common self-organization and institution-building that cultivate virtues of reciprocity and fairness while providing effective solutions to critical problems in the management of collective resources (Benkler & Nissenbaum 2006; Ostrom 1990; Poteete, Janssen & Ostrom 2010; Mansbridge 2010; De Angelis 2005). By studying both the theory of the commons and particular contemporary examples of commoning activity, Heteropolitics will seek to spell out the concrete ways in which various practices of the 'commons' reconstruct communal ties, meet social needs, advance democratic participation and self-governance in the economy and other fields, and offer new ideas of social, collaborative production and self-management which help us to rethink and recast egalitarian and participatory politics.

In our investigation of commons' thought and research, the aim will be to shed light on their divergent understandings of the commons, the different visions of alternative politics which arise out of these conceptions and the 'lack of the political' gaping in their midst. Existing studies of the commons have not yet adequately tackled political issues of inclusion/exclusion, complexity, scale, clashes of interest and ideology among larger groups. Consequently, they have not sufficiently dealt with the key challenges facing the construction of a broader sector of alternative formations of community, governance and economy: how to bring together and to coordinate dispersed, small-scale civic initiatives, how to relate to established social systems and power relations in the market and the state, etc.

Our approach to the commons as bearing promise for alternative forms of politics and social organization in various fields of social activity is informed by a particular understanding of the political. We follow several strands of contemporary political theory (see e.g. Rancière 1995, 2010; Connolly 1995, 2005; Butler 1990, 1993; Honig 2009; Heywood 2013; Ingram 2002), sociology (e.g. Giddens 1991; Beck 1992) and anthropology (e.g. Scott 1990; Gledhill 2000; Papataxiarchis 2014) which have decentered the political from the state and 'big-bang' politics, along three lines. They have lifted the emphasis on the political as 'institution'. They have traced the political in every act and process which exerts itself over established social forms and structures, seeking to contest them, to transform or to uphold them. And they have blurred, thus, the distinction between ordinary and extraordinary politics, conventional and unconventional, visible and invisible.

These shifts gesture towards our idea of 'heteropolitics' as alternative and transformative politics outside the mainstream, that is, at a distance from the state, 'grand politics' and their particular logics of political action and organization. The political' pertains to social activity which deliberately intervenes in actual social relations, structures and embedded subjectivities –i.e. conventional modes of thought, understanding, evaluation, motivation, feeling, action and interaction- by resisting, challenging, transfiguring, displacing, managing or striving to preserve them. Against this broader conceptual background, we introduce the term **'heteropolitics'** to highlight more specifically

(i) that such political activity is not primarily and exclusively focused on the formal political system;

(ii) it is not confined to revolutionary events or 'hegemonic acts of institution.' 'The political' as deliberate collective action on social structures and subjectivities can be also part of ordinary, face-to-face interactions and attempts at 'coping' with everyday problems;

(iii) 'the political' can occur on any (small, middle or large) scale of social life, in more or less institutionalized and visible social spaces across any social field. Hence, it can equally take place in informal and often obscure movements, exchanges, performances and differences of everyday life (Papataxiarchis 2014: 18-31). Such 'low' politics and 'micro'-political actions may have an impact only on certain social practices and relations, or they may coalesce with others to prepare and engender large-scale antagonisms and systemic 'macro'-changes. Finally,

(iv) we also place power relations, struggles and difference at the heart of the 'political', but this features both strife and action in concert, both plurality and confluence, both antagonism and consensus-seeking, both disruptions of normality and the crafting of 'alternative normalities.'

2. Angelos Varvarousis, 'Crisis, Commons and Liminality: Lessons from the Greek Commoning Movement'

Researcher and PhD candidate at Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona

*The slides of this presentation are available here: http://heteropolitics.net/

We are witnessing an exponential growth of alternative socio-economic practices in a new context where secular stagnation and perpetual economic crisis might be the new norm. Although the majority of those practices could be seen, from a specific point of view, as primarily economic, they do not seek neither only to promote an alternative economic model nor to relaunch a new spiral of economic growth. On the contrary they can be contextualized within a broader movement which tries to create new forms of "common-wealth," wealth that no longer relies on more and more money and is unfolding as a diverse, inclusive and even contradictory social process, based on the guiding principles of commons and democracy.

Drawing on the emblematic case study of Greece where such commoning projects have been multiplied hand by hand with unemployment and poverty, this paper aspires to shed new light to some of the least studied aspects of the literature on commons, namely, how and why those new commons emerge and expand as well as how do they deal with the dilemmas faced by their predecessors, especially those of openness versus closure, productivity versus egalitarianism and of their relationship to the state and the capitalist economy. Our core thesis is that the commoning movement in Greece benefited from a liminal state of unfixed identity, dominant in the period of the occupied indignant squares, and then blossomed as a rhizome. It now faces challenges of maturity in terms of its internal and external relations. Crisis does not constitute only the background context of this process; on the contrary it is the central constitutive element of those new commons and it characterizes both the subjects and the respective practices of commoning in various scales.

Keywords: Commons, Liminality, Crisis, Commoning, Subjectification, Rhizome

3. Christina Sakali, 'Commons of solidarity economy and alternative production: a typology of identities'

PhD, Economic and Political Studies, Independent Researcher

Introduction

As a result of an extremely unhopeful situation in Greece due to a long-lasting economic crisis and recession, there has been a bloom of a special part of the economy, which cares for democratization of decision making, equality of relations, and social well-being among participants. This part of the economy has been establishing economic relations based on collective management and solidarity, as well as production modes based on alternative visions of work organization. Consequently, an important process underpinning both the vision and the practice of alternative economy, has been the creation of commons. As a result, commons in the context of alternative economy can be considered the production means that are developed, used and managed as common resources, such as: work relations, collective capital or equipment, space or facilities, ideas and know-how, distributions channels, common funds, tools, networks and processes, ecosystems of cooperation.

Approach

These alternative forms of economy and production are pursuing a variety of goals, priorities, structures and directions, resulting in a richly diverse and polymorphous field with varied identities. In order to explore in depth the field of solidarity economy and alternative production, it is therefore worth exploring their identities looking into questions about the underlying creation of commons. A framework of commons can help look more deeply into the social relationships and political processes that lie beneath the generalized term of alternative economy and encourage a more critical engagement, related to issues such as:

- The size and characteristics of the community they intend to serve, as well as the range of social needs they intend to address

- The kind and extent of alternative organization they propose, whether it refers to vertical organisation of production, or whether it refers to horizontal organisation within a sector, neighbourhood or area
- The degree of transformation of social relations they encourage, either work relations among members of collectives, or economic relations among partners at different production stages (producers, suppliers, customers)
- The model of governance, decision-making processes, degree of participation and underlying power dynamics in these processes
- The extent and the kind of political action, alliances and networks they engage with each other or with the wider community
- The ability to challenge the free market competitive economy, by re-appropriating resources and market shares ought to belong to the community around them.

Objective

Based on the above and other issues of alterity, commoning and capability for social transformation, this paper will seek to construct an original typology of the varied identities of solidarity economy and alternative production, focusing on organisational, social and political aspects of these identities.

Findings

Analysis discovers a polymorphous sector with distinguishing initiatives, which however share a common vision: that of a society which differentiates itself from the dominant socio-economic paradigm of the free market competition and envisions a world of equality and inclusion. Some of these efforts have gone a longer way toward envisioning alternative and more integrated modes of organization and the management of their resources as commons, others still have a long way to go or they are not interested in such a direction. The question still remains about whether alternative economy as a field or as a movement can become the driver of a wider social change and what are the conditions that can lead to that direction.

4. George Chatzinakos, 'Urban Experiments in Times of Crisis: The Case of Svolou's Neighbourhood Initiative in Thessaloniki/Greece'

Associate Lecturer, Post-graduate Researcher, Manchester University

(Extended abstract follows in Section 3)

*The slides of this presentation are available here: http://heteropolitics.net/

5. Karolos Kavoulakos, 'The alterity of Social Solidarity Economy and the role of social movements'

Assistant Professor, School of Political Sciences, Aristotle University

*The slides of this presentation are available here: http://heteropolitics.net/

One of the main questions in the theoretical discussion on Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) is whether such economic practices could challenge the domination of capitalism. Two completely opposite views could be recognized in this discussion. On the one hand structuralist approaches, which tend to understand SSE ventures as a part of the system. According to these approaches SSE ventures are not only unable to threaten capitalism (Amin, Cameron and Hudson 2003), but it is also possible to support the system absorbing discontent against capitalism. On the other hand, there are optimistic post-structuralist and postmodern approaches (Gibson-Graham 2006), which refuse to regard the dominance of capitalist economic forms as given and argue that the final outcome is open.

The alterity approach of SSE is located between the above mentioned two poles. For this approach SSE is a potential threat to capitalism but at the same time raises questions regarding the degree of differentiation of SSE ventures from the dominant capitalist model. This paper will present the categories of alterity as they have been formulated in the literature (Fuller & Jonas 200, Jonas 2010, Lee 2010) and investigates the alterity of alternative exchange networks (alternative currencies, time banks and barter systems) that emerged in Greece the last decade. The case study is based on an empirical research that was implemented in three stages with the usage of different methodologies (discourse analysis of the published texts of the networks, questionnaires of active members of one network, and interviews with organizers of 6 time banks).

The research concludes that the alterity of alternative exchange networks under investigation is diverse, contradictory, dynamic and context depended. Their discourse and practices are radical, but almost none of them has features that belong to only one of the categories of alterity. The identity of the members of the networks is contradictory. Elements of the dominant discourse are mixed with radical or moderate reformist elements. The identity of the members of the networks and the differentiation of each network from the dominant model is dynamic and to some degree depends on the relation of the networks to the broader social and political environment. Alternative networks are not protected islands of autonomy within a general heteronomy. Maintaining the radicality depends to a certain extent on the relationship of alternative networks to social movements. The coexistence of 'claims against the existing' and 'creation of the alternative' raises the possibility of the maintenance of radicality.

6. Silke Helfrich, (1) 'Commoning: Towards a Deeper Understanding of the Commons'

Co-Founder of Commons Strategies Group and Commons Institut e.V.

The notion of the Commons plays an increasingly important role in social and scientific debate, but there is little theoretical work on the social processes associated with creating a commons. Due to a widespread market-state biased framework on the one hand and to the prevailing 'methodological individualism' on the other, **commoning is undertheorized.** The problem is, that it is impossible to understand the commons without understanding the multidimensional and open-ended social process of commoning. Conceptualizing it will help making evident that the scope of the commons is far beyond the management of collective resources.

As a contribution to this conceptualization, I will argue, that commoning presupposes an ontological shift, is unique in every instance (and therefore can't be modelled), sets situation specific limits, honours the role of caring for each other and for life, has the potential to foster a responsible stewardship of nature, requires emotional labour, cultivates an ethic of pluralism, yields social and legal innovation and offers a safe zone protected from capitalism. I will conclude, that the physical resources, our subjective sense of belonging to a community and thinking and feeling like commoners, our specific social practices, ethical norms, traditions, and so forth (commoning) – form an integrated whole. Thus, the Linebaughian concept – 'There is no commons without commoning' – can be taken a step further: there is no commoning without the commons or common pool resources. Nor is there community (or a peer network) without commoning. None of these aspects of a commons - collective resources, commoning, and the constant becoming of a commoner - precedes the other. They emerge from each other and enter the world at the same time.

(2) Dynamics of Self-Governance in Commons: Governing Internal Relations

With CSG colleague David Bollier, we are about to elaborate a framework that helps us to develop a commons vocabulary based on a relational ontology. This framework is based on the assumption, that everything can (doesn't have to) be conceptualized and enacted as a commons. Such a framework is necessarily imperfect and incomplete if only because the realities of the human condition ultimately elude full systemization and analysis. Despite this fact, we claim, that it will allow us to see the commons through a different lens than that of a calculative rationality and a dichotimized field of categories.

The framework contains four sections:

- At the social level: The Core Dimensions of Commoning (see 1)
- At the economic level: Provisioning through Commons
- At the governance level: Dynamics of Self-Governance in Commons, which is subdivided in: Governing Internal Relations and Governing External Relations
- At the ontological level: the categories, metaphors and epistemological premises.

Each section consists of a list of basic patterns, that is, features that we can find in commons over and over again that vary widely and do not assert universal, ahistorical principles of commons.
In my contribution I will introduce, conceptualize, exemplify and problematize the governance patterns with a focus on external relations we have found so far. The read as follows:

- Beat the Bounds (dealing with limits)

- Emulate & Then Federate (dealing with scale)

- Create Polycentric Democracies (dealing with conflict and democracy theory)

- Accept State Oversight & Support as Needed (addressing the relationship commons-state)

A quick overview about the patterns of internal governance can be added.

7. Paolo Dini, 'The Epistemology of Structural Meta-Politics in the Context of Sardex as a Laboratory of Institutional Learning'

Associate Professorial Research Fellow London School of Economics and Political Science

*The slides of this presentation are available here: http://heteropolitics.net/

This paper explores the electronic, B2B Sardex mutual credit system established on the island of Sardinia in 2009 and currently counting 3500 members, with a 2016 transaction volume of 67m credits (1 credit = 1 Euro). The paper's motivation is to discuss the Sardex governance process from

two opposing perspectives on socio-economic action. On the one hand, it studies the conditions of trade of the circuit under which individual action may become collective political action. The setting of conditions is effected by the central credit-clearing company, Sardex S.p.A., in some cases as a reflection of conditions imposed by the state. Therefore, it is a structural, top-down part of this process. On the other hand, the paper also studies the formation of Sardex as an institution through a bottom-up social constructivist lens. In both cases, a learning process is at work, hence the emphasis on epistemology.

'The political' concerns the deliberate, i.e. conscious, choice to organise or form social relations. 'Structural' refers to the conditions under which socio-economic action can become political. In this context, 'epistemology' refers to the process through which we become aware of the political meaning of our actions, with potential engendering of a commitment to individual participation in a collective endeavour. Meaning and knowledge are social constructs, and as such they are culturally-dependent.

'Meta-politics', therefore, refers to the explicit choices made in the process of creating such conditions in a given cultural context. The process through which the group of meta-political decision-makers is transitioning from the five Sardex founders to an assembly representing all circuit members is an important aspect of 'institutional learning'.The political, organisational, and economic decisions are mirrored by the architecture of the transactional platform and by the process through which it is created. As part of the INTERLACE EU project Sardex S.p.A. is developing an

open source, blockchain-based transactional platform for the mutual credit system. Therefore, INTERLACE overlaps with HETEROPOLITICS insofar as technological architecture can embody political and, more specifically, governance choices. In addition to socio-economic action, which is the main focus, the paper also begins to look at the commons-based vs. capital-based characteristics of Sardex, which provides a useful discriminant for the interpretation of the political choices based on the different kinds of action. For example, the paper will discuss rules of behaviour of the circuit members, many of which can be formalised within the transactional platform itself. These include meritocratic incentives to encourage trading behaviour that is beneficial to the circuit (oscillating many times per year from maximum to minimum balance, not staying still at maximum positive or maximum negative balances, etc) and the establishment of a resilience fund to handle bankruptcies or the chronic free-riding that leads to expulsion from the circuit, etc. A communication strategy for explaining to the circuit members how the governance framework is being defined and for gathering their online feedback as the process unfolds is also an important part of the research and will form its empirical basis.

8. Dimitris Dalakoglou, 'Infrastructures, Commons and Anthropology'

Professor of Social Anthropology, Vrije University Amsterdam

An infrastructural gap (IG) emerged after the outbreak of the crisis in 2008 and it refers to the difficulty of the state and the private sector in sustaining the level of infrastructural networks in the Western world. Yet, infrastructures comprise the realm where the state or the market materialize a great proportion of the social contract. Citizens therefore often experience IG as a challenge of the entire political paradigm. Nevertheless, as research in the country that is at the center of the current euro-crisis—Greece—records, we have novel and innovative forms of civil activity focused on the IG. Such activity, applying principles of self-organization and peer-to-peer relationships, along with practices of social solidarity and ideals of commons, attempts to address IG in innovative ways. However, such practices call for theoretical and empirical innovations as well, in order to overcome the social sciences' traditional understandings of infrastructures. This paper seeks to initiate a framework for understanding this shift in the paradigm of infrastructures' governance and function, along with the newly emerging infrastructural turn in socio-cultural anthropology.

9. Alekos Pantazis, 'How to talk about the commons transition in non-expert audiences?'

Research fellow, P2P Lab, email: pantazis.al@gmail.com

Workshop Description

We often find it difficult to explain -even within social movements- what commons stands for and what the process of commoning is about. What does the principle of the commons imply in terms of the co-participation in decision-making, of resource allocation or of political issues of inclusion/

exclusion? This workshop, based on non-formal education, hacks the rules of an old game to talk about the basic concepts of commoning through experiential learning techniques for the benefit of social movements. To introduce the commons to a general audience, we propose the use of the workshop of the musical chairs game. A commons-oriented musical chairs game is the reverse of the classical capitalist musical chairs game (collaborative and community-driven vs competitive and individualistic). In the context of the former, the community is challenged to find inclusive solutions instead of pushing players out of the game and to collectively manage its resources instead of wasting them. While in the dominant form of the game, each year has less environmental 'chairs' and less humane 'chairs', commoning is a vibrant activity for the deployment of a new type of game that treats 'chairs' as a common good. How does a commons-oriented musical chairs game changes participant's interpersonal relationships and what regulations can a community find to manage it's common resources? With the help of two facilitators, participants will think, act, play and then reflect on the dynamics developed under different variations of the game. Direct observation and instant video recording will be used.

10. Alexandros Pazaitis

Junior Research Fellow, Ragnar Nurkse Deparment of Innovation and Governance

Research Fellow, P2P Lab

(Full paper follows in Section 3)

11. Vassilis Niaros, 'A New Model of Production for a Commons-oriented Economy: An Action Research Project in Tzoumerka'

Research Coordinator at P2P Foundation; Research Fellow at P2P Lab.

*The slides of this presentation are available here: http://heteropolitics.net/

This presentation discusses emerging theory and case studies in the development of a new economic model. The model is called 'design global, manufacture local' and describes the development of an open design to localized manufacturing process. We argue it represents a fundamental shift in the economic production paradigm. The main question this presentation addresses is: What is the importance of commons, municipal politics and civic engagement for thinking and promoting socio-political transformation around the commons? We will begin by describing the model and providing emerging theory. It then moves on to two case studies, *FarmHack* and *L'Atelier Paysan*, both examples in the domain of agriculture. Through the lenses of an action research project to be held in Greece, we consider strategic pathways for supporting this avenue for human development.

12. George Papanikolaou, 'How to promote a commons transition through public policy?'

Lecturer, Harokopio University of Athens, P2P Foundation

This presentation will tentatively address three questions in relation to a commons transition and the state: first, how to bring together and to coordinate dispersed, small-scale commons-oriented initiatives and relate to established social systems and power relations in the market and the state? Second, how can we transfigure the state with its bureaucratic and sovereign rationality in order to make it 'think like a commoner'? Third, how is it possible to re-arrange the balance of power and to reign in central state governments so as to afford enough space for an effective self-governance and economy of the commons in our times?

13. Irini Sotiropoulou, 'Commons and private property as a patriarchal trap'

Independent Researcher

*The slides of this presentation are available here: http://heteropolitics.net/

The paper investigates the concept of commons as a western European patriarchal term constructed in antithesis to private property following the historical material conditions formed during the advance of capitalism.

I use feminist theory to understand how commons have taken over the demand for collective arrangements in late capitalism concerning both natural ecosystems and human societies. The paper examines commons in comparison to private property and its understandings within a framework where patriarchy is investigated as an economic system and capitalism is a form of patriarchy. I also examine how commons became prominent in the political discourse, exactly at the time of multi-layered changes in private property regimes under neoliberal policies.

The focus on the commons has reduced the interest in the critique of private property and in its abolition as an anti-capitalist anti-patriarchal claim of communities and social movements. Quite the opposite: Commons are a form of property and the logic of property seems to expand to the discourse about the alternatives to private property.

In other words, commons and private property are constructed in late capitalism as one more patriarchal binary of propertied 'things.' Moreover, the commons are thought of as the 'left-overs' of private property. This perception leads to prioritising private property demands and having the commoners following the agenda of the privatisers instead of setting a non-property agenda.

It seems that the commons, as constructed till the moment, bear this acceptance of private property as the main political economic institution to define arrangements of access and control over means of production. They also represent the social understanding that property is the only way to

institutionally understand our relationship to the world. The paper contributes to the commons debate by showing that the patriarchal construction of the commons keeps them tied to private property sustaining the latter and degrading the potential of the former for social change.

Keywords: commons, patriarchy, private property, means of production, nature.

14. Giota Bampatzimopoulou, 'Gendered Entwinements and Significations: towards an intersectional theory of the commons?'

PhD Candidate, Department of Political Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

This paper combines two different feminist threads of thought, that of Silvia Federici and Judith Butler, in an effort to effectively address the need for an enriched and up-to-date articulation of the commons' discourses. My aim is to contribute to the ongoing discussion around the subject of the commoning (the 'commoner') and its gendered perspectives. But, most importantly, I intend to point out that taking these factors into more serious account may lead towards an intersectional politics of the commons.

The theories of the commons highlight alternative systems or "spaces", collectively organized by individuals who form autonomous communities. In these spaces as struggles emerge, so a new ethical or value framework (of defending and reproducing all the necessary resources) is being articulated every day. In my opinion, despite the fact that the commons' discourses have attracted more attention in the literature, the subject in most of these discourses is being represented in a deficient manner. The commoner is usually being depicted as a non-gendered, universal, abstract subject, thus confirming an androcentric humanism that silences the (gender) difference.

On the contrary, Federici's work certainly goes a long way further. She poses the category of gender at the centre of her analysis of the commons, by highlighting the importance of social reproduction and domestic work, as integral parts of the capitalist division of labour and class struggle. However, although the dynamic of her critique is incontestable, I will try to show that her subject -the 'woman'- seems to be situated in a certain pre-defined position as well.

But, if the commons give us the opportunity to imagine and bring about certain alternatives beyond the bipolar division of the state and the market, then mustn't the subject who performs these alternatives be conceived as beyond the established male/female dipole, too? In an attempt to further broaden our view of the commoner, I will briefly focus on the work of Judith Butler.

Butler deconstructs the gender binary and the logic of identity politics which imposes the pre-existence of identity, in a way that certain groups' interests are being negotiated and formed, while political action is taking place. For Butler, identity should be conceived as an outcome. My aim is to show how Butler's critique on identity politics, along with her work on gender deconstruction and performativity, can be of use to our theories and discourses of the commons, towards the adoption of more intersectional approaches and practices.

By putting the emphasis on the instability, imperfection, complexity and multiplicity of the subject, we can surely enrich the common's discourses. In addition to that, perhaps we can even multiply the possibilities for a real 'upheaval': namely to act far beyond the limits of a solely economic or class

conflict and to step up for the creation of intersectional ‘safe-spaces’, that will constitute fields of struggle and points of departure for the enforcement of the commons altogether.

15. Rosa Barotsi, ‘The daughter as crisis/Daughters of the crisis: Women and contemporary Greek visual media’

Post-doc researcher, ICI Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry

Recent Greek fiction films have been celebrated, mostly abroad, for speaking to the socio-political situation in Greece. The crisis has put a spotlight on local cinematic production, so that films such as *Dogtooth, Attenberg, Alps, The sentimentalists, Standing aside, Watching, Miss Violence*, have been garnering attention and awards in the international festival circuit. These films have been discussed as being most often preoccupied with the family unit, both as a symptom and an allegory for society or an entire people. Whilst very often prominent or protagonistic, the female characters are almost always presented as either victims, stand-ins for a collective suffering; or as ‘active accomplices without agency’ (Kazakopoulou 2016). Whilst many of these films can make claims to giving space to women on screen, female characters very often serve merely to reaffirm the stereotypes that they might see themselves as fighting against. As these women bear the brunt of the suffering, both in real and allegorical households, their value seems to stem predominantly from their status as innocent victims unwilling or unable to fight back convincingly.

My contention is that Greek fiction films produced during the austerity years have not only fallen short of representing the collective subjects who have been pivotal in resisting, persisting, and organising, but they have failed to represent the collective subject at all, save in its embodied, individualised and sexist figure of the victimised daughter. In my presentation, I would like to juxtapose this picture with that of the flourishing world of Greek bottom-up documentary productions doing the work of reframing the narratives of crisis and documenting the struggles of community organising, as collected in the digital archive #greekdocs. Following Silvia Federici, I insist that Greek fiction films of the austerity years, whist bringing (young) women to the center of the screen, do so by reaffirming that part of our collective consciousness in which ‘women have been designated as men’s common’ (Federici 2011), contrarily to the work done in recent guerilla documentaries that engage ‘commoning’ and struggling for justice, both in terms of mode of production and choice of subject matter.

16. Alexandros Kioupkiolis, 'The lack of the political in the commons and a post-hegemonic strategy of social transformation'

PI, Assistant Professor in Contemporary Political Theory, School of Political Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

A central argument of *Heteropolitics* is that in the distinct currents of thought and research on the commons we encounter a certain 'lack of the political' gaping in their midst. Existing theories of the commons have not yet adequately tackled political issues of inclusion/exclusion, complexity, scale, clashes of interest and ideology among larger groups. Crucially, they have not sufficiently dealt with the challenges facing the construction of a broader sector of alternative formations of community, governance and economy: how to bring together and to coordinate dispersed, small-scale civic initiatives, and how to relate to established social systems and power relations in the market and the state.

Heteropolitics makes the case that a 'post-hegemonic' strategy of coalition-making and collective struggle can help to address these political challenges for the expansion of the commons. 'Post-hegemony' is a critical notion introduced by theorists who take issue with the modern politics of hierarchical organization, representation, unification, the state and ideology: the politics of 'hegemony' according to A. Gramsci and E. Laclau. Post-hegemonic thinkers tend to celebrate, by contrast, contemporary social movements which appear to be horizontal, leaderless, participatory, diverse, networked and opposed to the state, global capitalism and ideological closures. The argument seeks to demonstrate that diverse figures of contemporary activism in the last two decades are indeed post-hegemonic in the sense of the prefix 'post-' which implies an impure, ongoing development. Constitutive elements of hegemonic politics, such as representation, concentration of power and unification, are indeed endemic to 'horizontal' networks and other instances of anti-hierarchical self-organization. But we then proceed to show how contemporary movements and civic initiatives transfigure the political logics of hegemony in distinct ways, opening up representation, leadership and unity to plurality and the common, outlining thus a post-hegemonic strategy of change for the commons.

16. Theodoris Karyotis, 'Within, against and beyond the market: challenges of the commons as an antagonistic force'

Independent Researcher & Translator

The commons is a contested concept around which different schools of thought have developed. Each current of thought facilitates or precludes different political practices. E. Ostrom's theory is of great political significance, since it offers arguments in favour of collective self-management; however, its search for 'endogenous' causes of success or failure of the commons prevents it from articulating a substantial critique of the dominant institutions within which they appear, i.e. the state and the market. Conversely, for autonomist Marxists, the commons are always embedded in communities of struggle, antagonistic to the permanent process of enclosure promoted by the state and the market. However, by defending 'pure' commons against the 'distorted' commons, they

underestimate the ability of commons movements to confront the above institutions and challenge their logic. This presentation puts forward that in capitalist societies, where the market is the dominant mechanism of social reproduction, all commons are, inevitably, 'hybrid' or 'transitional' forms. A form of 'structural coupling' is necessary that allows for the coexistence –in an antagonistic relationship– of these two value creation systems, if the commons are to take root in a world dominated by capital.

17. Vaggelis Papadimitropoulos, 'The Politics of the Commons: Reform or Revolt?'

Researcher, University of Crete, Greece

*The slides of this presentation are available here: http://heteropolitics.net/

In this presentation I demonstrate a critical overview of the contemporary political theories of the Commons, classified in three main categories: 1) the liberal 2) the reformist and 3) the anti-capitalist. Advocates of the liberal theory of the Commons take a stand in favour of the coexistence of the Commons with the state and the market. The reformists argue for the gradual adjustment of capitalism to the Commons with the aid of a partner state, while the anti-capitalists contrast both liberals and reformists by supporting the development of the commons against and beyond capitalism. I make the case that both liberal and anti-capitalist theorists miss the likelihood of technology rendering large-scale production redundant in the future, thus forcing capitalism to adjust to the Commons in the long run. The prospect, therefore, of an open cooperativism, introduced by the reformist theory, holds significant potential with respect to the future development of the Commons. For the Commons to expand and flourish, however, a global institutional reform, based on a number of trans-local and transnational principles, is sine qua non. Hence, transparency of information, distribution of value, solidarity and bottom-up self-management are the core variables of individual and collective autonomy inasmuch as they permit a community or group to formulate its values in relation to the needs and skills of its members.

18. Christian Iaione, 'The right to pooling in the city'

Associate professor of public law at Guglielmo Marconi University of Rome

Public law scholars[1] highlighted that the renaissance of cities and their growing importance[2] in the context of re-configuration of the Nation-State[3] is an important historical phenomenon. In order to

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[1] Jean Bernard Auby, The Role of law in the legal status and powers of cities, 5, IT. J. PUB. L., 2 302, 305 (2013). See also Nestor Davidson, What is urban law today? 40 FORDHAM URB. L. J. 1579 (2013).

[2]BENJAMIN BARBER, IF MAYORS RULED THE WORLD (Yale University Press, 2013). See also I- M. Porras, The city and international law: in pursuit of sustainable development, 36 FORDHAM URB. L. J 537, 538 (2009).

[3]Khanna has stated that we are moving into an era where cities will matter more than states Parag Khanna, Connectography: Mapping the future of globalization 6 (2016). See also Patrick Les Galés and DESMOND KING, RECONFIGURING EUROPEAN STATES IN CRISIS, (Oxford University Press, 2017).

enrich the understanding about the process of transformation in which urban law finds itself, legal scholars need to start from the observation of concrete realities of cities[4], where urbanization is shaping what Eric Biber identify terms law in the Anthropocene.[5] Academic contributions that identify an 'urban paradigm' are plural and diversified: the knowledge-based city, envisioning the city as a marketplace, the tech-based city envisioning the city as a platform, the nature-based city envisioning the city as an environment. A large body of literature related to the city has been developed to reflect on the vision of the city from an environmental standpoint, broadly speaking the eco-city approach (considering how cities can achieve a better environment through the reduction in pollution and waste generation)[6] and the city as an ecological space[7], (conceiving the city as an ecosystem where the biophysical, social economic factors interact). This study is an effort to discuss the argument that main current paradigms lack a rights-based[8] approach and that in order to build a comprehensive paradigm one needs to reconceive the city as a commons[9], or co-city[10]. The concept of the Co-City situates the city as a platform for sharing and collaboration, participatory decision-making and peer-to-peer production, supported by open data and guided by principles of distributive justice. A Co-City is based on urban shared, collaborative, polycentric governance of a variety of urban resources. These include environmental, cultural, knowledge and digital goods which are co-managed through contractual or institutionalized public-private-community partnerships. Collaborative, polycentric urban governance involves different forms of resource pooling and cooperation between five possible actors—social innovators (i.e. active citizens, city makers[11], digital collaboratives, urban regenerators, community gardeners, etc.), local public authorities, businesses[12], civil society organizations, and knowledge institutions (i.e. schools,

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[4]Jean B. Auby, The role of law in the legal status and power of cities. Droit de la ville. An introduction Italian 5 J. PUB. L. 302 (2013).

[5]Eric Biber, Law in the Anthropocene epoch, UC BERKELEY PUBLIC LAW RESEARCH PAPER No. 2834037 (2016).

[6]E. Rapoport, Utopian Visions and Real Estate Dreams: The Eco-city Past, Present and Future 8, GEOGRAPHY COMPASS, 137 (2014). See also E.J. Junior and M. M. Edward, How Possible is Sustainable Urban Development? An Analysis of Planners' Perceptions about New Urbanism, Smart Growth and the Ecological City, 25 PLANNING PRAC. & RES., 417, 419 (2010).

[7]S. Foster, The city as an ecological space: social capital and land use, 82 NOTRE DAME L. REV. 527 (2006-2007). See also J. Evans Resilience, ecology and adaptation in the experimental city, 36 TRANS. INST. BR. GEOGR. NS. 223, 227 (2011).

[8] H. Lefebvre, The Right to City, in WRITINGS ON CITIES 147 (Elenore Kofman & Elizabeth Lebas eds., trans., 1968). See also N. Brenner and C. Schmidt, The urban age in question, 38.3 INT'L J. URB. REG. RES. 731, 750 (2014).

[9]S. Foster and C. Iaione, The city as a commons, 34 YALE L. & POL'Y REV 81 (2016). See also S. Foster, Urban Commons and collective action, 87 NOTRE DAME L. REV. 57, 60 (2011).

[10]C. Iaione, The Co-city, THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIOLOGY, (2016).

[11] C. Iaione, The tragedy of urban roads. Calling on citizens to combat climate change, FORDHAM URB. L.J. (2009).

[12] Christian Iaione Local Public Entrepreneurship and Judicial Intervention in a Euro-American and Global Perspective 7 WASH. U. GLOBAL STUD. L. REV. 215 (2008).

universities, cultural institutions, museums, academies, etc.). These partnerships give birth to local peer-to-peer experimental, physical, digital and institutional platforms with three main aims: fostering social innovation in urban welfare provision, spurring collaborative economies as a driver of local economic development, promoting inclusive urban development and regeneration.

The struggle of conventional law in managing the commons can be best understood if one examines how much commons are grounded and rooted in social practices and social relations[13], while also acknowledging that the issue of legal rights in the commons is still crucial, in particular with reference to equality concerns[14]. Moreover, scholars refer to 'commoning' as a powerful dynamic process (which also applies in the urban context) to create social value and relation.[15] Yochai Benkler importantly has highlighted the opportunities provided by peer production as the emergence of a new form of economic production[16]. A pragmatic perspective is further proposed by the legal anthropologist Etienne Le Roy, who states that 'law is not so much what the texts say, but rather what the actors do with it.'[17]

This paper elaborates on the idea of the co-city as an infrastructure that enables collaboration by embedding 'urban pooling'[18] in body of urban law and policies.

19. Haris Tsavdaroglou, Stasis: The Catalyst for the Circulation of Common Space. Protest camps in Athens, Istanbul and Idomeni'

Dr. Urban Planner, School of Architecture, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

During the last years, the discussion on commons and new enclosures revolves mainly around Marxist approaches that focus on the 'accumulation by dispossession' (Harvey, 2005) and conceptualize urban commons as a new version of the 'right to the city' (Mayer, 2009).[1] At the same time, during the current rising tide of urban revolts, the protestors do not just claim the urban space from the sovereign power, but they occupy and tend to transform it into common spaces. In this

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[13]Étienne Le Roy, How I Have Been Conducting Research on the Commons for Thirty Years Without Knowing It, in DAVID BOLLIER AND SILKE HELFRICH, PATTERNS OF COMMONING (The Commons Strategies Group, 2015).

[14]Antoine Dolcerocca and Benjamin Coriat, Commons and the Public Domain: A Review Article and a Tentative Research Agend, 48 REV. RADICAL POLITICAL ECON 127– 139 (2016).

[15]DAVID BOLLIER AND SILKE HELFRICH AND HEINRICH BOLL FOUNDATION, PATTERNS OF COMMONING, published by the Common Strategies Group, (2015).

[16]YOCHAI BENKLER, THE WEALTH OF NETWORKS. HOW SOCIAL PRODUCTION TRANSFORM MARKETS AND FREEDOM, (Yale University Press 2006).

[17]Étienne Le Roy, How I Have Been Conducting Research on the Commons for Thirty Years Without Knowing It, in DAVID BOLLIER AND SILKE HELFRICH, PATTERNS OF COMMONING (The Commons Strategies Group, 2015).

[18] Christian Iaione and Elena De Nictolis, Urban Pooling, (forthcoming in Fordham Urban Law Review 2017).

point it is emerged the crucial question how the spaces of commons can be circulated and go beyond the class, patriarchal, racial and other power relations.

In order to unsettle my view I follow several critical scholars analyses (De Angelis, 2007; Caffentzis 2010; Federici, 2011), who propose that conceptualizing the commons involves three things at the same time: common pool resource, commoning and community. Thus, the commons are not only physical, material or immaterial resources, they don't exist per se but they are constituted through the social process of commoning. In order to examine and deepen the notion of commoning I am inspired by the discussion on 'stasis.' Last years several scholars (Agamben, 2015; Butler and Athanasiou, 2013; Douzinas, 2013) adopt the Greek ancient notion of stasis in order to explain the social movements. Indeed, stasis is the process by which people stand, reflecting upon themselves, recognize their strengths, contest and take position. On the other hand, the suppression of stasis can be understood as the response of systems of domination to the social emancipatory commoning. In this theoretical framework, I propose stasis as the catalyst for the circulation of commons.

Based on the above theoretical context this presentation explores the role of the physical, social and symbolic meanings of stasis in the processes of setting up the common space. In particular it is examined the protest camps in the Indignados movement in Syntagma square in Athens (2011), in the Gezi park occupation in Istanbul (2013) and in the refugees' makeshift settlement of Idomeni in the Greek-Macedonia borders (2016). Through the above cases the main finding is that the protestors, through stasis, are transformed into an unpredictable and misfitted multitude that produces and circulates unique and porous common spaces, spaces in movement and threshold spaces.

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20. Giuseppe Micciarelli, 'Introduction to urban and collective civic use: the "direct management" of urban emerging commons in Naples'

Postdoc researcher, University of Salerno - political philosophy and philosophy of law

(Extended abstract follows in Section 3)

21. Marcus Kip, Making Architecture Common. Heritage and the Articulation of Difference'

Post- Doc Researcher, Technische Universität Darmstadt

This presentation highlights the the multi-dimensional character of an urban commons: the built environment. The possibility of using architecture in several ways and the various meanings that can be attached to buildings may complicate the process of making architecture common. At worst, the different usages and meanings may be contradictory such that groups of commoners will enter into conflict. At the level of theory, I show how such constellation challenges Elinor Ostrom's selection of case studies of common-pool resources from which she derives her well-known design principles. Urban commons require us to think commons in more contentious ways. Three case studies from an incipient research project on postwar modernist urban squares will be discussed. To explain the different histories of these squares, from complete redevelopment to preservation, I propose to look at the ways that commoning efforts were made hegemonic through particular alliances with state and market actors.

22. Petros Petridis, 'Sharing, fan labor and the logic of control in P2P networks and Massively Multiplayer Online Games'

Post-Doc Researcher, University of Thessaly

*The slides of this presentation are available here: http://heteropolitics.net/

This paper examines different aspects of the practices of sharing, peer 'produsage' and control of intellectual property in two technosocialities (Peer to Peer file sharing networks and Massively Multiplayer Online Game communities). Specifically, it focuses on three main issues that emerge through the practice of file sharing and peer cultural 'produsage' in the context of the aforementioned technosocialities. Firstly, it seeks to illuminate how participants in file sharing networks and MMOG communities produce knowledge, technological artifacts and open/free cultural works (applications, music, machinima, maps, images etc.), through the appropriation of copyrighted content and the performance of creative tasks. Secondly, it suggests that the practice of sharing can be manifested both as a kind of gift-giving, as well as a new form of free digital labor. Finally, it seeks to criticize the 'rhetorics of freedom' that are based on the dialectic between openness and closeness, by revealing the logic of control (mainly with respect to intellectual property issues) both in closed, hierarchical and vertical technosocial systems, as well as in open, heterarchical and horizontal ones.

23. Natalia - Rozalia Avlona, 'Digital commons and critical practices in hybrid spaces: the communities of Sarantaporo.gr and Exarcheia Net'

Lawyer / PhD Researcher @ Heteropolitics Research Programme, AUTH

*The slides of this presentation are available here: http://heteropolitics.net/

24. Yiannis Pechtelidis, Commoning Education in Contemporary Greece'

Assistant Professor in the Sociology of Education, in the Department of Early Childhood Education, at the University of Thessaly

*The slides of this presentation are available here: http://heteropolitics.net/

Yannis Pechtelidis explores an alternative option in education, pedagogy, and children's participation in public life in contemporary crisis-ridden Greece. He describes the everyday life of a public elementary school and a pedagogical community run by its members. In light of the new commons theory, he argues that both schools are underpinned by the commons heteropolitical ethics and logic, despite their differences. Particularly, they share a common resource, education. The 'common' is interpreted here as a heteropolitical process of 'commoning' education.

The author critically discusses the embodied subjective features and the rules that are crafted within these heteropolitical sites. He is especially focused on the intergenerational production of a hetero-political habitus of the commons within these specific pedagogical and educational groups. Moreover, he critically reflects upon the conflictual tensions running through the commons, the market and the state.

25. Aimilia Voulvouli, 'Ethnography and the Commons: A few notes before the field'

Post-Doc Researcher, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Heteropolitics Research Project

There is a difference between what people say they do and what they actually do, wrote Malinowski in his seminal 'Argonauts of the Western Pacific' book in an attempt to describe his understandings of Trobrianders 'sociologically' - as he wrote - distinguishing them from the native ones. There is an analogy of what Malinowski had described and the task of Heteropolitics to bridge political theory of the commons and ethnography, in an effort to grasp the complexity of commoning. In this framework, an ethnography of the commons should involve on the one hand the study of systems of knowledge embedded in commoning practices in order to understand as Clifford Geertz suggested how lives of people are led when they are centred around particular pedagogical or creative activities, such as – according to ethnographers of the subject - commoning and on the other hand to

study how the ethnographer's participation in this system produces new collective knowledge and may form the basis of new political action.

26. Alexandros Papageorgiou, 'Researching knowledge transfer processes in contemporary models of commoning'

Nethood & PhD candidate in Social Anthropology, University of Thessaly

*The slides of this presentation are available here: http://heteropolitics.net/

The contemporary economic crisis brought Greece to the center of attention and gave prominence to the failures and deficiencies of the Greek state and the political system in general. As a result, numerous alliances and groupings have emerged, such as the Commons Alliance (https://commons.gr/) and the Hub for Social Economy, Empowerment and Innovation (http://komvoshub.org/), that propel the concept and practice of the commons, toward the development of viable alternatives for sustainable living and socio-political transformation. In this context, researchers and activists from abroad are increasingly present, joining collective efforts that foster the sharing of resources and knowledge among different initiatives, through meetings, workshops, assemblies, conferences and festivals. NetHood is such an organization based in Zurich, which participates in knowledge exchange and sharing processes around two key resources: housing and network infrastructures. More specifically, through the Horizon2020 proje50ct MAZI (http://mazizone.eu) and netCommons (http://netcommons.eu), NetHood is in close contact with remarkable success stories on cooperative housing in Zurich (http://o500.org)and community networks in Catalonia (http://guifi.net) and Germany (http://freifunk.net), among others. With the additional support of the Heteropolitics project, NetHood is in a unique position to collaborate with Alexandros Papageorgiou, a PhD candidate at the University of Thessaly, who decided to develop his thesis titled 'Collaborative networks in Athens today: new possibilities of coexistence through inter-local knowledge transfer' as an active member of NetHood.

More specifically, Papageorgiou is both an engaged actor (through NetHood) and a researcher (through the University of Thessaly) on two related projects that have been recently initiated in Athens with the participation of NetHood: 1) Co-Hab – a group of architects and urbanists with links to international networks of urban research and cooperative housing that promotes the research and practice on a cooperative housing project in Athens, through the participation in international conferences, visits with the purpose of knowledge exchange and the organization of workshops with committees of residents. 2) Exarheia Net – a wireless community network in the center of Athens that works in two directions: of providing Internet connection to refugee housing projects, and establishing and supporting autonomous community wifi projects.

Both these initiatives try to promote the ownership and use of resources as commons and the creation of communities with minimum hierarchy that do not seek to make profit, but to produce resources and knowledge as commons instead. Papageorgiou explores how the processes of knowledge transfer under observation can contribute to answering research questions of the *Heteropolitics* project and thus to enriching political theory around the commons.

This paper also analyzes the selected methodological approach, and the inherent dilemmas and trade-offs resulting from the dual role of activist and researcher, which pose interesting challenges -ethical, practical and other-, but can reveal unique opportunities at the same time.

27. Christos Giovannopoulos, 'The Alliance of the Commons Presentation'

Independent Researcher, Commons Alliance

Commons Alliance is a social alliance which combines politics with production. Our goal is to create a common, regular meeting point for people and collectives which deal with common goods and the social and solidarity economy, in order to strengthen existing ventures as well as to create new ones. Our intention is for this meeting point to become a lasting social institution and a common domain of empowerment for active citizens, movements, and society. More information on the Alliance of the Commons is available on our website: http://www.commons.gr.

SECTION 2

EXTENDED ABSTRACTS & PAPERS

Christina Sakali, 'Commons of solidarity economy and alternative production: a typology of identities'

Introduction

As a result of an extremely unhopeful situation in Greece due to a long-lasting economic crisis and recession, there has been a bloom of a special part of the economy, which cares for democratization of decision making, equality of relations, and social well-being among participants. The flourishment of social solidarity economy (SSE) can be seen as the product of two separate but interconnected forces, namely an impulsive societal response to find answers or solutions to the multiple crises experienced, as well as the emergence of long-standing movements and communities exploring new models of economic, social and communal organization as alternatives to the mainstream hegemony of the market competitive economy (Utting et al., 2014; De Angelis, 2005, 2012, 2014; Gibson-Graham, 2008; Kawano, 2006; Sakali, 2015).

These two forces have united in the exploration and establishment of initiatives combining three broad elements:

-Economic relations based on solidarity and reciprocity,

- Production processes based on collective ownership and management of resources,

- Work organisation based on horizontal relations, equality and collective decision-making.

Consequently, an important process underpinning both the vision and the practice of solidarity economy and alternative processes of production, has been the creation of commons. As a result, commons in the context of solidarity economy and alternative production can be seen as the means of production that are developed, used, managed and reproduced in common, or else as common resources through a collective and participatory process. They may refer to work relations, collective capital or equipment, space or facilities, ideas and know-how, distribution channels, common funds, tools, networks and processes, ecosystems of cooperation.

Approach

These alternative forms of economy and production are pursuing a variety of goals, priorities, structures and directions, resulting in a richly diverse and polymorphous field with varied identities. Consequently, to look at solidarity economy as a homogenous whole does not allow us to recognise the differentiations and advance a more critical discussion in the field. Instead, we need the critical methodologies that would allow us to discern the diversity and engage in a more critical discussion about the role and nature of solidarity economy and alternative production. A framework of commons would allow to look more deeply into the social relationships and political processes that can be found beneath the generalized term of solidarity economy. It can help us contemplate about issues of community, inclusivity, participation, ways of communication or the management and

access to resources. For example to define what we mean by community, what is the community around a common or a process of communing, how inclusive this community is, what are the resources required and developed and who has access to those resources. Respectively issues of political processes, such as models of governance, processes and tools of decision-making, nature of relations and equality, as well as power dynamics inherent in these processes. By contemplating about these, it is possible to achieve a reconnection of the economy with society and politics, aiming at democratization, decentralization and empowerment. If the purpose of solidarity economy is to foster an economy and a society which are more democratic and empowering to the many, a framework of commons can provide us with some answers or perhaps more importantly with the questions that should be posed, in order to make this possible. An approach of commons can provide a more critical perspective which looks at the social and political aspects rather than focusing solely on aspects of economic aspects and performance, which means discovering the potential for social change.

Proposed methodology

This paper proposes an original critical methodology for the deconstruction of the generalised concept of solidarity economy which is built around issues underpinning the organisation of commons. Through the methodology it is possible to create a typology of the varied identities of the field, and explore the potential/ or lack of, for social transformation. It is structured around the following issues or questions:

-The degree of transformation of social relations, either work relations among members of collectives, or economic relations among partners at different production stages (producers, suppliers, customers).

- The size and characteristics of the community that is being served, as well as the range of social needs that are being addressed.

- The kind and extent of alternative organization proposed, whether it refers to vertical organisation of production, or whether it refers to horizontal organisation within a sector, neighbourhood or area.

- The type of activities involved, whether they are linked to an enterprise, collective, community or wider social movement

- The relation with the dominant socio-economic paradigm as well as the kind and extent of political action, alliances and networks they engage with each other or with the wider community.

- The model of governance, decision-making processes, degree of meaningful participation and power dynamics inherent in these processes.

Findings

For the exploration of the aforementioned issues, it is possible to construct three tables which reveal three facets of the identity of this field. The first two issues referring to relations as well as the community and its needs are presented in the first table and make up the social identity. The following two issues about the extent and nature of organization or activities are shown in the second table, while the issues of governance and the relation with the dominant paradigm are

presented on the third table representing the political identity. In the first table we see the nature of relations between either members or among various partners, for example producers, suppliers and customers. These can be either hierarchical based on unequal power distribution and possible exploitation or they can be horizontal based on equality and reciprocity. The vertical axis represents the size and characteristics of community as well as the range of social needs that are being addressed. Here the distinction is between a restricted participation and a focus on serving the needs of their members and an open participation whereby more people are welcome to join and the focus is towards addressing the needs of the society. In each of the cells there are indicative examples of initiatives, which combine in each case a different mix of the two dimensions of the social identity.

The second table represents the organizational identity which is summarized in the extent and type of activities involved. In this case we can have initiatives with either a specific focus or a wider range of activities, extending to more than one production stages, spaces and areas. Moreover the type of activities observed, may be either linked to a formal enterprise or refer to somehow more informal efforts, emerged as a result of wider movements and hence sustaining close connections with the communities around them.

Finally the last table depicts the political identity as summarised in the model of governance and the relation with the dominant socio-economic paradigm. In this case we can distinguish between cohabitation and challenge, based on whether there is a significant re-appropriation of relationships, practices and space from the capitalist forces as well as an engagement in political action to fight dominant practices. On the other hand the model of governance can be based on either meaningful participation, inclusion, discussion and fermentation or on limited participation and information and unequal power distribution.

Conclusions

The methodology presented can be applied to individual initiatives or practices, types of initiatives, categories, entire ecosystems, communities or movements. The construction of the tables and analysis reveal that as we move to the bottom right of the tables, the more the possibility for the creation of commons and the potential for social transformation increases, through a wider participation and more integrated forms of organization, which combine social, organizational/ economic and political dimensions. Collaborations, alliances and networks can also play a similar role, as the more collaboration deepens, the more possible it becomes for the commons to multiply and reproduce. Culture, education, discussion and a critical perspective are important because alliances require a common recognition of what commons involve, why they are important and how they can be achieved. Pluralism among initiatives is important, as also is discussion, fermentation and experimentation within them and collaboration among them. Since there is no initiative that has a definite answer or solution, pluralism is important in order to advance to a society that is both more radical and democratic. A framework of commons can enrich the study of solidarity economy and alternative production and provide a radical perspective to its conceptualisation and practice. Tηrough a lens of commons, the aim of solidarity economy and alternative production becomes the reappropriation of as many practices, relationships and processes from the hegemony of the market, back to the communities which are being affected and involved.

In order for this to be achieved, we need to understand the commons as social and political processes that are communal and hence inherently dynamic, rather than as products or resources which remain static once produced or used (Fournier, 2013). Communities, assemblies fermentation, ideas, trust and solidarity, are all part of the commoning process and may be regarded as significant common resources. This would mean that irrespective of the evolution of a movement or collective, processes and what they have created, carry the potential to become a legacy for the creation of new forms of organization as commons, which is important for both their reproduction and further evolution (Sakali, 2016).

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George Chatzinakos ‘Urban Experiments in Times of Crisis: The Case of Svolou’s Neighbourhood Initiative in Thessaloniki/Greece’

This participatory action research critically engages with issues of community-building and place-making in the development of an urban experiment in the historical and commercial centre of Thessaloniki, Greece. This bottom-up neighbourhood initiative was founded in 2013 by an informal group of locals and shopkeepers. It was a period where the impacts of the financial crisis had begun to unfold rapidly, not only at the retail level but also in everyday relationships. As a response, we started to discuss ways to make the neighbourhood more vibrant, creative and pleasant. With the

passage of time a diverse group of people joined the Initiative. We held concerts, a parade with various active citizens' groups of the city, place-making activities in schools and in public spaces, artistic and tactical urbanism interventions, actions to foster the collective identity of the neighbourhood (e.g. soft-branding sticker), a memory bank, solidarity actions (e.g. refugees) etc.

Influenced by respective cultural practices that take place in Barcelona, our main action is a collective dinner, which was performed for the first time in 2014. The first challenge was whether it was possible to transfer, in a sustainable way, a cultural practice from another city of the European south to Thessaloniki. Spring's Dinner has transformed the city's fabric in terms of appropriation of public space constituting a landmark event for a city which is directly affected by the economic crisis in all aspects (social, cultural, economic) of everyday life, introducing a new discussion around the role of citizens in the midst of a more-than-financial crisis. This pilot urban experiment created a more fertile ground for carrying out various activities in the neighbourhood. Gradually, this enabled us to establish a new neighbourhood identity, by combining various local and socio-cultural attributes. 2016 was the most successful year attracting 5.000 people who appropriated the entire neighbourhood.

Such cultural events can be considered to be a framing of time that isolates and draws attention to a gathering of people in a specific place at a specific time. In general such practices are distinguished for their ability to temporarily disrupt everyday order as they provide a sanctioned forum for unleashing societal tensions. Bahktin (1984) defined festivals as liminal, "time out of time" spaces with the ability to re-frame time and space; full of possibilities for challenging social conventions and inverting society's cultural norms. Liminality represents "a stage of being in culture almost completely at odds with the ordinary and the mundane" where social order is "mocked, reversed, criticized, or ignored" (Turner, 1992:133-147). This liminal phase potentially can contribute to the dissolving of mental and social boundaries, contributing to diversity and social transformations; challenging accepted ways of thinking; provoking radical changes of social attitudes and the status quo (Sharpley & Stone, 2011). Cultural events therefore represent marginal, liminal zones, places outside the normal constraints of daily life, showcasing "a liberation from the regimes of normative practices and performance codes of mundane life" (Shields, 1991:84). This is "related to the idea of transgression of the boundaries and taboos that define social and symbolic everyday life spaces" making such transgression in a sense authorized (Picard & Robinson, 2006:11).

The event played a very important role in the change that happened in the Neighbourhood; creating a new culture; producing social links between different groups and individuals who had little previous contact, and encouraging stronger interaction. Essentially, we managed to create a dynamic and diverse network between neighbours and shopkeepers who previously didn't know each other. The latter joined forces, intending to highlight the Neighbourhood in a pilot model of social organization and cohesion, aiming to introduce more permanent activities. We observed a significant change in everyday relationships, bringing different people closer together, and breaking the initial isolation and distrust through active participation in the Initiative. After four years of experience, we noticed that social relations between residents who previously hadn't had any relationship, were enhanced, creating a new sense of social cohesion, giving greater confidence in relationships where previously people were suspicious. The Dinner provides people with an

opportunity to get to know each other and develop an interactive relationship with public space. Arguably, by getting people who live in the same area together they get to know each other better and can build trust networks. However, there is a danger that our actions can develop a kind of "staged culture" (MacCannell, 1973). A potential commercialization of the event might lead to an alienation of the local community. Therefore, the Dinner is considered as a means, and not the end in itself, to create a different/temporary atmosphere in a stagnant and crumbling reality.

Nowadays, our aim is to find ways to increase individual responsibility, collective sensitivity and 'sociological imagination' towards urban commons. We are trying to develop a network which will be able to offer its creative assets, in order to manage everyday life, so it is becomes easier to solve common problems. Arguably, such neighbourhood initiatives can create a domino effect, propelling the history of this city into a new era of participation and solidarity; challenging social conventions; strengthening social ties; and creating a new relationship with public space. In Greece, due to the lack of a permanent institutional framework, people can't (re-)produce in a sustainable fashion actions that will respond to their individual needs and provide solutions to the collective problems of their place of residence. The aim is to create a framework that addresses or prevents social problems; or promotes the design of more sustainable/inclusive neighbourhoods; and enhances an ecological understanding which focuses on an overarching view of neighbourhood needs and desires (Chatzinakos, 2016; Aronson et al., 2007; Nelson & Baldwin, 2002). To this end, to what extent neighbourhood initiatives can present an alternative way of cities' management and citizens' participation in the midst of a more-than-financial crisis?

Keywords: Urban experiments; place-making; new politics of place; liminal cultures; critical event studies; action-research

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Silke Helfrich, 'Peer Governance in Commons'

Contribution for the International Workshop on the Commons and Political Theory in Thessaloniki, September 16, 2017

Introduction

According to the British author George Monbiot, neoliberalism and Keynesianism share the same narrative structure, which he coins the 'restoration story':

> Disorder afflicts the land, caused by powerful and nefarious forces working against the interests of humanity. The hero – who might be one person or a group of people – revolts against this disorder, fights the nefarious forces, overcomes them despite great odds and restores order.

Based on the insight, that the only way to overcome a broken narrative structure is to provide another narrative structure –instead of merely changing rules or the governance framework– we suggest developing a consistent narrative of the Commons. Such a narrative should be intelligible and make sense to common people and policy makers alike, while being anchored in pluriversality. It should crosscut traditional political divisions, be firmly grounded in social practices and provide theoretical orientation for scholars and practitioners. Together with commons expert and author David Bollier, since 2016, I am working on such a commons-narrative, based on the following…

Assumptions

✓ The whole world is ordered in patterns. (cf. Christopher Alexander (2002-2005): The Nature of Order, Berkeley, California)

✓ Patterns that enact a free, fair and sustainable future – the ultimate goal of a commons based society and economy – are already there but are not 'legible.'

✓ Patterns of commons and commoning are based on a relational ontology, meaning that nor the commons nor a commons polity can be framed and expressed in essentialist terms, categories and language. (cf. Wesley J. Wildman. An Introduction to Relational Ontology, Boston University, May 15, 2006)

Methodology

✓ collection of outstanding international examples (Bollier/Helfrich (2012): The Wealth of the Commons, Amherst/MA and (2015): Patterns of Commoning, Amherst/MA.)

✓ sense-making trough 'pattern-mining' and matching with theoretical concepts

✓ testing elements of the framework on which the commons-narrative will be based upon via in-depth interviews (several reiterations)

✓ ongoing adjustment of patterns and framework through reflection and p2p discussion (several reiterations)

A new framework for Commons & Commoning

Based on the aforementioned ideas, assumptions and proceeding, Bollier and Helfrich developed a preliminary version of a commons framework that helps to bring about a commons vocabulary (not taxonomy) and is the foundation of the narrative that overcomes the 'restoration story.' This framework is and will always be imperfect and incomplete if only because the realities of the human condition ultimately elude full systemization and analysis. Despite attempts to create an 'utopia of rules' (David Graeber) through bureaucracy and other systems of control, human agency is always dynamic, surprising and boundary-crossing.

A symbiotic triad - the core of this framework

Commons & Commoning are complex adaptive processes, that consist of a simple symbiotic triade: the social section (commoning), the institutional and organizational section (peer governance) and the economic section (provisioning through commons). Each section has multiple dimensions. It is important to understand, that these sections don't describe something different. They rather describe the same - aspects of commons & commoning just seen through a different lens depending on the section's focus. There is therefore an overlap and correspondence among the dimensions (which we call patterns), they are interlinked.

Dimensions of Commoning

There is no commons, without commoning: It is impossible to understand the commons without understanding the multidimensional and open-ended social process of commoning. Conceptualizing it helps making evident that the scope of the commons is far beyond the management of collective resources. We identified 12 dimensions we consider key for thriving commoning processes.

Peer Governance in Commons

There is no commoning without Peer-Governance. Peer-Governance is an expression of self-organization. It is distinct from governing for the people (charity approach). It is also distinct from governing with the people (participation-approach). It is governing by the people (commons-approach). We identified 10 dimensions we consider key for successful peer governance.

Provisioning through Commons

Commons can be seen as a different mode of production and commoning as a value-generating process that produces commons instead of commodities. That is: a commons approach breaks free of an economic empire, because it is based on a different rationality and transaction-logic. It brings about values and value. It produces care, shelter and all kind of useable things. We identified 10 dimensions we consider key in commons based and commons creating peer production.

At a later stage **External Politics & Culture** dimensions will be added to the framework. Here we coin generic patterns to describe the political culture and the policies that make commons & commoning work, and how commons relate to the State, the Market and other commons (the scaling question.

Alexandros Pazaitis 'How can the commons provide a new rationality for the firm in the information age?'

This essay attempts to synthesize two distinct bodies of knowledge: on one hand the long established innovation literature; and on the other hand the recent expositions of open innovation, peer production and the commons. The aim is to re-examine some of the persistent discussions around the notion of the firm, as the unit of analysis for innovative activities, in the context of the new techno-economic conditions effectuated by the revolution of Information and Communication

Technologies. The main dynamics of peer production are briefly presented in relation to the commons as an alternative approach for economic governance, distinct from hierarchies and markets. Finally, a synthesized multi-level approach is sought, acknowledging the commons as an important institution for the modern economic reality and the future of the firm.

Introduction

Organising for innovation has been one of the most intricate riddles that innovation theory and business strategy have been trying to solve. At its core, the discussion is orchestrated around the firm: a single unit of reference providing the realm of innovative activities. As a continuous subject of scholarly analysis the notion of the firm appears quite concrete and established. However, the contours of the firm vary significantly over time and upon several technological and institutional transformations (Teece, 1988; Lazonick, 2006). And in every one of these shifts the appropriate patterns and winning strategies are sought, which will best deploy its respective sociotechnical traits. Especially at the turning point of the ICT-driven techno-economic paradigm (Perez, 2002),

the types of organisational patterns that will effectively harness the dynamics of the new technologies will determine its potential course.

The advance and wide diffusion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has surfaced unseen human capabilities for effective communication and coordination among loosely-affiliated individuals. We have witnessed the emergence of fluid networks of autonomous agents, comprising a multitude of diverse individuals and organisations that can effectively collaborate towards a common goal by pooling information and their productive capacity. Yet, economics and business literature still seem by and large agnostic to these dynamics. Recent literature has been exploring some facets of this plexus, analysed under the broad umbrella of 'open innovation' (von Hippel, 2005; Chesbrough, 2003, 2006; Lakhani & von Hippel, 2003).

However there still hasn't been a convincing theoretical approach integrating them in the theory of the firm. Innovation literature – to a certain extent – has been treating those elements as blind spots in the various functions and operations of the firm, without elucidating them within the innovation process per se. ICT has drastically reduced the cost of communication and distributed material capital giving agency to an increasing number of individuals to participate in innovative activities. But the increased capacity effectuated by ICT is arguably much broader than this. An expanding ecosystem of community-driven initiatives, beginning with the Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) and Wikipedia, and moving towards open hardware, open design and distributed manufacturing, may offer a glimpse to this perspective.

Beyond crowdsourcing platforms and user feedback mechanisms, these initiatives exemplify a new approach that goes past the identification of users' needs and the optimization of simple human labour to well-defined tasks. They rather introduce a new organisational model that harnesses ICT to streamline distributed knowledge production and learning towards meaningful social production (Benkler, 2017). Central to this approach are the concepts of the commons (Ostrom, 1990; Bollier, 2014; De Angelis, 2010) and peer production (Benkler, 2002; 2006; Bauwens, 2005). They exemplify a new modality of value creation, where autonomous individuals engage in voluntary contributions to a common goal. For this they pool resources and their creative skills and produce shared outputs, usually universally accessible, i.e. commons. Peer production and the commons provide a new rationality in the way the ICT-enhanced capabilities can be harnessed under a new organisational form, one that subsumes command-and-control, as well as competition, under cooperation. The aim of this paper is to explore the existing innovation literature on the organisation of the firm, attempting to re-examine certain dynamics through the lens of peer production and the commons. The main motivation is to couple two distinct bodies of literature, insofar they can better delineate the future of the firm in a highly complex economic reality. The overall objective is to shed light to certain elements that may be closely related to a new organisation paradigm for innovation and sustainability in the information age.

Demystifying the innovative firm

Following the Schumpeterian legacy, the firm has been dominating the scholarly attention as 'the most powerful engine of progress' (1942: 106). Yet in an economic world that is rapidly progressing, so are the strategic, financial and organisational arrangements supporting the

innovation process (Lazonick, 2006). Changes in technology, market structure and competition, themselves linked to successful innovation, demand continuous reformulation of a firm's innovative capabilities. A key determinant in this process is its organisational integration of a variety of aspects, associated with its structure, internal and external relations, and learning capacities. Schumpeter's observations have concentrated a large bundle of theoretical and empirical explorations on the link between innovation and, respectively firm size, and market structure. Yet most of the discourse has been rather inconclusive, either for methodological reasons (Cohen & Levin, 1989) or simply because the developments in the intra- and inter-firm environment have rendered it outmoded (Teece, 1992). In the following review, I will attempt to highlight certain aspects of these views that may gain particular significance in the context of the information age.

Firm size and market structure

The original argument underpinning the link of innovation with firm size and market structure, as attributed to Schumpeter (1942), can be summarised in three points: (a) larger scale provides better capacity to bear Research & Development (R&D) costs; (b) larger diversity and scope is more effective in absorbing failures across various technologies; and (c) greater market control enables firms to reap the rewards of innovation (Teece, 1986; 1992). Firstly, the argument on R&D intensity in large firms is basically premised on in-house R&D, based on the assumption that firms have the actual capacity to engage in it, while acknowledging the contractual difficulties erected from outsourcing R&D (Teece, 1988). However, the increased complexity and pluralism of actors required for contemporary R&D necessitates the involvement of external parties. Simultaneously, there are occasions where technological breakthroughs may be more likely to occur outside an established firm's competences and cumulative knowledge, where research collaboration drastically is a more attractive option for both new as well as incumbent firms (Teece, 1988).

Furthermore, empirical evidence indicates that R&D spending and productivity is greater in large firms (Knott & Vieregger, 2016). However, outliers and industry effects have a significant impact in this relation, rather than size alone (Cohen et al, 1987; Shefer & Frenkel, 2005). There are also important differences in the choices of the types of R&D and the respective strategies associated with firm size (Nelson, 1959; Rosen, 1991; Cohen & Klepper, 1996). Overall it can be argued that large firms have a greater probability to engage in- and bear the costs of R&D. Nevertheless, there are certain areas, such as basic research, where private firms are reluctant to invest, regardless of their size, while the direct causal relation between R&D and innovation is often overstated (Mazzucato, 2013). Moving on, it has been also supported that legal tools and regimes that allow for greater appropriability of knowledge enhances the innovators' ability profit from innovation and encourage further investment in R&D (Teece, 1986; 1992). However, tight appropriability regimes are rather rare in modern industry, whereas there has been broadly acknowledged that patents cannot offer viable solutions to the problems they are theoretically trying to solve (Teece, 1986; Boldrin & Levine, 2013).

Furthermore, there the empirical evidence concerning a positive relation between firm size and R&D investment is rather inconclusive and varies among different areas and industries (Shefer &

Frenkel, 2005). On the contrary, horizontal integration across the value chain, involving competitor firms, can solve many issues concerning appropriability and spillovers. This is accomplished by sharing the benefits to a greater number of firms, whilst reducing the cost and risk of R&D and commercialization, and the duplicate effort (Teece, 1992). Simultaneously, there is empirical evidence that speaks for the relative advantage of small businesses in engage in networking and inter-firm alliances (Rogers, 2004). It may also be argued that, in certain instances, small firms can emulate most of the functions and capacities of large enterprises through cooperative agreements, whilst discharged by many size-related complications (Teece, 1992; 1996). Regardless of the specificities of the innovative process, it is most likely that a firm would need to ensure access to certain assets and capabilities situated beyond its boundaries. In the development process of new technologies, valuable knowledge and skill lie in institutions such as universities, laboratories and functional departments of unaffiliated firms (Teece, 1992; Mina et al, 2014), even independent user communities (von Hippel, 1988; Dalhander & Piezunka, 2014). Similarly, the vital role of access to complementary, specialised and co-specialised assets has been emphasized in the commercialization of innovations (Teece, 1986; Gambardella & Panico, 2014).

Foremostly, the firm as a unit of analysis in Schumpeter alone, but also in the subsequent analyses, remains somewhat fuzzy with no clearly defined boundaries. A highly complex web of inter-firm agreements and alliances is often in place, affecting the business structure, strategies and innovation processes. It is thus very difficult to substantially focus the analysis to a single unit and produce useful results (Teece, 1992). Even more, in today's ever-changing corporate environment, with an expanding web of clusters and networked forms of cooperation (Porter, 1990; 2000; Powell, 1996), the firm size debate seems to further diminish in relevance. A meaningful discussion over the function and outreach of the modern firm would arguably not be of any value without a deeper understanding of the inter-enterprise cooperative relationships and liaisons, particularly amongst the most innovative firms (Teece, 1992). Governance and coordination Innovation is a unique type of economic activity, one that has very special requirements on information and coordination. This entails not only the coordination of intra-firm processes for product development and commercialization, but also the access to complementary assets, the management of linkages with users, suppliers and competitors, as well as the connections among different sets of technologies (Teece, 1992).

Economics and business textbooks have for a long time been mainly locked in two main approaches concerning the governance patterns favouring innovation. On the one hand, there is the rationality of the price system that is efficiently coordinating competitive self-interest towards optimal results, stemming from a Walrasian understanding of the economy and the prescriptions of F.A. Hayek (1945) that praise free market competition. On the other hand lies the logic of managerial capitalism, introduced by the work of R.H. Coase (1937) and forwarded by O.E. Williamson (1975; 1985), which focuses on the hierarchical organisation of the firm serving for the reduction of transaction costs that occur in regulating contracts and information through market relations. Of course this dichotomy cannot provide a sufficient general model for the modern economic reality. It's neither complete hierarchical monopoly nor perfect market competition to be observed in the real world that is coordinating and stimulating business processes. Despite the

common belief among standard textbook economics, a pure free market system - assuming that it exists - is also not adequate to foster most types of innovative processes (Teece, 1992).

Similarly, high level of vertical integration may facilitate the commercialization of innovations, but may also hinder interdependencies and the introduction of new technologies due to path dependencies (Teece, 1988). Most importantly, this debate abstracts the complex business reality in a way that other key elements are dismissed (Teece, 1992). Teece (1992) signifies that a variety of different types of organisational structures are simultaneously at work in successful firms.

Moreover, in many stages of development and commercialization of new technology, large hierarchies and the price system seem to hinder the conditions that affect the flow of information and time to market. On the contrary, cooperation, multilateral agreements entailing pooling of resources and activities among partner organisations can offer significant advantages. This is the case of strategic alliances (Teece, 1992), defined as constellations of multilateral agreements among firms. They are typically intended for the development and commercialisation of new technology, but may as well constitute a new organisational form, spanning within and beyond the confines of the firm. While they can occur in various forms, strategic alliances generally entail a commitment among two or several parties to pool their resources and activities to reach a common goal. They may be in the form of joint R&D, know-how, manufacturing and marketing agreements and provide solutions to various strategic and operational levels, including access to complementary assets, users and suppliers, and coupling of enabling technologies. Such alliances pervade the narrow terms of legal structural and property arrangements. They rather operate as long-term, durable relationships based on reciprocity. It has been argued (Teece, 1992; Cohen & Levin, 1989) that western – especially in the United States - economists and business scholars have long failed to properly analyse such patterns of cooperation, due to a widespread preoccupation against cartel and trust practices.

The same applies to the comprehension of certain aspects of the efficiency gains from the Japanese and overseas tradition. In Europe these types of alliances have been increasingly coming to be integrated in businesses, spurring cooperation that is proving effective in processes of product development and commercialization (Teece, 1992). This is also building upon a long tradition of pre-WWII cooperative tradition, such as the German science-based intra-industry cooperative associations and cartels in the early 20th century (Fear, 1995). In the Japanese tradition (Gerlach, 1988; 1992), the parties of an alliance do not engage in market-based transactions, but are rather bound upon relational types of exchange. They are motivated by participation and mutual obligation, while symbolic activities and ceremonies play an important role. Familiarity and historical bonds are the key determinants of the alliance, instead of incumbent task distribution (Teece, 1992).

The introduction of strategic alliances in scholarly discussion is of course not aiming to the erosion of competition and market pluralism from it. However it may serve to bring certain aspects to the forefront of the organisational theory of the firm, beyond firm size and market structure. Most importantly, in the observation of new forms of collaboration facilitated by widely diffused ICT and the internet, those types of cooperation based on non-market relations can provide a solid and

reliable ground to guide further research. Dynamic capabilities and learning A vital element in comprehending the innovative functions of the firm, beyond its size and structure, is its learning processes. These include the relation between tacit and codified knowledge, individual and collective capabilities and the cumulative causation of learning over time (Lazonick, 2006). Learning is a highly social activity, which is tightly bound with the uncertainty of innovation, and its cumulative and collective characteristics. Therefore, the social context of the innovative firm is shaping the types of interaction and learning among its people. Teece et al (1997: 516) speak for the dynamic capabilities of the firm, concerning its 'ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competences to address rapidly changing environments.' To this direction, a firm's strategy is directed towards the most sustainable paths and courses for competence development.

Those capabilities are of cumulative nature, as firms standardise the embodiment of tacit knowledge into their organisational patterns (Nelson & Winter, 1982). Simultaneously, the successful organisational patterns of a firm are representative of the collective knowledge of coordination and learning in a certain social context (Kogut & Zander, 1996; Lazonick, 2006). This collective dimension has been further interpreted in von Hippel's (1977; 1988; 2005) analysis of user innovation. One part of the equation is the social knowledge from the users that drives technological design, while, on the other side lies the firm's ability to integrate this knowledge in its capabilities to produce and commercialise new technologies (Teece, 1992). There is thus a collective function of the firm that moves from the identification and satisfaction of needs, to the co-production of socially meaningful innovations.

Von Hippel initiated the discussion on the integration of learning and technological capacities of users, by opening up the innovation processes transcending the boundaries of the firm. Recent literature has discussed the engagement of external actors contributing in intra- or inter-firm activities, including users, suppliers, competitors, investors or other organisations (Dahlander & Piezunka, 2013; Gambardella & Panico, 2014; West & Bogers, 2013) and the free exchange of knowledge among them (West et al, 2006; Enkel et al, 2009). Alongside, there is a rich tapestry of well-documented cases from the ecosystem of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) (Dafermos, 2012; Harhoff & Lakhani, 2016; Mateos-Garcia & Steinmueller, 2008; Scacchi et al., 2006; Benkler, 2006; von Hippel, 2016), as well as open design and open hardware (Kostakis et al, 2015; 2016; Giotitsas & Ramos, 2017). Benkler (2002; 2006) discusses this phenomenon as a new modality of value creation, called (commons-based) peer production. However, he suggests that this mode of production is not all new, rather it has been present for the most part of the known history of human societies. It is only now, with a new array of technological capabilities, that it has gained economic significance.

Similarly, Teece (1992) argues that it is not that in earlier periods there had been a broader geographical dispersion of technological capacity. But it is that global communications are now so effective that the economic distinction between local and global has been wildly eradicated. This combined with a broad availability of a wide variety of options for inter-firm cooperation, has unfolded a feasible reality of rapid, complex and geographically dispersed organisational forms.

Benkler (2016) makes the case for a new approach in organisational theory, that amalgamates a theory of knowledge production and learning, with the core insights of open innovation and user innovation (von Hippel, 1988; 2005) and elements from sociological research on innovation networks (Powell, 1990; 1996), innovation clusters (Gilson, 1999; Saxenian, 2000) and the commons (Ostrom, 1990; Bollier, 2014). This approach is arguably very substantial to decipher the nature of the firm in the information society. Just like a discussion on firm size and market structure that dismisses cooperative agreements and alliances would misinterpret the nature of the firm (Teece, 1992), likewise a discussion on knowledge production and open innovation that dismisses peer production and the commons would mislead our perception of the future of the firm.

The commons and the nature of The Firm

The phenomenon of peer production has been analytically and empirically analysed in relation to both hierarchies and markets. As a mode of production it has illustrated unique characteristics that allow for the successful large-scale collaboration of individuals following a diverse set of motives and social signals that render neither to hierarchical command nor to market stimuli (Benkler, 2002). Firstly, building on Coase's transaction cost hypothesis, Benkler (2002) analysed peer production, focusing on its capacity to effectively reduce transaction costs related to contract and property. Specifically, in occasions where physical capital is distributed, like the case of information production, peer production possesses significant advantages in motivating and assigning human creativity. Moreover, by pooling resources and activities among groups of individuals, there are efficiency gains in allocating a large number of potential contributions to larger clusters of resources. This drastically reduces the transaction costs related to allocating effort, assigning roles and tasks, and monitoring the use of resources. Furthermore, focusing on the distribution of resources, Benkler (2004) identifies a distinct parcel of goods and services with certain characteristics that deem them 'shareable.' Such goods possess a systematically excess capacity that can be more effectively valued through the practice of social sharing rather than through the price system. For instance, such are the cases of computer processors or automobiles, where demand rarely meets the aggregate capacity of the supply, when they are privately owned and used as rival resources.

On the contrary, distributed computing and carpooling are the respective social sharing practices that have evolved around such goods, in which loosely affiliated individuals contribute part of their capacity, leading to their more effective provisioning. Those special characteristics of shareable goods and services may suffice to deem social sharing a feasible and sustainable practice. However, those characteristics alone are neither sufficient nor necessary for the sharing to take place. Rather they signify those conditions that give eminence to sharing among the other types of social interactions (Benkler, 2004). Benkler's analysis is thus aiming to the recognition of sharing as a productive economic function, alongside firm-based and price-based interactions. Indeed, the phenomenon of peer production has eloquently demonstrated its dynamics in relation to the other types of production. Exemplary projects are vigorously building on the advanced capabilities of modern ICT to out-compete their hierarchical and market-based counterparts. The case of the free encyclopedia Wikipedia triumphing over the previously salient Encyclopaedia Britannica, and the Apache Web Server outperforming Microsoft's web server are only a few of such instances. Most

importantly, amidst a broader value crisis in the economic and work milieu (Arvidsson et al, 2008), peer production has been presenting a unique endowment in unlocking human creativity and intrinsically motivating people to contribute to a collaborative process.

Following Benkler's contributions, peer production has arguably helped us re-imagine the commons in the economic life. The commons may still remain relevant in a somewhat marginal field of scholarly and business practice, yet as the driving force behind peer production, they have much broader implications. A new economic rationality is shaped, where intrinsic and social motivations are subsuming material rewards and individual benefits; the dominance of property is challenged by common ownership regimes and commons-based governance; and, finally, the centrality of the firm in the innovation process is questioned (Benkler, 2017). Nevertheless, despite the rapid reduction of transaction costs and the efficiency gains from sharing capabilities, there is arguably still a huge role for the firm to play in this new economic reality. Benkler (2017: 8) argues for a virtuous function of peer production in maintaining 'coherence in the face of vanishing transaction costs.' That is, facilitating collaboration among diversely motivated individuals, so that they engage in some sort of persistent social relation: the future of the firm. In other words, peer production and the commons arguably present an alternative to Hayek's decentralised coordination, one that also takes context and human characteristics into account. Instead of assuming spontaneous relations of exchange emerging out of self-interest in every field, cooperative peer production understands why people need, and in most cases prefer to, work amongst each other, whilst developing proper institutions to reduce the relevant friction to the minimum.

Most importantly, the strategic advantage of a firm in this form over ad-hoc, fluid networks of gig-based participants would be to provide a more humane environment to engage the full capacities of people in a socially-meaningful interaction (Benkler, 2017). It's a sort of strategy that aims to (re-) introduce reciprocity, sharing and cooperation at the very core of economic activities, elements that have been abstracted in the name of cost-effectiveness and optimisation. At the turning point of the ICT-driven techno-economic paradigm, it is those types of organisational patterns promoting a positive outcome for all the social groups investing in the potential of the new technologies, that will determine its successful deployment. The commons may provide a viable option in the quiver of future policy design, in shaping the future of the firm and its role in a continuously complex and interconnected reality.

Synthesis: A multi-modal approach

We may thus argue that there are in fact three modalities of governance facilitating coordination and innovation in the firm: (a) hierarchy; (b) market exchange; and (c) the commons. Those modalities are simultaneously at work, whereas, depending on the context, each one subordinates the others. The ICT revolution has brought about a series of hitherto unseen capabilities of human coordination and communication that have effectuated a great advantage of commons-based practices in relation to the other two modalities under certain circumstances. Yet, the commons have been broadly dismissed in economics literature as inefficient and prone to the infamous 'tragedy' (Hardin, 1968). But the commons have arguably been an invisible element continuously operating in economic reality, especially in non-market-based forms of cooperation. From cooperative agreements, to

strategic alliances, to peer-to-peer networks and collaborative platforms, the commons provide a more rigid ground to analyse and interpret human entanglements. Numerous forms of human interaction and coordination entail some form of 'commoning' (Bollier, 2014: 3), i.e. the capacity to contribute to- and benefit from a shared resource.

De Angelis (2010: 955) argues that 'what lies behind the "tragedy of the commons" is really the tragedy of the destruction of commoning through all sorts of structural adjustments.' In this view, hierarchies and markets have been such forms of 'structural adjustment' in the process of commoning of human, intellectual and material resources, born out of historical and technological necessity. Indeed, Lazonick (2006: 32) presents the conceptualisation of the modern corporate enterprise offered by E. Penrose (1959), as 'an organisation that administers a collection of human and physical resources' entailing the contribution of 'labour services to the firm, not merely as individuals, but as members of teams who engage in learning about how to make best use of the firm's productive resources – including their own.' In this view, the corporate commons may be perceived as an array of shared resources, imposed to a certain type of administration by a structural unit akin to a certain set of motives and objectives.

The commons come to existence once certain resources are mutualised among a number of agents that are bound by their social relationships to maintain and manage them for the common benefit. There is no commons without commoning and vice versa. There is also no commons without commoners. The dynamic of peer production is arguably moving from the periphery to the centre of economic reality and it may eventually bring the commons to the consciousness of the ones that are relying upon them to pursue their collective interpretation of value. In a highly complex and pluralistic economic reality, the potential of the commons lies in creating those sorts of organisational arrangements, able to integrate a certain degree of collective dynamic capabilities among diverse agents, which would lower the costs and risks of innovation to such an extent that would deem hierarchies and competition obsolete as forms of structural adjustment. In turn, this will emancipate such structures from their historical confinements and allow them to function as conscious manifestations of human culture, trust and socially meaningful interaction.

Keywords: the firm; innovation; organisation; commons; peer production

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Irini Sotiropoulou, 'Commons and private property as patriarchic trap'

The paper investigates the concept of commons as a western European patriarchal term constructed in antithesis to private property following the historical material conditions formed during the advance of capitalism.

I use feminist theory to understand how commons have taken over the demand for collective arrangements in late capitalism concerning both natural ecosystems and human societies. The paper examines commons in comparison to private property and its understandings within a framework where patriarchy is investigated as an economic system and capitalism is a form of patriarchy. I also examine how commons became prominent in the political discourse, exactly at the time of multi-layered changes in private property regimes under neoliberal policies.

The focus on the commons has reduced the interest in the critique of private property and in its abolition as an anti-capitalist anti-patriarchal claim of communities and social movements. Quite the opposite: Commons are a form of property and the logic of property seems to expand to the discourse about the alternatives to private property.

In other words, commons and private property are constructed in late capitalism as one more patriarchal binary of propertied 'things.' Moreover, the commons are thought of as the 'left-overs' of private property. This perception leads to prioritising private property demands and having the commoners following the agenda of the privatisers instead of setting a non-property agenda.

It seems that the commons, as constructed till the moment, bear this acceptance of private property as the main political economic institution to define arrangements of access and control over means of production. They also represent the social understanding that property is the only way to institutionally understand our relationship to the world. The paper contributes to the commons debate by showing that the patriarchal construction of the commons keeps them tied to private property sustaining the latter and degrading the potential of the former for social change.

1. Introduction

The paper investigates commons within its historical and social context, which is capitalist patriarchy. The purpose of the paper is to critically investigate how this notion is linked to patriarchal and capitalist understandings of the economy and how it perpetuates ways of thinking and ways of practicing anticapitalist activism that inherently are reproducing core concepts and institutions of capitalism and patriarchy.

I use feminist theory and the critique on property in order to understand where the commons are situated within a complex political system that encompasses patriarchal and capitalist traits. My intention is to understand better how we ended up not to discuss the abolition of private property and how indigenous groups are now blamed for anti-commons behaviour while they are themselves suffering from colonial and neo-colonial destruction of their livelihoods.

The next section explains the research question of the paper. Section three presents patriarchy as a social system and section four examines patriarchy as an economic system, with special emphasis on property and the connection of property arrangements to the commons. Commons are critically analysed within the context of being constructed as the last resort of the poor, in section five. Section six is the concluding section where I discuss possible ways to allow the discussion and practice go beyond commons.

2. Why commons?

I have been puzzled for some years now concerning the proliferation of the notion of common in both social movements and social sciences. I am not against the idea of having collective arrangements for things that we produce or things that everyone needs to have access to, like a beautiful forest.

In that sense, the work, both theoretical and activist, done for the commons so far is something that needs to be recognised and praised as such. However, the same notion of commons seems that does not take into account the existing inequalities that get reproduced through the commons, especially gender and class. At the same time, the commons seem to satisfy various claims and needs of the social movements in Europe and United States (or in the so-called Anglo-Saxon world), but seem awkward or out of context in other settings like Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, and much more in countries that belong to completely different historical and cultural contexts (Akbulut 2015, Davis 2011, Peterson 2012).

Moreover, concerning the Western European movements and theorists, it is impressive to see the discussion about the commons having crowded out the discussion on private property. Compared to 19th and 20th century discussions, the abolition of property has been forgotten during the late decades of 20th century and even more in early 21st century (Bauwens & Kostakis 2014, Benkler 2006, Benkler & Nissenbaum 2006, Gibson-Graham 2006, Hardt & Negri 2009, Ostrom 1990, De Angelis 2005).

The question of putting the notion of commons into its historical, social, cultural and political economic context raises further questions:

-Where is the discussion about abolishing private property?

-Where is the critique on commons that are established among and for privileged people at the expense of disadvantaged groups? (An example is the digital commons in a “disruptive” company in Western Europe at the environmental and human expense of the workers in South Asia who

assemble the hardware parts under deplorable conditions, after aggressive extraction of raw materials needed for the hardware)

-Who is working for the commons and who is reaping the benefits?

-What happened with collective arrangements that defy commons and possibly private property altogether, but no-one discusses about them?

3. Patriarchy as a social system

To understand what the commons are and how they function in late capitalism, I used feminist theory and the critique to patriarchy as an economic system. Moreover, I share the view that capitalism is a form of patriarchy and that capitalism is not antithetical to patriarchy, but is built around its main institutions.

We usually think of patriarchy as a social system. Major traits of a social system are the kinship arrangements (or the non-existence of kinship arrangements). In social sciences, we have four main distinctions of organising kinship: patrilinear or patrilineal (kinship constructed around the father/ son line), patrifocal (newly established households are created around the father/groom line), matrilinear or matrilineal (kinship constructed around the mother/daughter line), and matrifocal (newly established households are created around the mother/bride line).

However, one should bear in mind that families, clans, tribes, or kinship play a part only in social structure and that even the most inward-oriented communities try to keep bonds and kinship affiliations with the outer world. The other important point is that a patriarchal system can have a combination of kinship and non-kinship arrangements that can include matrifocal and matrilinear elements, which makes the understandings of patriarchy even more complicated. Nevertheless, what makes a system to be patriarchal is not the social elements only but their combination with the economic elements of patriarchy that we will examine in the next section.

At this point, we need to remember that patriarchy adores to create binaries for representing the world and social activity. This is very useful for the reproduction of the patriarchal system, because simplistic understandings through binaries allow the privileged members of society to reproduce their power, their access to resources and their hierarchical position. Gender hierarchies and heteronormativity, in-clan and out-of-clan society members, up and down in the social ladder (obsession with power) and construction of violence and non-violence as an obligation, depending on which group one belongs to (subaltern groups are obliged to be nonviolent). Binaries of patriarchy are very important in relation to the commons because they establish who defines the commons and the control of them (Scholz 2014, Strathern 1988, Peterson 1997, Henderson 1996, Lerner 1986, Fraser 2013a, 2013b, Federici 2013, Ehrenreich & English 1978, Bennholdt-Thomsen et al 1988).

4. Patriarchy as an economic system

Patriarchy is an economic system. Actually it is a very resilient, violent and totalitarian political economic system. Moreover, that capitalism is an intensified form of patriarchy shows from the fact that both share the same main institutions: marriage and control of sexuality (for the subalterns), state institutions, money and private property.

I mentioned private property as the last institution, but it is anything than the least. In fact, patriarchy could not exist without private property and private property is the institution that makes patriarchy reproduce itself. Marriage and control of sexuality, state and money develop or function around private property.

In capitalism, this is visible, but it seems that the same happened in other forms of patriarchy. Moreover, even in types of patriarchy that they might have not been that monetised, nor that state-administered, private property was there as an institution to ensure that patriarchs had access to the resources and the political power they needed Fraser 2013a, 2013b, Federici 2013, Ehrenreich & English 1978, Bennholdt-Thomsen et al 1988, Barker & Kuiper 2003, Eisenstein 1979).

4.1. Property

What is property? It is a very complicated institution, because it takes many forms, and only part of it is explicitly legislated, especially in capitalist societies. However, if one wanted to grasp the core of property, she could define property as the publicly assigned right to use something and exclude others from it.

Therefore, two are the essential traits of property: it is a public right, it is something that an entire community must decide or accept or tolerate. And second, it is a right that combines use of something by the property owner and exclusion from the use of that something for all the other people who are not owners of the propertied thing.

In other words, the property owner has exclusive rights to a thing. Those right include the use of the thing, the harvest or the use of its benefits or the reaping of profits from that same thing, and the right to abuse or dispose or destroy the propertied thing. If the property owner has no right of abuse, destruction or disposal, then the property is not fully assigned. If the property owner has no legal right of abuse, destruction or disposal but if she/he can practically destroy or dispose her/his propertied thing, because social norms allow or expect the disposal, then we have property which is fully assigned, although it might not be fully assigned by formal law.

This distinction of formal and informal assignments of property is crucial, because in patriarchy many properties are assigned through other legislation than real estate law or through de facto norms that everyone or most people accept and enforce, even if the law says otherwise. This is the point where the arguments about the inexistence of patriarchy in western European societies emerge, while legal property over women by men has moved from marriage laws to employment law or to informal slavery arrangements like trafficking and to the tolerance to violence against women in general, despite of the laws that prohibit it.

What is important: in patriarchy, the propertied thing, that ‘something’ that the owner can use, harvest and abuse or dispose, is by priority the human body and nature, i.e. alive creatures, in many cases very similar to the creature that an owner can be.

Well, not all human creatures are very similar according to patriarchy. The patriarchal binaries come into force when ownership and property emerge as an issue: women are supposed to be owned by men, children are supposed to be owned by fathers, black workers are supposed to be owned by the white-owned factory that imposes quasi-slavery working conditions or an entire river ecosystem is supposed to be owned by the state or by the corporation that rules the use of the water that runs

through the river (Fraser 2013a, Federici 2004, Borneman 1975, Cassano 2009, Dallacosta & James 1975, Graeber 2006).

Particularly, nature in patriarchy is not only objectified and understood as existing for humans and for satisfying their own agenda for survival, artistic expression or for beauty seeking. It is also feminised, so that it can be much easier treated the way women are treated in patriarchy: nature can be propertied by men, used, harvested, abused and then destroyed, as there is 'plenty of nature' to proceed with more property owners being receiving what their privilege tells them to expect (Bennholdt-Thomsen et al 1986, Mies & Shiva, Von Werlhof 2007, Sotiropoulou 2017a).

4.2. Common and private property

Private property, therefore, is the property that belongs to one person or to one household or to one group of people who, as individuals, have agreed among themselves to own a thing by excluding all other people (like a corporation), and the property is passed down to their patrilineal descendants or relatives with the exclusion of other people or the community.

Within this context, I understand the distinction between common and private property as being one more patriarchal binary. In addition, common property is never common enough, either for legal or de facto reasons: a river can be regulated as a common for the people living around or for the state that the river runs through, but not all people have access to the river or even if they have, they do not control what happens with the river, with its fish, with the water used for agricultural or industrial purposes. Even when something is deemed to be a 'true' common, like the open sea or open space, the use of the common is practically available to those who have the means to navigate through the open sea or open space and to those who use both the sea and space for disposing their garbage and technological externalities, like accidents with environmental impact. It is not a coincidence that those who are practically able to use the global commons usually belong to social groups that are white, European/Anglo-Saxon, male, middle or upper class, with ownership of capital and land (Agathangelou & Ling 2006).

Why is that? Because even if we 'all own the open sea', the open sea is owned truly by those who have the means of production to travel, fish, extract oil or dispose their waste there. Means of production are owned privately in capitalism and in patriarchy though. That is, private property is everywhere, even when the condition or the control of a common is under consideration.

Moreover, the common property as an institution and as an idea, allows the establishment of property over nature and bodies. It does not matter that the property is not private or that it is not private yet. Even if it remains common, it still a property with owners and excluded people, with rights to use, harvest and abuse for some, even if those 'some' can be the entire humanity.

In addition, it is the 'common' that makes private property acceptable at the first place. It is not only that in practice (and in history), we have seen in many cases that the norms and/or legislation turned from regulating the common-propertied bodies (human/nonhuman) to allowing or instituting the exclusive right of the patriarch to those bodies, whether human or nonhuman. The patriarch or the private owner, even if it is a patriarchal substitute like a state, has the right, once a common property comes into existence, to distribute or retain that common property, to exclude from that common property social groups or everyone whom the patriarch/patriarchal substitute does not want to have access to (previously) common or (now) private thing, and to include to its control

whomever supports patriarchal rights, like a corrupt politician who gets his share of profit for turning a blind eye to environmental destruction in his area (Mies & Shiva, Bennholdt-Thomsen et al 1988, Pateman 1988, Sugden & Punch 2014).

4.3. Property in patriarchy

Historically we have not found any social and economic systems other than patriarchy where land and humans become (common or private) property (Lerner 1986, Mayes 2005, Brosius 2004). However, one would think of patriarchy as a system with property, just for the analytical need to avoid essentialism (like saying that property and patriarchy are the same thing and cannot exist otherwise).

In patriarchy, most lands and means of production are owned by men or by patriarchal substitutes, like the state, corporations or women who serve patriarchy in all its aspects. That at some point, ownership might reach a person (man or woman) who is not so patriarchal as patriarchy expects them to be, that does not change the structure of the system as such, despite of the cracks or subversive possibilities that such 'unfortunate' coincidence might create (Mayes 2005).

Moreover, private property is the default institution concerning economic sharing or economic arrangements. Despite of what the discourse of the commons declares now and then, common property is not the default of a patriarchal system and even if it is at some point in history due to historical conditions that go beyond the usual patriarchal structures, patriarchy will make sure that the common property will be patriarchalized and privatised.

Sometimes, the process of patriarchalization and privatisation go hand in hand. An example is the miri system of common/state lands in the Ottoman Empire, that degenerated as time went by, and as the Empire got more and more patriarchal, militarised and capitalised (Dönmez-Atbaşı & Sotiropoulou 2017).

Therefore, privatisation is a systemic trait of patriarchy. Patriarchy is not just the economic system that has private property, but the system that has private property which is aggressively expanding. Privatisation expands formally, informally and through interpretation of the commons as spaces serving private property. Aggressiveness of privatisation is not theoretical only: it uses all types of physical violence to be established, increased, deepened and disseminated (Sotiropoulou 2015, Demsetz 1964, Bennholdt-Thomsen et al 1988, Von Werlhof 2007).

Even in the construction of non-tangible properties over previously common goods one can see the violence that was a prerequisite for the private property to be instituted. Knowledge, especially medical knowledge, required a massive witchhunt in Western Europe and United States. The patenting of agricultural genetic material and biopiracy required and still requires colonial violence to exist. The construction of arts and culture or of production of know-how as private properties or even as common properties that need to be managed by certain managers and controlled by certain controllers required the violent exclusion or destruction of artists, communities or entire societies that produced goods, arts or entire cultures in ways that were not compatible with private property and patriarchy (Federici 2004, Mies 1998, Peterson 2003, Ehrenreich & English 1973).

4.4. Capitalist patriarchy and the commons

As it has already been mentioned, commons and private property are one more patriarchal binary. This has huge implications in general, but in capitalism the implications are even more pressing or complicated.

Private property in capitalism is the institution that is more or less treated as sacred. In other words, private property in capitalist societies is deemed to be the default institution for everything that needs to be organised. It is not an institution to be doubted or reversed, much less to be examined as totalitarian or suppressing the majority of the population or being the cause for environmental destruction and human inequalities.

Within this context, the commons are a political economic arrangement that expands property relationships to everything that cannot (yet) be easily individualised under capitalism. It creates a reserve of means of production that are left outside private property sharing or use-harvest-abuse arrangements, for future use. Or, they are left outside private property to allow the most powerful to privatise de facto and without even undertaking the responsibility of the privatisation, the common, as it happens with the abuse of environmental commons by the most powerful economic actors of society.

Capitalist patriarchy on the other hand, could not exist at all without having this 'commons' arrangement, not really to contain private interests from going wild and from making the patriarchal arrangement to collapse under harsh or violent competition. As it happened with the de facto common property over women in modernity, capitalist patriarchy through commons creates 'fraternities' that are patriarchal enough to own and use-harvest-abuse the common but not self-destructive enough to lose the propertied thing. Destruction of the propertied thing means that not only the owner needs other things to own, but that the fraternity is over and patriarchs need to have some arrangements between them against all the rest (humans and nature) to make sure they can continue exploiting the rest as a group (a common of patriarchs). Leaving some commons to exist as such is essential for the survival of the entire patriarchal capitalist property-based economy (Pateman 1988, Peterson 1997, Ehrenreich & English 1973, Eisenstein 1979, Trenkle 2014).

5. Commons as the property of the poor

For years, I was happy to read in literature how much the commons support the survival of the poor communities or of the groups that are marginalised, deprived, or discriminated against, like women, sexual minorities, ethnic minorities, low income classes or formerly colonised and now indigenous communities (Antinori et al 1997, Baland & Francois 2005, Astuti & McGregor 2016).

However, something was not fitting in this discourse. It is true though that the commons are the last resort of the most disadvantaged. And I would have no problem with poor people having access to the commons to survive, given that they are deprived from anything else.

The problem is that through this discourse, the commons become a compensation to the poor for accepting the private property of the rich and the wealth transfer to the latter through the private property in combination with the other patriarchal (capitalist) institutions. It is obvious that the wealthy groups can very well manage the patriarchal (capitalist) institutions to their benefit, as it seems that each patriarchal institution supports the reproduction of the rest patriarchal institutions. While this is happening at the expense of the poor, the latter are happy to have access to a forest or

river that can be anytime privatised once the profit-making procedures have exhausted other natural or social sources of wealth.

In other words, the commons extend property relationships to everything that cannot (yet) be easily individualised. That way, they create a precedent, both social and legal, over things that would be unthinkable to own in any way some years or centuries ago. Think of the sea or of the open space. Anything that it is too costly at the moment to be cut in private shares, can be commonly owned till a new arrangement is possible for technical or social reasons.

The most fundamental problem though of the proliferation of the discourse of the commons while private property and property in general remain undoubted, is that it educates everyone that property is the only relationship to the world: nature, things, humans, communities. It wires our thinking to see everything through the prism of use, harvest and abuse or dispose, through the prism of control and through the prism of exclusion. If we cannot relate to something or somebody through other relationships than property, then we are not only stuck in capitalist thinking – we are stuck in patriarchal thinking too. Patriarchy and capitalism can reproduce themselves exactly because their main institution, property, remains, unquestioned (Richardson 2010, Pateman 1988, Mayes 2005, Agathangelou & Ling 2006).

To that, one could add some more practical issues. In reality, the commons are self-defeating as a term and practice. Moreover, it has a direct class, gender and race bias that turns against the poor, the colonised, the women, the migrants and those who cannot survive outside the commons.

First, the commons are happily understood as the left-overs of private property. It seems that none or very few people who support the commons discourse have a problem with private property crowding out the commons more and more. If we construct the commons like this, then we have lost our offensive position against private property and we end up cornered by private property asking for more and more commons to privatise. There will be less and less common property and more and more people will have to cope with less and less material commons.

Second, the commons become the reserve of raw materials and means of production, plus productive land that can be used at demand for private purposes. We have seen this in all structural adjustment programmes, which never had any problem with public property and the commons: the commons and public property were property good enough to be sold to interested buyers. Colonialism has many faces and the commons have been one of them: you cannot buy something that is not property already, you need to conquer it or let the sellers create property rights over it first. It does not matter whether the property rights initially are common rights. This can be fixed easily. What is not easily fixed is the non-propertied thing. This requires mere violence to be turned into property and violence is expensive.

Third, the commons have become already a means to hierarchize communities. We knew already that even before capitalism, entire communities entered fights for managing the local river or forest. In reality, war is violence over the commons, ‘yours’ claimed as ‘ours.’ Power relations emerge around the commons and property is an institution that is bound to hierarchy, power and exclusion of the weakest/poorest/stranger. The exclusion refers to the modes of production that are based on the commons, too. The colonial communities produced their livelihoods with the colonised commons in a different way than the local people did before being colonised – the modes

of production with the commons that was adopted by the local people was hierarchized as non-productive, primitive, ridiculous, conservative or even destructive.

Finally, the hierarchization of the modes of the production concerning the commons is of utmost importance with reference to indigenous communities, i.e. formerly (and unfortunately, still) colonised peoples. There are cases where colonialism, private property and capitalism destroy nature for centuries. Then, when the commons discourse emerges, the local authorities (who are the political economic successors of the colonisers) claim that the indigenous practices are not sustainable/commons-friendly anymore, because there are not enough forests or not enough hunting game for the indigenous communities to live again in their pre-colonial or semi-indigenous lifestyle. The claims never mention the reasons of the reduction of the forests, of the extinction danger of species or the reason of the pollution that make the ecosystems fragile to indigenous practices but not fragile to extractive activities or deforestation for industrial purposes (Astuti & McGregor 2016, German et al 2016).

6. Conclusion: Beyond the commons

Can we escape the commons? The question is linked to our possibility to escape private property and patriarchy, including capitalism. It might be maximalist thinking but if we are expected to understand systemic functions of a term and practice, we are supposed to see the connections of actual political economic institutions the way they are and not the way we would like them to be.

In reality, private property and property in general are very problematic institutions and they need to become again the epicentre of anticapitalist and antipatriarchal debates and practices. At least, while theorising, we need to dismantle the acceptance of (private) property as our only way to relate to the world, or as our only way to behave so that we can live in a complicated world where we are not supposed to expect or to be entitled to use, harvest and abuse everything around us.

As a researcher, I see a scope for research concerning theory and practices of collective arrangements that do not use property or use it in a very limited way as an institution, whether those are historical or contemporary. It would be necessary to proceed with this research and debate while having in mind that those varied practices existed or still exist in other areas outside Western Europe and the Anglo-Saxon world where the commons discourse is produced (Brosius 2004, Dönmez-Atbaşı & Sotiropoulou 2017, Sotiropoulou 2017b).

At the end, if the commons are not critically examined in historical and social contexts that are different from the ones where they were initially created, we will not be able to see whether the notion has any relevance in other economies and societies or whether it is a capitalist euro-centric notion that needs to be put within its context.

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Giota Bampatzimopoulou, 'Gendered Entwinements and Significations: Towards an Intersectional Theory of the Commons?'

Introduction

The following paper aims to contribute to the ongoing conversation concerning the necessity of correlating the commons' discourses, the subject that participates in the commoning and the category of gender. Here and in what follows, I take into serious consideration the fact that feminist theory may provide useful tools in the conversation regarding the commons, far beyond the concept of social reproduction. Furthermore, the category of gender is widely acknowledged as a key factor in the analysis of the structures of power, the organization of social institutions and of the mechanisms of ideological control in contemporary societies. (Αθανασίου, 2006, pp. 106–107)

I have intentionally chosen the work of Silvia Federici, as she treats the category of gender as a central one in the politics of the commons. However, there are some undoubtful restrictions in the ways that women are conceived in her work. In order to take her thread of thought a step further, I will use the work of Judith Butler. Despite the fact that Butler does not examine the commons, she can give us valuable tools concerning the gendered body and the commoning. It is hoped that I will argue in favour of the necessity of enriching the commons' discourses, at least with the gender category. Finally, I intend to experiment with the notion of intersectionality, while trying to find out the ways in which this theoretical tool might be useful for the commons' discourses.

Sensing the commons

The paper begins by defining the commons, as a diverse body of discourses, that includes multiple demands. They highlight an alternative way of viewing and constructing our social reality, beyond the bipolar division of the state and the market. Through emphasizing the self-organization of the populations and the creation of communities, both the political and the politics are being re-examined, in order to be reconstituted in new contexts. Many scholars and activists believe that this emerging politics is able to unite different movements, with different perceptions under a common purpose, but also that it can overcome the restraints of wage struggles.(An Architektur, 2010; Federici, 2011, 2012b)

An important starting point in the analysis of the commons is that they presuppose three things: resources, communities and struggles. Broadly defined, they refer to all those necessary for our social reproduction- material or immaterial- resources. But the commons only come to the fore when struggling communities are trying to preserve and enlarge them. We can also conceive of them as an administrative system, a space, where all necessary resources are being organized, within which subjects and groups are related, struggles emerge and a new ethical frame to defend and reproduce this system is being articulated. (Benkler & Nissenbaum, 2006; De Angelis, 2007, 2013; Dyer-Whitheford, 2007; Federici, 2012a)

Nevertheless, the subject of the commons in most of these discourses is being represented in a deficient manner. The commoner is usually being depicted as a non-gendered, universal, abstract subject, thus confirms an androcentric humanism that silences the (gender) difference. Many feminist scholars support that this ' ''constitutive difference'', proves central for a politics that

challenges both property and sovereignty in specific ways' (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013, p. ix) and aims to overcome the '[…] project of domination that can sustain itself only by dividing, on a continuously renewed basis, those it intends to rule' (Federici, 2004, p. 8)

In the light of the above, the paper will go on to discuss how the category of gender is correlated with the commons in the current bibliography. Silvia Federici's work is pivotal to this connection.

Silvia Federici: Female Commons

Federici's perspective on the commons is obviously a feminist one. She considers that the struggles for the commons, based on social cooperation, can enrich the ways in which property is being conceived. According to her view, the commons can help us rewrite the history of class struggle and unite different movements under the same umbrella (Federici, 2011). The key-word in her analysis is reproductive work- meaning the ensemble of activities by which life and labour are constituted. Domestic labour forms the basis of every economic and political system and is an extra criterion of evaluation of every model of social organization. The unpaid work of women is '[…] what keeps the world moving' (Federici, 2012a, p. 139).

Along with this, she criticizes domestic labour because of its unwaged character and she puts the emphasis on the extremely important task of denaturalizing it. (Federici, 2012a, pp. 5, 8–9) In this context, sexuality is completely attached to labour, as well. For her, 'it is always women who suffer most from the schizophrenic character of sexual relations', (Federici, 2012a, p. 24) as they are under an extra obligation to please their husband. The sphere of reproduction is being defined as the only and absolute regulator of our social life, while at the same time sexuality is being put into an exclusively heteronormative framework. (Federici, 2012a, pp. 23–27)

Moreover, Federici indicates that women, historically, have a greater need for access to common-pool resources and for that reason they are placed in the front line of the struggle against enclosures. By putting the emphasis on the witch-hunting during the period of the transition into capitalism, she reveals that the enclosures equally happened in women's bodies through the control of: feminine sexuality, reproductive capacity, but mainly, through the devaluation of the reproductive work and their social status. Thus, in parallel with the emergence of the waged proletariat, so the naturalization of women's reproductive work has been imposed, as the radical decomposition of communal relationships. Hence, enclosures stop being reckoned just with the criteria of the separation of the producers from the means of production. Additionally, the subject of enclosures ceases to be non-gendered and abstract. Along with this, through an orchestrated violence from the state, 'a new model of femininity emerged: the ideal woman and spouse- passive, obedient, thrifty, of few words, always busy at work and chaste' and 'a whole world of female practices' (Federici, 2004, p. 103) have been destroyed. But, it is extremely important that at the same period women became a common that everybody used as he wished, so the state as men (Federici, 2012b, pp. 138–139).

Closer to our present time, Federici explores women's struggles, mostly in Africa and in other places. In these struggles women strongly oppose the attacks of global organizations, in an effort to retain their means of survival. As their primary concern is the protection of their land and forests or the creation of alternative bank systems and collective kitchens, among others, they manage to

collectivize their reproductive work. By doing this, they reduce the cost of reproduction and keep themselves protected from poverty and the violence of the state and men. For Federici, these struggles create a collective identity, a common interest and reciprocal bonds. In this framework, what she, finally, suggests, is the collectivization of reproductive work (Federici, 2012a, pp. 143–144). In the main, she considers the collective forms of living necessary, in order the intensity of care work to be collectively shared. Furthermore, she deems our reconnection with the history of women's struggles essential, as this reconnection is extremely important for the reconstruction of our life as a common (Federici, 2012a, pp. 145–148).

Definitely, such a strategy may diminish women's burdens, but we cannot eliminate them. For that reason, it would be useful to step further and enrich our struggles with the history and the knowledge from different fields beyond reproduction. In my opinion, Federici gives the impression that she invites us to adjust in the present, tools of resistance from the past, or tools that cannot have broad application. Certainly, these practices still strengthen many women so as to resist and to be socially reproduced. But, in different environments, could we, exclusively, lean upon such means? In cases that the attack in our social reproduction is not so obvious or direct, how could we resist?

For Federici the word 'women' should not be used to describe a homogeneous type of human being. (Federici, 2012b, p. 10) For her, the gendered division of labour dissociate the gender from an understanding "as a purely cultural reality" (Federici, 2004, p. 14). In her work, it is demonstrated that due to the gendered division of labour ' ''women's history'' is a class history' (Federici, 2004, p. 14). Nevertheless, the woman as described by Federici, has certain characteristics- it moves between housewife and worker- as the man who is always a proletarian. That way, every struggle for Federici is a class struggle. Even though, woman as housewife is situated next to the man-worker, we still cannot confirm that the class position should be considered as something permanent and mostly as the only source of our oppression.

Accordingly, she creates great cracks in the bipolar division of state-market. She reveals their main role, historically, in the oppression of women. Though, Federici cannot escape from the bipolar division between the male/worker and the female/housewife/worker. Could we support today the view that all women experience the same oppression? The oppression can be found only at the field of reproduction? Can we confirm that the subject woman only accepts and do not exert power on multiple levels? Additionally, the notion of social reproduction and of unpaid labour does not relate to other genders besides the two established?

The paper moves on to explore different significations of gender, in an effort to step forward in the enrichment of the commoner.

Confrontation with different significations of gender

I think that the work of Judith Butler can offer us useful tools. Her main concern is to examine critically the basic vocabulary of feminism and to expand the notion of gender, beyond the bipolar stereotypes that lead to new forms of hierarchies and exclusions. What she wants to indicate is the fact that the distinction between 'original' gender expressions (male/female) and those which are regarded as fake and secondary should not exist. The 'opening' of the possibilities that she undertakes could be comprehended, as she insists, by whoever '[…]has understood what it is to live

in the social world as what is ‘‘impossible,’’ illegible, unrealizable, unreal, and illegitimate[…]’ (Butler, 2002, p. viii).

With her work manages to bring into question the distinction between sex and gender. She argues that sex is also primarily social. Furthermore, she criticizes the approaches that presuppose the ‘ ‘‘essence” of gender’ (Αθανασίου, 2006, p. 97). For Butler: ‘[…]sex is an ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time’ (Butler, 1993, p. 1). But also: ‘[…] gender proves to be performative- that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed’ (Butler, 2002, p. 33). And more: ‘ ‘‘Sex’’ is, thus, not simply what one has, or a static description of what one is: it will be one of the norms by which the ‘one’ becomes viable at all, that which qualifies a body for life within the domain of cultural intelligibility’ (Butler, 1993, p. 2).

For Butler sex is a rule or a ‘regulatory practice’ that exerts productive power on the bodies. This practice may form and control them. In this way, sex becomes the ‘effect’ of the very process of materialization of the body. For this to happen a necessary condition is the repetition of those norms that define what is in compliance with each gender. This procedure of obligatory and continual repetition to adjust yourself to the rules of your sex, proves primarily that the materialization is never fulfilled and that finally the bodies cannot be fully conformed to the norms. In parallel, through the process of the repetition, the hegemony of established rules could be deranged (Butler, 2008, p. 42).

Sex as ‘**doing**’ opens up the field and a different performance of our actions is within the bounds of the possibility in order to the established formulations and the heteronormativity to be renegotiated. (Butler, 2006) In her work, the subject ‘we’ of feminism is finally a ‘phantasmatic construction’ (Butler, 2002, p. 181) that always leaves something out. The category of subject is radically unstable and that way it is necessary to reconsider the politics (Butler, 2009, pp. 184–186). The instability and the imperfection of the subject brings the **contingency** on the scene. As a result, the political is being conceptualized as an **event**, as the ‘perfomative exercise of social agonism’ (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013, p. 141) inside those regulatory rules that even if we cannot always control, at least we can create cracks.

In this vein, the body is significant, as the procedure of gendering through performativity, namely the ‘[…] reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names’ (Butler, 1993, p. 2) is an opening up to the materialization of possibilities which is defined from the historical and social framework (Αθανασίου, 2009).

Experimentations: Queering the commons?

But, which is the relation of all these with the commons? The work of Butler could help us to comprehend the regulatory mechanisms that impose to us the ways/rules by which our bodies live. Finally, it seems that some bodies obtain a greater importance and legitimacy from others. Therefore, if the politics of the commons are about to influence human bodies, to make the bodies significant, these bodies should primarily be put in the centre. But, we should recognize their multiplicity, beyond the established dualities that heteronormativity imposes.

Furthermore, the theory of performativity could be extremely useful for the political delineation of commoning, the dynamic practice that gives 'energy' to the commons. But, this commoning is mostly situated into the field of (re)production. (De Angelis, 2013, p. 83) I strongly believe that by putting front and centre an 'open' subject, as the one that Butler examines, we could surpass another bipolar division, that between the original economic struggles in the field of production/ reproduction that impose the heteronormativity and the 'merely cultural' struggles in the field of sexuality that many still consider that are inferior (Butler, 1998).

Finally, if the commoner, as a kind of identity, is materialized by norms that are imposed by established rules, and the commoning may also influence this materialization, it would be a challenge for the movements/communities to destroy all those limitations that can make some bodies less important in this struggle. That way, I think that the commons could not be regarded just as a disorder in the system, but as a real 'trouble' and our struggles could surpass more frontiers and compulsions.

Trying to sense the commons through intersectional lens

Even if many people still believe that the communities who materialize commoning cannot subvert the hegemony of neoliberalism, we should keep in mind that it is exactly the iterability of commoning that invites the difference as an essential condition for the promise of the event. Can we imagine the commons' communities as intersectional spaces, namely, as spaces where different people co-exist and the difference is not considered as a 'merely cultural' characteristic? Does it suffice to say that the commons only constitute spaces of governing effectively the resources or spaces of class struggles? In this final section, I intend to experiment with some extra tools from feminist theory that I find extremely useful, beyond the above-mentioned approaches concerning the gender, that extend from autonomous-Marxist feminism to queer theory.

In contemporary feminist theory one way of conceptualizing the correlation between multiple systems of oppression is the concept of intersectionality. The lives of women and commoners' as well are highly influenced by multiple, intersecting systems of oppression. For feminist theorists who use intersectionality as a theory or methodology to study 'real world phenomena' there are four main analytic benefits: simultaneity, complexity, irreducibility and inclusivity. (Carastathis, 2014; May, 2015) which I think we could add in the analysis of the commons and the commoner.

In a word, we should keep in mind that oppressions are experienced simultaneously. Furthermore, complexity can be found inside any type of relationship or group and we should avoid monistic approaches. Both simultaneity and complexity invites us to not prioritize a certain category (e.g class), while addressing oppressions, that is the analytic benefit of irreducibility. Finally, having in mind inclusivity away from practices that favour among others white solipsism, heteronormativity, elitism and ableism we can enrich the meaning of political solidarity (Carastathis, 2014).

As commoning is an energetic procedure by which we protect the resources but also regenerate ourselves we should keep in mind that as agents we are embedded in multiple systems of oppressions and inequalities. That fact urges us to highlight the complexity that human relations include, and the multiplicity of the categories by which we signify our political action. Perhaps that way, we would stop prioritizing the economic struggles against the 'merely cultural' and finally

include in our analyses and practices more categories that produce inequalities even inside the communities of the commons.

Concluding remarks

As commoning is an arduous undertaking, it would be useful in our claims beyond the open and equal access to add the respect to differences and the protection, but mainly the enforcement of those who are more vulnerable because of their gender, race, ethnicity, sexual preference, abilities or every other exclusion they face. It is reasonable to conclude that, the struggles for our open and equal access to common resources should be attached with our bodies that may suffer from simultaneous oppressions even inside the communities that prefigure a new world.

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Alexandros Kioupkiolis, ‘The lack of the political in the commons and a post-hegemonic strategy of social transformation’

Introduction

A central argument of *Heteropolitics* is that in the diverse currents of thought and research on the commons we encounter a certain ‘lack of the political’ gaping in their midst. Existing theories of the commons have not yet adequately tackled political issues of inclusion/exclusion, power relations, antagonism, clashes of interest and ideology among larger groups. Crucially, they have not sufficiently dealt with the challenges facing the construction of a broader sector of alternative formations of community, governance and economy: how to bring together and to coordinate dispersed, small-scale civic initiatives, and how to relate to established social systems and power relations in the market and the state in order to expand the paradigm of the commons.

Heteropolitics makes the case that a ‘post-hegemonic’ strategy of coalition-making and collective struggle can help to address these political challenges for the growth of the commons. ‘Post-hegemony’ is a critical notion introduced by theorists who take issue with the modern politics of hierarchical organization, representation, unification, the state and ideology: the politics of ‘hegemony’ according to A. Gramsci and E. Laclau. Post-hegemonic thinkers tend to celebrate, by contrast, contemporary social movements which appear to be horizontal, leaderless, participatory, diverse, networked and opposed to the state, global capitalism and ideological closures. The argument seeks to demonstrate that multiple figures of contemporary radical democratic activism in the last two decades are still informed, or should be informed, by constitutive elements of hegemonic politics, such as representation, concentration of power and unification. However, they transfigure the political logics of hegemony in distinct ways, opening up representation, leadership and unity to plurality and the common, outlining thus a post-hegemonic strategy of change for the commons.

The lack of the political in the commons

1. *E. Ostrom*

Elinor Ostrom’s (1990) *Governing the Commons. The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* has been a major breakthrough and a watershed in the contemporary scholarship and understanding of the commons. The specific and seemingly limited objective of Ostrom’s studies of the commons has been from the start to open up conceptual and practical-political space for the recognition of other ways of regulating natural resources used in common, beyond the state and the market, highlighting the diversity of systems and institutions of governance (see Ostrom 1990: 2-21; Ostrom 2010b). Her entire work relies on case studies and the analysis of CPR institutions in order

to demonstrate that 'collective action on the commons is possible and not merely a vestigial form' (Poteete, Janssen & Ostrom 2010: 46).

Ostrom inquires into a particular kind of commons, which she designates as 'common pool resources' (CPRs): a 'natural or man-made resource system that is sufficiently large to make it costly (but not impossible) to exclude potential beneficiaries from obtaining benefits from its use' (Ostrom 1990: 30). CPRs stand out as a distinct type of 'good' in a four-fold classification, which lists public goods, private goods and 'toll' or club goods. CPRs are like public goods in that it is difficult to exclude people from their use. But they are akin also to private goods, as they are subtractable, i.e. one person's use subtracts form the good available to others (Ostrom & Hess 2011: 8-9; Ostrom 2005: 22-26). In her original research she dwells, more specifically, on CPRs which are small-scale and located in a single country, involving 50 to 15000 persons. These CPRS involve communal forests, animal husbandry in grazing areas, water management (of groundwater basins), irrigation channels and inshore fisheries.

A main object of Ostrom's research is to account for the success of enduring CPR institutions and to explain, thus, under which conditions communal self-organization for the management of environmental resources is possible and likely. All robust CPR systems that she considers face uncertain and complex environments (e.g. erratic rainfall in irrigation systems), but the populations in their specific settings have remained more or less stable over time. The homogeneity, close ties, unity and boundedness of the relevant communities, their members' attachment to the land and to one another, are features underlying the effective self-organization of the commons in these cases (Ostrom 1990: 88-89, 166, 185; Ostrom 2008).

Ostrom identified a set of essential conditions ('design principles') which help to explain the emergence self-governance institutions and their robustness over time: 1) clearly defined boundaries; 2) congruence between appropriation and provision rules and local conditions. Rules-in-use should allocate benefits in proportion to contributions of required inputs. Rules that respect proportionality are more widely accepted as equitable; 3) collective-choice arrangements. Most individuals affected by the operational rules can participate in modifying the operational rules. Self-designed rules through collective participation are considered fair by participants; 4) monitoring. Monitors, who actively audit CPR conditions and appropriator behavior, are accountable to the users or are the users; 5) graduated sanctions; 6) conflict-resolution mechanisms; 7) minimal recognition of rights to organize. The rights of appropriators to devise their own institutions are not challenged by external governmental authorities; 8) nested enterprises. In large and complex CPRs, appropriation, provision, monitoring, enforcement, conflict resolution, and governance activities are organized in multiple layers of nested enterprises, from the local/small-scale upwards to regional and national levels.

This is her answer to the 'problem of collective action', with which she has wrestled from the outset. Individuals are willing to commit themselves to observing common rules which they have participated in devising if they think that these rules will be effective in producing higher joint benefits and that monitoring will protect them against 'being suckered' (Ostrom 1990: 90). A wide range of in-depth case studies bear witness to the capacity of autonomous, grassroots collective self-organization on a footing of relative equality, freedom and reciprocity, independently of the structures of the market and the state. They demonstrate the human artisanship in constituting and

reconstituting the very contexts in which individuals make decisions, act and bear the consequences of their actions on an everyday basis (Ostrom 1990: 185, 216).

For the purposes of *Heteropolitics*, the thrust of Ostrom's field studies of the commons is, precisely, that they provide empirical grounding and insights for the possibility of other ways of doing politics and organizing social life and economic sustenance, beyond both centralized, top-down state administration and profit-driven market competition. Collective co-management of environmental systems for mutual benefit is not only feasible, but it can be also more effective and fairer. Drawing on their local ecological knowledge and their ongoing interaction with their particular environment, participants in CPRs are better equipped to tailor rules of resource use to local circumstances, sustaining thereby both the surrounding ecosystems and their livelihoods. By collectively self-devising the rules of use on a basis of relative equality, they are also more likely to meet shared standards of fairness.

The relevance of Ostrom's findings and arguments may seem, however, to be confined to the small scale and particular kinds of non-urban natural environments. Her later inroads into the 'commons of knowledge', a broad-range institutional analysis and her idea of 'polycentric governance' could allay some, at least, of these misgivings.

Knowledge commons consist of diverse forms of goods and regimes, from public libraries, academic research results and indigenous traditional knowledge to digital information, free software and cultural, creative works (Ostrom & Hess 2011: 4-15). They are marked off by a specific feature which differentiates them sharply from most environmental CPRs. Whereas the latter are 'subtractive' goods, whereby one's person's uses reduces the amount of good(s) available to others, knowledge commons are typically nonsubtractive or nonrivalrous. In effect, they are quite the opposite. The more people use them, the greater the common good through the expansion and development of knowledge. Moreover, communities around knowledge commons, such as Wikipedia, can be global, virtual and heterogeneous.

Regarding scale, a broad range of relevant contemporary research (Dowsley 2008; Carlsson & Sandström 2008; Ostrom & Andersson 2008) make the case that the non-hierarchical, direct communal self-government of vital ecosystems does not work effectively on higher and multiple scales. Accordingly, it has been argued that the valuable insights gained from the collective self-organization of small-scale economies cannot translate into solutions for large-scale problems without resort to hierarchical organization (Harvey 2012: 70). Ostrom has grappled with the question of scale by elaborating on the idea of 'polycentric governance' (Ostrom 2010a; 2010b). Polycentric governance consists in a complex combination of multiple levels and diverse types of organization drawn from the public, the private and the voluntary sector with overlapping responsibilities and capacities. It is characterised by multiple governing authorities on different scales rather than a central dominant unit (Ostrom 2008: 552). The polycentric view holds that in complex, interconnected systems of multiple interactions at different scales both the active involvement of local users in the management of resources and governments play a key role in solving CPR problems. Polycentric governance implies that 'national officials' work with local and regional officials, NGOs and local communities to achieve the best outcome.

A comprehensive and nuanced account of Ostrom's studies of the commons helps to refute facile charges of political naiveté or narrowness levelled at her work. Nevertheless, several such criticisms

carry much force. Ostrom's take on the commons is marred, indeed, by an exclusionary, homogeneous idea of the community and a feeble sense of hegemonic power relations, political antagonisms and the importance of conflict in democratic politics. These limitations, together with the narrow scope of participatory government in her political vision and her accommodating disposition towards the state and the market, detract from the value of her conception of the commons for transformative democratic politics today, without, however, annulling this value. Ostrom refuses to make the commons into 'a general principle for the reorganization of society' (Dardot & Laval 2014: 155). Her narrow objectives are explicitly reduced to the recognition of institutional diversity to a fuller extent and to the proper restoration of the commons within this diversity.

More crucially, what stands in the way of an expansion of the commons from within Ostrom's frame of thought is her alleged 'naturalism' or 'resource-centered' outlook (see Dardot & Laval 2014: 155-165; Dellenbaugh et al. 2015). Her explicit thesis is that the natural attributes of different goods and resources, along with the size of the population, dictate particular modes of social and political organization. This precludes in principle a general diffusion of the commons principle of collective autonomy, confining direct collective self-government exclusively to CPRs and small, homogeneous communities (see Ostrom 2005: 22-26; Ostrom 2008).

Core constituents of the political, such as conflict, antagonism and hegemonic power relations, are not adequately noticed and addressed in Ostrom's political thought, which calls thus for further elaboration and deeper politicization. This lack of a sufficient sense of the political comes into sight in her attitude towards the capitalist markets and the state, but it concerns the importance of political conflictuality and agonism more broadly. Ostrom does not only tend to pass over in silence the past and present history of social antagonisms between the commons and 'commoners', on the one hand, and the state and corporate market forces, on the other. On a more general and theoretical level, she fails to illuminate and to come to grips with the conflicting logics which inform them. The centralizing trends and the top-down administration of modern states clash with the decentralizing drives and endeavours of grassroots communities to exercise effective self-government on the regional, municipal or lower scale and to direct political power from the bottom-up. A similar intrinsic clash marks the relation between the 'practical reason' of the commons, which tend towards mutuality and sustainability, and the profit-driven logic of the capitalist market.

Her theorization of the commons considerably conceals, then, the political as antagonism, struggle and power structures. Crucially, she fails to attend to the hegemonic formation of societies: the unequal hierarchies of command that connect the different types and scales of social activity and government, as well as the forces and structures dominating the systemic wholes in which diverse communities, social relations and actors are embedded (Dardot & Laval 2014: 156). In conclusion, Ostrom's breakthrough in the research on the commons, and the outlines that she offers of another politics of egalitarian and sustainable self-government should be broadened to disclose a richer array of possibilities for the commons today. Her account should be also enhanced with a fully-fledged agonistic-hegemonic take on the political. Finally, it should grind sharper edges through an acute sense of the conflictual tensions running through the commons, the market and the state.

2. *Digital commons*

Since the turn of the century, with the spread of new digital technologies and the Internet, a large body of thought and action has shifted attention from the 'commons of nature' to the commons of culture, information and digital networks (Benkler 2006; Bollier 2008; 2016; Bauwens 2005; 2009, 2011). This technological change has triggered the formation of new modes of production and collaboration, which have given rise to novel patterns of association and self-governance. These patterns do not only reinvent and expand the commons as a culture of co-creation and social sharing outside their traditional bounds of fisheries, forests and grazing grounds. They forge, also, new schemes of community and collective self-governance beyond the closely knit, stable and homogeneous communities of face-to-face interaction (Benkler 2006: 117-120; Bollier 2008: 2-4; Bauwens 2005).

A 'commons analysis' of the Internet, new digital technologies and networks helps to show that such technological innovations are entangled with legal and social innovations, drawing attention to the communities involved and their ways of self-organizing –their politics and political innovations (Benkler 2008: 19-20). Digital networking has afforded new opportunities for making and exchanging information, knowledge and culture. Spanning diverse fields, from software development to online encyclopaedias, investigative journalism and social media platforms, the new information environment enables the construction of decentralized, self-administered communities. These combine individual freedom and autonomous social collaboration, holding the promise of more democratic participation, openness, freedom, diversity and co-production without the hierarchies of the state and the market (Benkler 2006: 2; Bollier 2008: 1-20, 117; Bauwens 2005). The Internet does not only boost and diffuse creativity in the creation of culture and information. It also makes possible 'egalitarian encounters among strangers and voluntary associations of citizens' (Bollier 2008: 2).

The new digital commons exhibit considerable similarities with the 'traditional' ecological commons foregrounded by Ostrom. They make up a tripartite system which consists of a self-governing community of users and producers; a common good (from free software and music to encyclopaedias and social communication platforms); and equitable, self-legislated norms of access, use and collective self-management (Benkler 2006; Bollier 2008; Bauwens 2005; Ostrom & Hess 2011). They likewise promote a culture of decentralized collaboration, co-operative nonmarket production, sharing and common autonomy. They advance thus an alternative to both the profit-driven, competitive and centralizing practices of the market and the top-down, hierarchical command of the state. Moreover, they are similarly locked in a battlefield with the market and the state, threatened as they are by market and state forces which seek to appropriate, to control and to 'enclose' them through patents, copyright and trademark law, trade regulations and privatization (Bollier 2008: 2-15, 140-141; Benkler 2006: 2; Bauwens 2005; Bauwens 2011).

However, they radically depart from the historical commons of nature in politically crucial respects. The goods that they fabricate and sustain are not depletable and rivalrous (Bauwens 2005; Benkler 2006: 117). The 'new commons' consist of essentially nonrival cultural goods: their consumption by one person do not make them less available for consumption by others (Benkler 2006: 36). Second, their communities are internally heterogeneous, open and potentially global rather than local, homogeneous and bounded. Their networked forms of association and collaboration introduce new modes of sociality, whereby co-operation on equal terms is combined with enhanced individual autonomy and creativity (Bauwens 2005b). Hence, the contemporary

networks of information and communication seem to embody and to enable the post-Heideggerian vision of a community of open, expansive and plural encounters without any fixed center or identity (Armstrong 2009).

Finally, 'digital commoners' argue that the networked information commons immensely expand the commons paradigm beyond its traditional, small-scale natural location in forests, land, irrigation channels and fishing grounds. They actually represent a new, emergent mode of peer-to-peer production, which is displacing the industrial mode of production and promises to install decentralized nonmarket co-operation at a central locus of contemporary economy, society and politics. They remake in their image a wild diversity of social fields, from music to business, law, education and science, remodelling them after the logic of open, plural, creative and participatory commons (Benkler 2006: 2-3; Benkler & Nissenbaum 2006; Bollier 2008: 14-18; Bauwens 2005b).

The emergent 'sociotechnological paradigm' of commons-based peer production has spawned, at the same time, a broader radical transformation of contemporary culture, diffusing the values and the practices of the commons –sharing, free collaboration for mutual benefit, egalitarian self-organization, openness (Bauwens 2005b). According to Bollier, this amounts to a 'Great Value Shift' which has brought about a crucial shift in subjectivity (Bollier 2008: 190) by propagating, among other ideas and values, a deeply different conception of wealth as commons.

Salient theories of digital commons, in the writings of Y. Benkler, D. Bollier and M. Bauwens, outline more open and plural communities of the commons in comparison to the 'Bloomington School' of ecological commons. Moreover, the champions of the digital commons and peer production diverge to some extent from Ostrom's endeavour to carve out some space for the commons alongside a diverse range of institutional forms. They advocate a broader paradigm shift which is presumably facilitated today by the rise of the network society and new technological developments which gestate around the Internet. This opens up the horizon of a commons-based society, whereby the commons will not be confined to the margins of contemporary social formations, in small-scale communities and local ecosystems, but will occupy centre stage in economic, political and social life.

Despite such innovations and divergences from the older, Ostrom school of commons studies, the theories of the digital commons are beset, however, with similar deficiencies and lacunae in their understanding of the political. Again, they do not fully own up to the contradictions between the logics of the state, the market and the commons. Likewise, they fail to adequately grapple with the hegemonic power structures of contemporary social formations. As a result, they do not effectively ponder the conditions and the political practices through which a broad-based social movement of transformation –a counter-hegemonic bloc- can be put together under the actual circumstances of social fragmentation, exclusion, precarization and collective disempowerment.

To a certain extent, this is a technocratic vision of socio-economic change in which the expansion of a new mode of digital, networked production, legal reforms and 'social entrepreneurship', i.e. technological, legal and managerial fixes, are the fundamental basis that can spark historical transformation on a large scale. Political processes of collective dis-identification from hegemonic relations and new identification, movement-building, political struggles around, with and within the state, intense conflicts with dominant political and economic elites who profit immensely from a vastly unequal market economy in our times receive little attention and consideration.

It is evident that Benkler (2006), Bollier (2008: 12, 20) and Bauwens (2005; 2009) accord to technological developments a pivotal role in pushing historical transformation towards the commons. The irruption of new computer and digital network technologies has been the main trigger of socio-political and economic mutation. It has destabilized the established structure of markets, technologies and social practices, giving rise to a diffuse institutional battle over the physical, technical and logical (software and protocols) components of the digital networked environment (Benkler 2006: 468-469; see also Bollier 2008: 1-20; Bauwens 2005).

Yet neither Benkler nor Bollier or Bauwens are naïve believers in technological determinism. Benkler (2006) is aware that technologies are not the single determining factors as they are channelled and moulded by political objectives, social values, the historical context etc. It is the interaction between technological-economic 'feasibility spaces' with social responses to them, in the form of institutional regulations and social practices, which define the prevailing structures and modes of life in a certain period. Hence, the digital technologies of networked computers can be put to different uses. There is no assurance that they will contribute to innovation, freedom and justice. This is a matter of the social choices that we will make in the coming years (Benkler 2006: 17-18, 31-34).

Bauwens envisions a new form of society, 'based on the centrality of the commons, and within a reformed state and market' (Bauwens 2005). A transformative practice for expanding peer production beyond the 'immaterial sphere', in which it was born, will not come about automatically. It calls for the development of tactics and strategy (Bauwens 2005b).

However, Bollier, Benkler and Bauwens converge on a techno-legal and economic fix when they envision the historical transition in the direction of the commons. Bauwens concludes one of his earliest accounts of a 'Common-ist' evolution of P2P (Bauwens 2005) with the following list of the core conditions that will enable the new commons to grow beyond the sphere of 'immaterial' non-rival goods in which they originated: 1) access to distributed technology (viral communicator meshworks etc.); 2) widespread availability of other forms of distributed fixed capital; 3) reliance on P2P processes for the design and conception of 'physical production'; 4) broader distribution of financial capital (through e.g. state funding of open source development, cooperative purchase of large capital goods etc.); 5) the introduction of universal basic income. Despite allusions to 'Common-ist' movements, we are left completely in the dark as to how these will be built, how they will become massive, how they will overturn the 'neoliberal dominance' and how they will reform the state and the market (Bauwens 2005). Instead, we are provided with a list of techno-economic terms.

A technocratic outlook on the commons has prevailed from the beginning of the millennium in the digital commons literature. Technology, economic practices, the law and loose, vague references to 'social movements' are its main entries. Change things by producing a new model which makes the existing model obsolete, not by fighting existing reality is its motto (Bollier 2008: 294). Historical transformation is envisaged mostly not as political, rebellious and oppositional, but as incremental, immanent, i.e. arising from within actual social relations and heightened productivity, and prefigurative, i.e. transcending the old social order by projecting a new world to come (Bollier 2008: 305-310). If one removes the revolutionary flame, the idea of an immanent transformation which issues from technological and economic evolution and is attributed to rising productivity is, actually, a very classic Marxian one.

A techno-economic outlook on historical change is likely to evince little concern with the challenges of organizing broad-based socio-political movements in robust blocs and modes of collective action which could effectively counteract the power of vested private interests and state elites, and would strategically advance an alternative project of social reconstruction. Revealingly, Bollier (2008: 8) talks of an 'emergent second superpower' which arises from the coalescence of people around the world who affirm common values and form new public identities through online networks. He does not elaborate, however, on the essential political question: whether the organizational forms of the 'movement' are fitting and they can face up successfully to the other 'superpowers' of states and large corporations (see also Bollier 2008: 199-225). Unfortunately, apart from occasional international demonstrations and cross-national events of local resistance (such as the 2011-2011 Indignados and Occupy movements), this 'second superpower' is nearly invisible in our actual world of growing 'surplus populations' and exclusions (Sassen 2014).

No more do we find an explanation of how collective influence could be effectively exerted on entrenched power structures, elites and hierarchies of the state beyond the limited capacities of lobbying, litigation and legal proposals or public appeals to the good will of public officers. The impotence of both technology and law in rearranging the established order of power in contemporary societies has been acknowledged by 'digital commoners' themselves. 'The more I'm in this battle, the less I believe that constitutional law on its own could solve the problem' (Lessig cited in Bollier 2008: 87; for the limits of technology see Benkler 2006: 17-18, 31-34).

The tactic of public appeals through open letters, speeches etc., which relies on the good will of incumbents, has not fared any better. The tight embrace of business interests and enclosures by state politics has also blatantly refuted time and again the naïve trust in the benevolence of present-day governments, which would be persuaded by rational arguments to assist commoners in the making of a 'digital republic' with a more open, democratic character (Bollier 2008: 93; Benkler 2006: 382).

An awareness that the techno-economic and legal path runs up against overwhelming obstacles has been growing in recent years in the peer commons school (see e.g. Bauwens & Kostakis 2014; 2017). Hence, an increasing emphasis is being placed on the 'partner state', on social and political movements and on building commons counter-power on multiple levels by creating parallel institutions, such as the 'Chambers of Commons' and the 'Assemblies of the Commons' (Bauwens & Kostakis 2017: 45). However, the techno-economic and legal steps are still given priority in both thought/analysis and practice.

The strained relations of the digital commons school with profit-oriented businesses and markets shed light on the tendency to suppress the political as radical opposition and contestation. In this and other respects, Benkler, Bollier and Bauwens partake of the 'post-political vision' as fleshed out by Mouffe (2005; 2013): the fantasy that democratization can proceed without defining an adversary and that, in post-traditional societies, collective identities are not constructed in terms of we/they on account of the growth of individualism –of 'cooperative individualism' in the case of digital commoners. Conflicts can be pacified through dialogue and by nurturing relations of mutual tolerance among individuals with different interests and perspectives. Moreover, the post-political view typically disregards existing power relations and how they structure contemporary societies (Mouffe 2005: 48-51). However, the politics of 'consensus at the centre' is plainly the result of 'the unchallenged hegemony of neoliberalism' (Mouffe 2013: 19; emphasis added).

In effect, Benkler and Bollier trumpet the idea that wealthy corporations can reorient their business models, make profit through the use of open source software and become political allies or even business partners of the digital commoners (Benkler 2006: 471; Benkler 2011: 25-28; Bollier 2008: 15-16, 20, 229; Bauwens 2011).

3. Anti-capitalist commons

A distinct, third strand of contemporary theorizing about the commons has taken shape in the writings of a group of interacting authors with strong Marxist influences, a staunch anti-capitalist orientation and an aspiration to revive a 'communist' alternative project that breaks with the history of state socialism. This current is made up of George Caffentzis (2010; 2013), Silvia Federici (2004; 2010; 2012), Massimo De Angelis (2005; 2010; 2012), Peter Linebaugh (2008; 2014), and Nick Dyer-Witherford (1999; 2012; 2015).

What holds the anticapitalist Marxist paradigm of the commons apart from Ostrom's Bloomington school and the digital commons current is, first, that the writings of Caffentzis, Federici, De Angelis, Dyer-Witherford and Linebaugh span the different varieties of the commons and, crucially, that they are animated by an intense awareness of the antagonisms between the commons and capital, advocating vociferously for a radically anticapitalist politics of the commons for our times. The commons are presumed to be locked up in an endless conflict with capitalism since its rise at the end of the middle ages, on account of an ongoing practice of capitalist dispossession and appropriation of the commons. 'Primitive accumulation' is held to be a constant feature of capitalist production (De Angelis 2007: 14). The commons in their diverse guises have been subject to intensified new enclosures since the onset of neoliberalism in the '70s.

Hence, this body of thought is alert to the political in its power-laden and conflictual dynamics, particularly in the social battles between capital, the commons and the global poor. As distinct from Hardt and Negri, they are also conscious of the need to actively construct what is absent- a collective subject of historical transformation towards the commons. Despite all this, the anticapitalist/Marxist take on the commons is beset with deficiencies akin to those we have uncovered in the digital commons literature. Socio-economic processes and struggles are placed apart from political ones. The realm of the social is considered to be the foundation of any proper historical shift towards the expansion of emancipatory commons, as opposed to political revolutions (De Angelis 2012: 4, 10). For all its political concerns and ideas about the formation of a collective subject out of fragmented, disempowered and contradictory individuals, it has not worked out a robust figure of counter-hegemony suited to our times and the commons. Hence the need to delve into contemporary political theory.

Their starting point is that the class struggles of workers –under which they subsume not only waged and industrial labour, but a more extended group of unwaged, slave and rural labour- shape the crises of capital by intensifying its contradictions and imbalances. Hence their revolutionary power (MNC 2009: 2). Workers' revolts against capitalist exploitation and the divisions of labour combat and overturn the dominant modalities of capitalism in its different historical stages, triggering reactions on behalf of the elites and bringing about systemic transformations.

The multiple economic and political crises over the last years reveal that the state and capitalist market have managed the 'two great commons' of labour and the planet's ecosystem in a destructive manner which impedes the social reproduction of the majority. So, they commend a

‘constitutional perspective’ on social struggles. This would put in place collective alternatives that would secure social reproduction in terms of housing, work and income over and against the present capitalist forms. When communities can reproduce themselves collectively, they can afford to radicalize their struggles. ‘Autonomist Marxism champions the autonomy of workers, their capacity to resist and find alternatives to capital. To that end, it has always focused on struggle, and working-class capacity’ (Dyer-Witherford 2015: 188).

In the conditions of neoliberal dispossession and disempowerment, social reproduction, freedom, equality and justice for the vast majorities in the world can be achieved by overcoming capitalism and its state by means of ‘constituent’ anticapitalist struggles which generate independent life-sustaining commons for the many, enabling their reproduction here and now and underpinning their political and other fights against capital. A large part of capital’s power lies in its ability to terrorise people with the idea that they are unable to organize the production and reproduction of their livelihoods outside the circuits of the market. The political import of the commons for anticapitalists lies in their ability to demonstrate in practice that other ways of organizing social life and reproduction are not only feasible but actually existing and effective (Caffentzis 2010: 25).

The anticapitalist stream in the debate over the commons has not only centred on the opposition between capital and the commons that spans several centuries up to the new, neoliberal enclosures. It has also made the case that contemporary capitalism has sought to enlist the commons in the service of its own reproduction in order to use a cheap substitute for the shrinking welfare state and to deal with the ecological and social disasters that neoliberal greed has inflicted on the contemporary world (Caffentzis 2010; Federici 2010).

Ostrom turns out to be the ‘major theorist of the capitalist use of the commons’ (Caffentzis 2010: 30). This is the ideological response of pro-capitalist intellectuals and politicians. They recognize the disastrous fanaticism of a neoliberalism intent on privatizing and commodifying everything. And they advertise the possibilities and the virtues of capitalism with a human face (Caffentzis 2010: 39). Hence, the commons do not bear an intrinsic political meaning and orientation. They can be articulated in conflicting ways in political discourse and practice.

Yet, there is something profoundly anti-political in this vehement antagonistic-anticapitalist stance towards the commons. The issue is not simply the superficial hermeneutic one that Caffentzis and Federici run a brutal roughshod over the nuances of Ostrom’s positions. What is troublesome is the will to eliminate ambivalences and to consign the ambiguous pluralists to the camp of capitalist forces of domination and exploitation, setting up a rigid, clear-cut and unmovable divide between capitalists and anticapitalists. The politics of counter-hegemony navigates its uncertain and arduous course amid complexity, hybridity and fluidity by enunciating a discourse which can speak to society at large, in manners that can tap into ambiguity and indeterminacy so as to refashion habitual ways of thinking and seeing things.

The anti-political animus of the ‘autonomist Marxist’ framing of the commons becomes more pronounced in the writings of Massimo De Angelis, which summon a conception of social revolution aligned with Marx’s and juxtaposed to Lenin’s. This conception does not envisage epochal change as a result of the seizure of power by political elites, through elections or insurrection. Rather, it comprehends historical transformation as a long-term process which brings about ‘the actual production of another form of power, which therefore corresponds to...a change in

the ‘‘economic structure of society’’ ’ (De Angelis 2012: 9). The political comes after, it is based on the social, and it has a limited capacity for transformative agency in the absence of the requisite social ground (De Angelis 2012: 4-8). What is eclipsed from view here is the political within the social, that is, the power relations, antagonisms and contestation which suffuse social relations, as well as the key political process of constructing/instituting social relations.

In the process of depoliticizing the social and eliding the social with commons, this stream of autonomist Marxism removes twice from commons their political edge. First, as it obscures the power asymmetries and conflicts structuring the fields of the commons, and it fails to reckon that we should politically organize them in order to inflect the manifold actual commons in particular directions of history-making. Second, as it advances an overly expansive and indefinite definition which equates the commons with society at large –social systems, socio-material conditions of production and reproduction, even the family without qualifications (De Angelis 2012: 10-11; 2007: 243). In De Angelis’ thought we reach a cul-de-sac. Whereas it feels acutely the urgency of hegemonic politics for the making of a collective subject for the commons, it forbids us to think in such terms, putting all our stakes on a ‘social system’ and its own development, which, however, is neither automatic nor secure. In line with these assumptions, De Angelis fails to work out any theory for the production of counter-hegemonic subjects and projects. Honestly enough, he owns up to this failure and the political impotence it entails: ‘The explosion of the middle class...rearranges social relations...and the borders of the wage hierarchy policed by the army of prejudice, patriarchy and racism. How this explosion will be brought about, I do not know’ (De Angelis 2010: 971).

Nick Dyer-Witherford (1999; 2012; 2015) has advanced, perhaps, further than any other in this paradigm of the commons towards the elaboration of a political understanding of the commons in our times. He underscores the urgent need for strategic political thought and action and he poses eminently political questions. Contemporary history is cast as an open and dark battlefield in which the ecological, social and financial crises of capital pave the way for a variety of competing political responses. Crucially, we must tackle head-on what turns out to be the political issue of the collective subject: who are ‘we’, how can we forge commonalities in struggle, how can we overcome the difficulties in working together so as to reinforce the weak or inexistent links between riots, wage struggles and occupations; how can we transcend the present state of precarious, segmented labour and distressed, unemployed ‘surplus populations’ in order to assemble an organized massive power.

His political project is called ‘commonism’, which is intended as a negation of centralized command economies reigned by repressive states. It is also intended as a set of high level demands in the domain of ecology, networks, and society and labour (e.g. a guaranteed global livelihood) that should be pressed on both the national and international level, providing a clear focus and a ground of convergence among diverse movements and struggles (Dyer-Witherford 2007). The ‘circulation of the commons,’ is a core part of this project, signaling a process of mutual enhancement and bootstrapping of the manifold commons. This adds a constructive dimension and a transformative dynamic to the ‘circulation of struggles’ which may interrupt any point in the ‘circulation of capital’ (its movement from money and commodities to more commodities and money through production for the market). The circuit of the commons should unfold not only laterally, among the multiple classes of the commons, but also vertically, among new subjectivities, autonomous assemblies (solidarity networks, coops etc.) and governmental agencies. Governments can underwrite or even initiate at a state level the creation of alternative commons networks. They can also supply the

planning mechanisms and processes which are called for the ecological commons, e.g. by regulating carbon emissions, and the field of production.

Dyer-Witherford combines thus a heightened perception of political predicaments with an 'autonomist' Marxist accent on the material expansion of the commons as the primary condition and objective. Yet the lack of the political –of political thought ruminating on political strategies and ideas- becomes even more glaring here. We are served notice about the need to synthesize the diverse commons, struggles and plans, about the value of governmental agency, discursive mediations and a new alliance between grassroots movements and governments. However, Dyer-Witherford does not comes to grips effectively with such essential challenges for the politics of the commons. On this set of political concerns, and in blatant contradiction with the recognition of their vitality, we learn precious little from the work of Dyer-Witherford, beyond the standard vague references and nodding gestures.

Post-hegemony

The foregoing review of commons theories and practices highlighted a yawning lack of strategic thinking over key political predicaments. These bear crucially on the construction of a collective subject (alliance of social forces) that will further the commons as an alternative social system and will win the game of power against its opponents in the establishment. In order to address this deficit, we will tap into the political theory of hegemony and post-hegemony and we will transfigure these theories and the related strategies so as to align them more closely with the politics and the logics of the commons. In political theory, 'hegemony' designates precisely a political process which welds together a collective subject that engages in a socio-political struggle aiming at the institution of a new social order.

The theory of hegemony has been shaped mainly by the writings of Gramsci, Laclau and Stuart Hall (Lash 2007: 56). Laclau's conceptual elaborations provide today the key reference, in cultural studies and political theory at least (Beasley-Murray 2010: 40). In Laclau's thought, hegemony articulates a contingent plurality of autonomous struggles around a 'chain of equivalence', putting together a common political front. It is the political process whereby a new social formation is put in place through an antagonistic fight between the dominant regime and an oppositional coalition of forces, or between rival political projects (Laclau 2000a: 207).

Hegemony consists, more specifically, in a dialectic between universality and particularity which necessarily involves a) chains of equivalence; b) empty signifiers; c) uneven power and d) representation (Laclau 2000a: 207).

However, any attempt to recover the logics of hegemony for assembling a new social alliance for the commons today is bound to encounter the objections of the advocates of 'post-hegemony' or the 'death' of hegemony. The latter make the case that contemporary social conditions and movements have given rise to new tropes of political organization which overcome the structures and the strictures of hegemonic politics.

Post-hegemonic accounts hold that collective democratic agency today is horizontal, i.e. non-hierarchical, networked and plural, and it undertakes prefigurative politics which enact here and now the values of a radical democracy to come. These figures of political action are said to have superseded older, hierarchical forms of agency in political parties, governments and movements.

The label ‘post-hegemony’ can be justifiably extended to a wider spectrum of contemporary thinkers and scholars.

Critical ripostes to the post-hegemonic thesis do not deny that novel or alternative schemes of multitudinous politics have appeared at the turn of the century. They argue, rather, that hegemony and post-hegemony are not two self-standing, internally pure and fully independent poles.

A key argument of *Heteropolitics* is that in order to achieve transformative effects it is not only possible but also necessary to ally horizontal, spontaneous and ‘non-representational’ action with vertical, centralized and representative politics. Beyond any ‘empirical’ refutation of the post-hegemonic thesis in its typical guise, it seems that several dimensions of hegemonic politics should be upheld in contemporary movements which strive for the construction of autonomous and equal associations. On the reasonable assumption that entrenched interests, plutocrats and established oligarchies will not forsake voluntarily their power, their property and their privileges, it will be necessary, first, to pursue hegemony as a divisive struggle to reconfigure the existing composition of forces and to replace it with a different power structure that will strain to minimize domination, hierarchies and exclusions.

Second, even if one envisages freer, plural and egalitarian worlds, and the struggles to realise them, in terms of multiple interlocking and conflicting assemblages, rather than as a global system or a united revolutionary front, a variable degree of hegemony as collective unity-cohesion will be still needed to avoid mutually destructive collisions and incompatibilities. This would be redundant only if social and individual differences cohered spontaneously with each other, and ruinous conflicts could be magically averted without much effort.

Third, relations of representation and the dialectics of particularity/universal, whereby a particular force takes on universal tasks and speaks in the name of the whole, will be reproduced in any association in which the will of the many does not coincide with the will of all. Such a congruence is not logically inconceivable, but it is empirically unlikely in societies of free, diverse and self-differentiating singularities where no universal reason, nature or homogeneous tradition guarantees the collective convergence of different understandings, values and pursuits in political interactions.

The argument of *Heteropolitics* is not, however, that in thinking and pursuing effective collective action to transform society around the commons we should simply re-enact hegemonic politics in Gramsci’s or Laclau’s version. Following the lead of contemporary democratic mobilizations and egalitarian initiatives, we should reimagine and recast hegemonic politics in forms which would, indeed, be post-hegemonic insofar as they would contest and strive to minimize hierarchies, centralization and homogeneity. When the aim is the expansion of an alternative paradigm of the commons, which is self-organised in terms of openness, diversity, creativity and equal freedom, the balance in the fuzzy, hybrid politics of contemporary collective movements should be forcefully tipped towards bottom-up, plural and collective participation in an anti-hierarchical template.

(i) Leadership is synonymous with hegemony. Historically, it connotes various figures of asymmetrical influence such as the top-down direction of the ‘masses’ by individual leaders, authoritarianism and paternalism. It is now more widely acknowledged that inequalities of power cannot be just wished away by calling a movement ‘leaderless.’ In various nominally non-hierarchical organizations, particular individuals or groups exert greater influence in collective decision-making on the grounds of the time and the devotion they invest, the experience they

accumulate, their expert knowledge, their social capital and other unevenly shared skills and capacities (in persuasion, planning, communication etc.). Leaders initiate new practices, they mediate conflicts, they put forward plans and common visions, they motivate and integrate groups, they link up with other organizations and, in general, they assume tasks which afford them increased power in the direction of collective action (Dixon, 2014: 175-179; della Porta and Rucht, 2015: 222-229).

Contemporary collective action has addressed issues of asymmetrical power by, first, recognising its presence and, second, by seeking to institute forms of explicit leadership which do not engender domination and contribute to the collective sharing of skills, knowledge and responsibility. Developing 'another leadership' entails essentially a 'growing attempt to be clear, conscious, and collective about leadership' (Dixon 2014: 186; see also della Porta & Rucht 2015: 223-229). This involves an endeavour to grapple reflectively with power and command, to mitigate their authoritarian implications as far as possible, and to experiment with diverse schemes of collective 'leadership from below' (Dixon 2014: 175-198; Rucht 2015: 66-67).

Hence, present-day horizontalism is not a finally achieved condition in which hierarchies have been fully eradicated. It constitutes, rather, a horizon and a regulative principle for which egalitarian movements endlessly strive through critical reflection, political processes and experiments that fight domination and work to minimize or, at least, to control any concentration of power amidst their ranks. Their internal struggle against inequality is sustained through spaces of ongoing reflection in which questions of domination and influence are openly debated, and unwarranted authority gets effectively challenged. This is an 'agonistic horizontalism' which contrasts to Gramscian and Laclauian logics of organization entrenching centralization, top-down direction and asymmetrical power as essential structures.

(ii) Unity, the construction of a collective identity, and the concentration of force in order to 'become state' form the backbone of hegemonic politics (Laclau 2000a: 207-212, 301-303; Gramsci 1971: 152-3, 181-2, 418). Sporadic, multitudinous, dispersed initiatives and 'disorganized' upsurges of collective politicization can be effective in confronting specific issues, in pressing for reforms in the political system and in catalysing long-term transformations. In recent years, however, egalitarian movements have also engaged in broader coalition-building, addressing society at large, constructing collective identities and seeking to amass enough power to alter the prevailing balance of forces. The Occupy Wall Street, the Spanish and the Greek Indignant, along with a multiplicity of anti-authoritarian groups in the U.S. and elsewhere, are again a case in point.

Present-day hybrid instances of horizontalism gesture effectively beyond hegemony insofar as they turn the scales in favour of plurality, egalitarianism and decentralization through new modes of unification and community beyond the hegemonic mould. To begin with, diversity and openness became themselves the principle of unity in horizontalist mobilizations such as the Global Justice Movement at the turn of the century and Occupy Wall Street more recently. The creation of open spaces of convergence, a pluralist, open and tolerant political culture, the network form and a spirit of pragmatism are specific ways in which diversity and openness are made to function as a principle of unity.

The crux, however, is that if hybrid movements want to ward off the prevalence of top-down hierarchies foisting uniformity, the balance must remain firmly inclined towards grassroots self-direction and the making of egalitarian alternative institutions. This is because most horizontalist initiatives and mobilizations today remain weak, tentative and dispersed, while they are confronted with entrenched state institutions and corporate or other systemic centres of power which can easily overwhelm or co-opt them (Dangl 2010; Zibechi 2010).

(iii) Representation lies at the core of hegemony in both Gramsci's politics, which elevates the Party to the modern Hegemon, and Laclau's scheme, in which 'particularities…, without ceasing to be particularities, assume a function of universal representation. This is what is at the root of hegemonic relations' (Laclau 2000b: 56). Hegemonic representation rests on the exercise of unequal power over others (Laclau 2000a: 208). This embrace of political representation clashes head-on with the widespread distrust of representative politics among late modern citizens and activists (see e.g. Tormey 2015; Sitrin & Azzelini 2014). Hence, the 2011 democratic uprisings, from the Arab Spring to the Spanish Indignados, the Greek Aganaktismenoi to the Occupy Wall Street, tended to oppose political representation in general, along with party partisanship, standing hierarchies, fixed ideologies and professional politicians. Instead, they self-organized in public spaces and they initiated processes of consensual self-governance which were accessible to ordinary people (see e.g. Giovanopoulos & Mitropoulos 2011; Graeber 2012).

Hegemonic representation, the rule of political representatives in parliament and the government, conflicts also sharply with the political logic of self-governance in the commons, which is participatory, collective and egalitarian rather than directed by a small club of professional politicians who exercise sovereign power over social majorities during their term in office.

A key thesis of *Heteropolitics* is that a democracy of the commons, or a 'common democracy', could not be thought and enacted on the model of a community of citizens who constantly participate as a whole in collective self-management across multiple social fields and are regularly able to partly reconcile their differences. On practical grounds, such as the concerns of everyday life, and for political reasons, such as the right to abstain from politics, a variable fraction of the citizenry will normally attend regular assemblies and other fora of social self-governance. Hence, a part of the whole will be usually present in the institutions of direct, popular self-rule and will make decisions for a whole which is absent as such. In other words, a form of sovereign political representation will remain in place in most conceivable instances of an assembly-based democracy of the commons.

Moreover, under conditions of historical contingency and in the absence of a preconstituted universal reason or any other guarantor of general agreement, a partial consensus among dissenting views and desires cannot be always anticipated with certainty. This is even more the case if the singularities in the common are diverse, autonomous and self-changing. When antagonistic divisions split the body politic, a part –preferably, the majority- will again take decisions for the whole, acting thus as a sovereign political representative of the entire community, even in the exceptional circumstances when all its members are present at the moment of deliberation and decision-making.

Even the popular mobilizations in 2011-2012, which advocated for ‘real’ or ‘direct’ democracy, did not effectively break with all notions of political representation. Indeed, mobilized actors made representative claims in their appeals to non-present citizens, as illustrated by the slogan of Occupy Wall Street: ‘We are the 99%.’

However, actuality and history furnish examples of collective self-rule which map out political avenues beyond both hegemonic representation -the rule of elected oligarchies- and the perilous mirage of popular full presence. Principles and practices of a counter-hegemonic democracy, which would be egalitarian, participatory and effectively representative at the same time, can be traced out in ancient instances of limited direct democracy, in contemporary digital commons and in radical democratic mobilizations. Despite their differences, these figures can be all said to make political power common, an equally shared good accessible to all and sustainable over time. This is the core of a common democracy, i.e. an institutionalized, large-scale democratic regime which commons political representation and representative government.

According to Hanna F. Pitkin’s (1972: 8-9) seminal analysis, ‘representation, taken generally, means the making present in some sense of something which is nevertheless not present literally or in fact.’ Political representatives stand for the subjects they represent in a variety of ways, which may range from purely symbolic, when e.g. a party leader becomes a point of identification for his party, to more active and politically consequential, when representatives speak and act on behalf of their constituents, making decisions for them (Pitkin 1972: 38-111).

Representation as ‘the making present’ of something which is ‘not present literally or in fact’ remains operative in participatory or direct democracies. What effectively distinguishes representative democracies is not merely the more extensive political role conferred on representatives but the establishment of a ‘permanent and institutionalised power base’ (Alford 1985: 305), which underpins the separation of political representatives from the represented and releases the former from the immediate pressures of their constituencies by providing them with securely tenured office (Alford 1985; Manin 1997: 9).

As against representative democracy, ‘common’ participatory democracies eliminate any standing division between the rulers and the ruled, enabling anyone who so wishes to involve themselves in political deliberation, lawmaking, administration and law enforcement regarding collective affairs. Collective self-governance becomes in principle an affair of common citizens, of anyone. As distinct from Rousseauean democracy, however, sovereign power is not exercised by the assembled demos in its unified totality. Divisions within the people and between governors and governed remain in place, and the demos is never wholly present at once in any single political institution. Only an alternating fraction of the community participates normally in the various sites of self-management, as they freely choose. Political representation is not eradicated. But institutional devices such as lot, rotation in office, limited tenure, increased accountability and the casual alternation of participants in collective assemblies work against the consolidation of lasting divides between rulers and ruled, expert governors and lay people. The workings of ‘common’ representative governance can be witnessed in several types of the commons, including the digital commons of open source peer production, Wikipedia, and the open assemblies of the 2011 movements.

From the perspective of *Heteropolitics*, they can be seen as a massive endeavour to perform a political logic of the common in central public sites and sovereign institutions. The popular assemblies organised in public squares sought to carve out participatory spaces of collective decision-making, opening political power to all ordinary citizens and contesting the rule of money and professional political classes. Opposition to representative politics and the dominance of the markets went hand in hand with an endeavour to involve 'normal and common people' (Dhaliwal 2012: 265), striking down informal and institutional barriers to participation in the exercise of sovereign power and striving to increase 'community control' over the entire social system (Dhaliwal 2012: 266). The intent to make democratic representation common was evident also in the regulation of the practices of governance. These deliberately sought to enforce the rule of 'whoever, whenever s/he wishes' against the hegemony of leaders, elites, sovereign representatives and a homogeneous people bound to be present en masse in decisive political functions.

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Theodoris Karyotis, ‘Within, against and beyond the market: challenges of the commons as an antagonistic force’

Introduction

Not an academic. I come from the movements and I approach the commons from a political point of view.

Although not all grassroots social movements utilise the vocabulary of the commons in their self-description, I consider the discourse of the commons one of the most potent analytical tools to construe the activity and objectives of grassroots initiatives, demonstrate their revolutionary potential and explore their challenges and contradictions. (Biopolitical field).

This presentation is it is an attempt at a theoretical intervention in the dialogue that unfolds within the movements of the commons, motivated by my involvement in relevant initiatives. My aim is to examine the potential of the commons for social transformation that goes beyond the horizon of the "crisis". To that end, I will examine the relationship of the commons with the dominant institution of the market, and the threats, contradictions and opportunities it generates. I am trying to contribute to a critique of movement activity, and this is why I am trying to trace the theoretical origins of this activity.

Capitalism(s) and anti-capitalism(s)

Often, the commons are presented as an ‘anti-capitalist’ or ‘post-capitalist’ transformative power that can disrupt or overcome the dominant institutions of the state and the market. An exploration of

this potential of the commons would necessarily have to begin with a presentation of the different definitions of the terms ‘market’, ‘state’, ‘capitalism’, ‘power’, etc. Most importantly: Are the market and capitalism synonymous? Or on the contrary, non-capitalist forms of impersonal exchange can exist?

I will present in turn 3 different definitions of capitalism:

1) Capitalism is a system of exchange where the law of demand and supply in a free market defines what is to be produced and at what price it is to be sold.

I will not pay attention to this definition because it is a self-definition of capitalism by its proponents, but also because there is no such thing as a ‘free market’ – it is a fiction. Indeed, Fernand Braudel (historian) argues that the rise of capitalism originates in the capacity of big entrenched interests to manipulate markets. (Capitalism = anti-market) Markets are always ‘skewed’. The issue is who ‘skews’ them and to what end.

2) An economic system where labour, land and money are commodities themselves (Polanyi). Polanyi is despised by many Marxists because his theory lends itself to social democratic solutions. However a social democratic is only one of the possible readings of Polanyi.

3) A system where commodities are produced and capital is accumulated through the appropriation of surplus value, i.e. through the exploitation of labour. (Marx)

As social change, we define the transformation of social practices and institutions towards increased equality and freedom, and consequently the transformation of subjects, both collective and individual.

The issue of subjectivation and identity is very important. We have had at least two interesting presentations in this workshop, one by Kioupkiolis on the need to forge common identities as part of a bottom-up hegemonic project, another one by Varvarousis when he described how crisis and liminality break down traditional identities and foster the emergence of militant subjects.

Thus, I will concentrate on the other important issue, the relation between commons and capital.

<u>Institutionalist School</u>

The commons represent a contested concept, around which many different schools of thought have developed, with different conceptualisations, each of which facilitates or precludes different political practices oriented to social change.

The first approach to the commons, that of Elinor Ostrom, does not need to be described in detail since it is familiar for all of us here. Ostrom of course is particularly interested in natural resources, and how their collective management by self-instituted communities through common rules avoids the notorious ‘tragedy of the commons.’

Ostrom’s conclusions have been of enormous political significance, since they offered arguments in favour of collective coexistence and self-management, at a time when methodological individualism was on the rise.

However, with her insistence on effective ‘management’, Ostrom fails to outline a new subjectivity, a new anthropological type; on the contrary, she argues that individual economic pursuits are best served by collective self-management. Most of Ostrom’s examples relate to collective resource

management (irrigation, fishing, forestry) geared to the production of goods for the market. Collective self-management appears here as collateral to market participation, where everyone aims to maximize their individual benefit.

Ostrom perceives the commons as ‘closed’ systems and seeks the ‘endogenous’ causes of their success or failure, and thus fails to provide a meaningful critique of the dominant institutions within which the commons emerge, the state and the market. Therefore, she envisions the commons as ‘nested’ between these two institutions.

This vision, however, can lend itself to the utilisation of the commons by capitalism for its own ends. From the idea of the ‘third sector’ to that of ‘big society’, the commons are approached as welfare mechanisms to alleviate the crises: the state provides institutional support to the commons, and in return the commons mitigate the most acute social and environmental consequences of capitalism, thus absorbing the ‘shocks’ of a system that is in a permanent crisis, while a substantial critique of the underlying causes of the crisis is totally absent.

Autonomist Marxism

This is a central critique of the second approach that I will examine here, that of the autonomist Marxists. Since current capitalist restructuring dictates the ‘externalization’ of the cost of social reproduction, the promotion of ‘domesticated’ and ‘benign’ commons alleviates capitalism’s crisis of reproduction and prevents social unrest. From this point of view, the commons are a ‘safety net’ that aims to mitigate the most extreme effects of capitalism.

A characteristic example is SYRIZA government’s approach towards the commons. Social solidarity structures and alternative economies are the cornerstone of its ‘parallel program’ of social salvation, while policies of neoliberal dispossession continue unperturbed.

A related Marxist critique focuses on the fact that, to the extent that commoning endeavours involve commodity production, the capitalist law of value penetrates the activity and imposes its logic. Workers of radical cooperatives, for example, might have equality and democracy in the interior of the production unit; however, the market operates as an external ‘boss’, determining what is going to be produced and how, as well as the intensity of labour and the remuneration of workers. This leads to phenomena of self-exploitation.

A very important observation.

To navigate the above criticisms, autonomist commons thinkers have often tried to differentiate between ‘anti-capitalist’ commons, on the one hand, and ‘distorted’ or ‘commodity-producing’ commons, on the other. In their perception, the commons are always embedded in communities of struggle, antagonistic to the permanent processes of enclosure promoted by the state and the market. For them, the central concept is not the common goods as resources, but commoning as a process that simultaneously produces subjects and collectives that can intervene in the biopolitical field antagonistically to the requirements of the state and the market. They thus promote a view that the commons are embryonic forms of a future liberated society, free from the institutions of both the state and the market.

However, an excessively close reading of Marx and his formulation that the law of value permeates all social relations leads some of them to conclude that the only potentially non-capitalist relationships are those that emphasize use value; thus they privilege sharing and the gift and they

reject exchange. If we take this idea to its logical conclusion, most social and solidarity economy endeavours are "distorted" commons, since they involve the production of commodities. They do nothing but "capitalise" resources, skills, social relationships, etc. for the purpose of accumulation; even if this is an alternative form of accumulation.

Marxist ‘capitalocentrism’

This perception, that solidarity economy is the Trojan horse of capitalism, is widespread in Greece among left and libertarian movements.

So we should ask the question, can societies as complex as ours be reproduced without an impersonal system of exchange? Unfortunately, with this simplistic view, autonomist Marxists inadvertently reproduce the economicism of classical Marxism. They argue that the labour–capital contradiction is the dominant contradiction that inheres in the capitalist mode of production, and they reduce all the other contradictions we are immersed in to the central one. We could mention among them uneven power relations, uneven geographic development, private property, private appropriation of the fruits of our labour, gendered and racial divisions of labour, disparities of wealth, alienation, as well as the economy’s impact on the environment and the climate. That also means that they underestimate the capacity of commoning endeavours to address and remedy these contradictions.

By concluding that the complex processes of creating new value systems that the commons represent are always subordinate to the law of value, they end up promoting what Gibson-Graham calls ‘capitalocentric thought.’ They therefore underestimate the ability of values to confront value. (That is why I argue that they reproduce the economicism of classical Marxism, since for the latter ‘values’ are nothing but a component of the ‘superstructure’ that merely reflects material relationships, while for commons endeavours values are a structural element of reality, inherent in the imaginary representation of our social life.

(De Angelis is a brilliant exception).

‘Structural coupling’ of capital and commons

Therefore, while the separation of ‘capitalist’ commons from ‘anti-capitalist’ is clearly well-founded, in societies where the market is the predominant mechanism of social reproduction, all commons are inevitably in ‘hybrid’ or ‘transitional’ forms. A particular arrangement, or ‘structural coupling’ in the terms of Massimo de Angelis, is required, that allows for the coexistence - in an antagonistic relationship - of these two systems of value creation if the commons are to ‘take root’ in a world dominated by capital.

Certainly, the requirements of the capitalist market are prone to ‘infect’ any commoning endeavours with considerations that are alien to them: profitability, cost efficiency, competitiveness, and so on. However, it easy to overlook that the ‘infection’ can be bidirectional: ‘[The] advancement of commons implies sooner or later a collision with other social systems governing them, the challenge to existing local rules, of capitalist ways to measure and give value to social action, its value practices, and other networked structures [...].’

For this reason, it is necessary to adopt an antagonistic stance within the existing fields of dispute of the commons. This means that we cannot hope that the commons can become immaculate ‘islands of freedom’ that will bring about social change merely through enlargement or multiplication.

Instead, the commons have to confront the dominant institutions, and to do so they have to come in contact with them.

Our relationship to capitalist commodities is contradictory. On the one hand, the represent our chains, our source of alienation from our world, our source of dehumanisation. On the other hand, we are absolutely dependent on commodities for our reproduction. No commoning would be possible without the material substrate provided by capitalist commodities.

Is there a way for the commons to coexist with commodities without being absorbed by the capitalist logic? What form will this 'structural coupling' take if it is to be transformative?

Given that there is no capital or commons in a pure form, but there are always hybrid forms, the question we should ask in each case is 'who is using whom'? Is capital using the commons for its reproduction or is it the other way around?

We can effortlessly think of examples:

- A social centre that sells drinks and uses the proceeds to maintain and expand the activities of the community that manages it.
- Socially supported agriculture, where a consumer community guarantees farmers' income in exchange for agricultural products. It includes both an exchange of products and commoning among farmers and consumers, who collectively decide on the quality and quantity of goods.
- Fair trade, where product prices and the producers' income is – potentially – not determined by supply and demand, but by the perceptions of producers and consumers on solidarity, fairness and sustainability.
- An occupied factory that, through occupation, creates a common space available to society as a whole, while at the same time using alternative product distribution networks to market its products.
- An alternative currency network where the community decides to establish different product exchange rules with a kind of money that retains its function as a unit of measure of value but not as a means of accumulation.
- To take an example from immaterial production, a software developer association that uses its revenue from the creation of websites, ie from the sale of products, to finance the creation of free software, ie common (a practice in the world of peer production is called transvestment).

All the above are attempts, precarious and incomplete, to deal with the relentless law of value of the capitalist market, and to replace it with new systems of valuing human action that derive from the world of the commons. Values against value. These 'value struggles' are the core of modern social struggles.

Not sufficient!

The above do not, of course, reduce the importance of the gift, free access, reciprocity or moneyless exchange, which lie at the heart of the life of the commons. Nor am I arguing that the above is sufficient to bring about social change without a continuous process of decisive resistance against

enclosures and defence of our collective rights, which we have gained through historical processes of struggle.

On the contrary, what I argue is that we should be equally cautious of approaches that consider the commons 'islands' of freedom, unpolluted by the dominant institutions, and of those that treat them as collective systems of resource management; but also of those that consider the commons a new 'mode of production' in the making, which will teleologically replace the capitalist one.

On the contrary, the commons are always embedded in antagonistic social movements, and are promoted through practices that seek to create 'cracks' in existing institutions, but also diffuse their discourse among society, create new common identities, awaken new, militant subjectivities, and to form a common political project through which they will actively claim power over everyday social and political life. In my opinion, not through the capture of the national government, but in the municipal field as an area of proximity and community building.

Even if capital is permanently adapting to the commoners' attempts to subvert it, appropriating and utilising their structures for its own needs, there is no zero-sum game between the processes of resistance and cooptation: an 'excess' is constantly produced, which gradually transforms social relations and prepares the ground on which future commoning endeavours will flourish.

[Marx's law of value describes the way in which, in the capitalist market, the exchange value of products is linked to the amount of socially necessary labour time. In simple terms, it is the process by which markets self-regulate, rendering the production of one or the other product more or less profitable, and dictating the intensification of labour to maintain competitiveness. Essentially, it is the process by which the market appears to take on a life of its own, regardless of human needs or desires; hence, it is a central element in our sense of alienation within capitalism.]

Giuseppe Micciarelli, 'Introduction to urban and collective civic use: the "direct management" of urban emerging commons in Naples'

Introduction

I will investigate the possible forms of collective governance of the commons. The starting point of this analysis is the re-use of abandoned or underutilized goods, e.g. 'former places' which function as civic incubators for new practices of citizenship. Here I present the case of former places as a case study for analysing an unprecedented legal tool, the so-called 'civic and urban use', as theorized in the context of a social conflict and subsequently implemented by the city of Naples and now followed by activists in many cities. The civic and collective urban use is an innovative and somewhat 'creative' mechanism of rulemaking from grassroots, in that it reveals a push from the bottom heading to establish new institutions (Dardot, Laval 2014). In particular, I will compare and contrast this instrument, as well as the new idea of 'direct management' of the so called 'emerging commons', with other forms of participatory democracy and shared administration that regulate the use of public spaces.

We can start from a common situation around Europe: a great number of citizens, local communities, groups of workers, and cultural activists are mobilized in defense – often a discovery – of new kinds of urban commons: ancient buildings, former prisons, abandoned convents and barracks, brownfields and other properties in ruin raised like ghosts in metropolis affected by the

crisis. Are these urban commons? To have an answer we must have a look that goes beyond good itself. Similar sites were something in their previous lives: former orphanages, ex schools, ex barracks, psychiatric hospitals, former convents, ex stations. But these places are also skeletons of an ancient development model. In other words, they were the core of some kind of social relations that, on the one hand, were the positive mirror of the public welfare system, on the other they reflected its backwardness of control and containment of the abnormalities, of the different and above all of the weaker social classes. The social relationships produced in such public places started in the nineties as a result of the neoliberal transformation. Think about non-places, the neologism coined by the French Anthropologist Marc Augé in order to refer to anthropological spaces of transience where the human beings remain anonymous and that do not hold enough significance to be regarded as 'places' (Augé 1992). There are not only these non-places. In the last years many of these abandoned pieces of cities have been occupied by social movements or assigned to associations. We can call them 'former-places'. In such ex places different experiment of self-government and community management have developed. Today a lot of people use them for social, cultural and different kind of activities. This common use is a small precocious laboratory of democracy which directly question the dilemma of commons, thus said the attitude to the cooperation as well the difficulty towards the democratic government of the things we have in common. So to solve the 'tragedy' described by Garrett Hardin we must question much more deeply similar experiences trying to create new institutions from this sort of micro-political and social systems.

The collective and urban civic use is an innovative, replicable and sustainable model of management of urban commons. This is a form of direct administration of public spaces, such as abandoned historical sites, led by citizenship, without the mediation of any association or other legal entity. The most important leading case of this political and juridical experiment is in the city of Naples, where these regulation is now recognized in several administrative acts of the city Council. From May 2012 to June 2016 at least five resolutions – which I co-wrote – have extended this kind of governance to eight spaces, covering today an area of nearly 40 thousand square meters in different parts of the city.

My approach is based on a political and legal philosophy. In Italy we see a theoretical-legal debate about commons, rather than an economist one. This legal approach is a key feature of the social movements that were arisen in defense of commons. This attitude towards the law can be described as the aim to create new legal instrument for recognize collective action in urban regeneration process. Through the practice of self-government of theaters and other cultural and social spaces (Cirillo 2014), there has been an 'unexpected' turning point in comparison to the definition of common goods proposed by the first Rodotà Commission (Rodotà, Mattei 2010): the direct participation of citizens in the use and management has claimed as a qualifying element of the legal category. This innovation is very important, because as I will explain the existing legal framework of urban regeneration does not help collective action. We need to increase collective action of ever-larger groups of people, where associations, informal groups, families and single people can find home and mutualistic support together; in the way that may have the opportunity to share also projects, competences, ideas and not only physical spaces.

Asilo Filangieri is the political experience where civic use born. It is a huge building, a former three-story convent, located right in the middle of the pulsing historical city centre of Naples. On March the 2nd, 2012, a collective of workers of art, theatre and culture occupied this building that was the headquarters of the Universal Forum of Cultures, the paradigm of a giant cultural machine made of spoils system. Here was imagined for first time a new way for translating our idea of common use into a legal form. We wanted an institutional recognition of Self-rule power making into the public law. We did not want to be the tenants or the owners, but citizens who had the opportunity to use the good in common. Think to a public garden: anyone can enter, but at a certain time, to do certain activities and not others, but the problem is that are standard, do not consider difference of the spaces, and wider communities.

To do so we needed a new legal tool. But at the same time we tried to make it understandable and recognizable by the existing law. We then wrote a regulation inspired by the 'Civic Uses', an ancient institution still in force, albeit in minority, which regulates the so-called rights to take the wood, (profit of the woods) fishing and grazing on common land of small and medium-sized rural hamlets (Capone 2017). You have something similar all around Europe. This regulation has been written and theorized by ourselves, in a collective work, during three and half years of a specific working group of l'Asilo-www.exasilofilangieri.it , which I am part of. Interestingly in these cases legal filed claimed by movements is not interpreted - not only and not so much - as the classic, and even essential, fight for the 'rights', but as the reversal – in a democratic sense – of those spaces that the governance leaves to the filed action to private individuals. Here we make a creative use of the law. Theoretically it is a regulation of use in which citizens are not only guaranteed powers of access, but also the much more important ability to define independently the basic rules of use of the structure. A feature that Elinor Ostrom defined fundamental for a better management of the common resources (Ostrom 1990). But this change of view must also concern the definition of urban commons.

To be defended, common goods need to be recognized as such by legal order. The legal definition proposed by the Rodotà commission, which has worked with important jurists, was very successful. In This proposal, never approved in Italian law but still influence, Commons are those goods that generate functional utility for the exercise of fundamental human rights. This definition is important, but in my opinion insufficient. My idea is that the recognition of self-regulation capability must be a qualifying element of the legal category of commons (Micciarelli 2014 a, b). We must link governance to the legal category of commons. But this gives a lot of juridical and theoretical problems. How the management of a water company can be equal to the self-governance of a community with an assembly? Paraphrasing a distinction in Italian jurisprudence regarding public property I propose a legal differentiation of two types of common goods, linked with two different governance system (Micciarelli 2017). We can call 1) necessary commons and 2) emerging commons, where urban commons are too.

The first type, necessary commons, are some goods that are necessarily in common, such as water and other natural goods. But there are also artificial goods: think about Life-saving medicine. Obviously we are against private management of corporations. But in our fights it's more difficult to distinguish their governance from the public one. The difference is that in commons we must

insert rules of traditional participatory democracy. Because they are goods related to fundamental rights on a large scale the best you can imagine is Porto Alegre model or similar. (Definition: Those goods - material, immaterial and digital - whose utility is considered necessarily functional to the exercise of fundamental rights. By virtue of this indissoluble link with the dignity of the person, their access cannot be excluded on the basis of economic availability: in order to reinforce these guarantees some aspects of their management (among the more sensitive ones such as distribution and conservation) should be decided through institutional procedures that involve the audience of their users or special representatives. Individual, collective or collective rights holders and beneficiaries should also be granted special procedural legitimacy for their protection in order to safeguard them for future generations.

Second type: there are commons which emerge as such from the use that is claimed from the bottom. We did not walk around the city and say: look at that abandoned building, it is an urban common! Not all abandoned places are perceived as commons. But it's difficult translate this care in a juridical way. Urban commons are emerging commons, thus said those immaterial and digital goods - which, by expressing functional utility connected to fundamental rights, are characterized by a direct and non-exclusive management of reference communities. This self-regulatory power is certified by public authorities in order to ensure the use and the collective enjoyment of goods, addressing them to the fulfilment of these rights as well as the free development of the person and the safeguarding of future generations. So emerging commons definition make possible to link political claiming with legal recognition. So people are able to create their own institutions, Murray Boockin spoke about this very well (Boockin 2015, 1993). Differently from his point of view we use a juridical form. We may be considered these emerging commons such as a new public space institution. The idea of a new public use, the political process of writing of new democratic rules, the obligation of an open door system, help us to recall that democracy before the solution is still a challenge to be resolved.

This is a working paper, please contact before quoting. For edited articles please check https://unisa-it.academia.edu/giuseppemicciarelli

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Yannis Pechtelidis, 'Commoning Education in Contemporary Greece'

Introduction

In contemporary crisis-ridden Greece various social and cultural spaces have been emerged in Greece aiming to a more participatory education. The focus here is on the intergenerational process of commoning education in two examples, a public elementary school (Fourfouras, The school of Nature and Colors - the children aged 6 to 12) and an independent pedagogical community (Sprogs) about early childhood, run by its members (parents, teachers, and children). A core group of two preschool teachers and around 14 parents and 10 children (aged 2,5 to 5) were fully engaged in Sprogs.

The empirical data collected from a variety of sources such as participant observation, conversations with teachers and parents, blogs and sites of the school and the pedagogical community, various Internet posts, videos and radio broadcasts, flyers, and a teacher's autobiographical book about Fourfouras. My intention is to briefly describe rituals, practices, and mentalities produced within these alternative educational social spaces, and to provide an understanding on how alternative children's subjectivities come into being. The aim is to critically discuss both their dynamics and limitations; their similarities and differences; and subsequently their consequences for the participants and society. In light of the new commons theory (Bollier & Helfrich, 2012; Bollier, 2014; Hardt & Negri, 2012; Dardot & Laval, 2015; Ostrom, 1990), it is argued that both Sprogs and Fourfouras are underpinned by the commons heteropolitical (Kioupkiolis & Pechtelidis, 2017) ethics and logic, despite their differences. Particularly, they share a common resource, education. The 'common' is interpreted here (for both cases) as a heteropolitical process of 'commoning' education (Means et al., 2017). However, Sprogs is a typical or classic form of a small-scale common.

For Fourfouras, on the other hand, it is claimed that it is a different kind of commons, because the commons' ethics is developed inside a public school and in accordance to a specific official curriculum and strict state requirements. Both groups/schools have established collective ownership of education to ensure the prosperity of each of their members and the community. The members of these communities or the commoners tend to form a web that connects all participants into a network of social co-operation and interdependence. These specific commons have limits, rules, social norms and sanctions determined by the commoners. In our cases, the children are considered as commoners, because they partly influence the formation of the communing practices and rules, mainly through their involvement in the assembly or the council. Also, they follow these rules and they are subjected to the sanctions of the community they belong. From this perspective, this particular alternative logic of 'common education' is illuminated through the specific description of the non-conventional social organisation of space and time of the schools of the study, and the process of politics that takes place there.

In Greece, citizenship practice is still considered to be the result of specific educational trajectories. They will only fully attain their social and political nature through a predefined socialising course. Focusing on what is not attained yet by the pupils neglects their existing activities in the present. In this sense, it is vital to investigate and re-consider youth and children's views about politics, as well as their activity, and their potential for social change (Pechtelidis, 2016). Within the pedagogical settings of the study the children are not socialised into a predetermined citizenship identity. Specifically, they enact an autonomous subjectivity through their direct involvement in the assembly or the council of the group.

Considering both children and adults' participation in the assembly or the council of the groups we could point out an intergenerational agency (Mayall, 2015), which provides a base of a hybridised habitus, or, to put it differently, a mixing of new dispositions and elements of tradition. The active participation of the children in them maybe causes confusion about the role and participation of young children in public life. This confusion arose from the uncertainty around the nature of 'childhood' and the shift of power between children and adults.

The children's assembly and council and the children's contribution in the formulation of the rules of these communities are evidence of such a shift. Sprogs and Fourfouras are perceived as

heteropolitical because they construct alternative spaces for learning and promote experimentation in thought and action beyond the top-down, bureaucratic structures of the state and the profit-driven market logics. In these contexts, seems to be cultivated a specific heteropolitical habitus of the commons consisting of the dispositions of a) direct involvement in public and collective life, b) autonomy and c) self-reliance. Considering the heteropolitical regulation of Sprogs and Fourfouras' everyday life we could argue that they challenge both the traditional and the neoliberal paternalism. They are cracks in the current post-political regime, and an obstacle in the operations of neoliberal power. Also, they question the traditional discourse about a child being a passive, weak, defective and ignorant being, which is lacking not only in knowledge, capabilities, and skills, but also in learning capability (Biesta, 2010).

However, further research grounded on children's views is needed, because the statements expressed in this study are mostly from an adult perspective (teachers and researchers). Furthemore, the processes of commoning education are initiated mainly by the adults, despite that the children have an active role in this process, which they conceptualize and enrich with their own experience and views. The children themselves cannot do so either because of the formal school constraints (in the case of the public school of Fourfouras) or of their young age (mainly in Sprogs). But children have the ability to influence and shape the process of subjectification. Also, we should take into consideration that adults' mentoring and support can happen in many ways. In our cases, they try not to get involved too much and give space for children to express themselves freely and to shape the process in their own terms.

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