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Divergent democracy: toward a mediatised affective activism renewal of the feminist and anti-fascist struggle in contemporary Greece

Abstract

While the shackles of austerity continue to shatter the remnants of once dignified, and now, mostly dehumanising lives, for most Greeks who have suffered decades long of economic and social crises, the rapid rise of the far right and its incipient racist and xenophobic discourse has had a profound impact on the country. At the same time, whereas overall anti-fascist and anti-racist discourse has had moments of a peak, by and large, the momentum has been varying and mostly lukewarm with quite a noticeable absence of collective and coherent feminist organising. This paper attempts a twofold objective: on the one hand to contribute to the global feminist dialogue by making visible and vocal the case of Greece, and, on the other to advance a plea for a current consciousness raising era in Greece as regards particularly contemporary youth who can transform instances of despair into action and social change by adopting feminist principles in their everyday lives. This paper draws on the representational politics of far-right fascist discourse and individual behaviour articulated and depicted in contemporary Greek films, and its gendered and xenophobic normalisers, to contextualise an interdisciplinary feminist analysis of such phenomena in contemporary Greece. It would be pertinent for film to be harnessed as representational resistance to fascism in clearly portraying how fascist elements are destructive to societal freedom, and how resistance to such, should embody principles of tolerance and anti-racism. It is such anti-fascist aesthetics that can be energised by activists in re-igniting struggles.

Keywords

Mediatised affective activism, anti-fascist aesthetics, feminist anti-racist interventions, Greece, xenophobia, film.

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Introduction: ideologies, pathologies and institutions in contemporary Greece

I shamelessly proclaim a profound sense of exasperation. As an academic activist based in Europe, no matter which country or continent I turn to, I am resolutely met by dismay at recent unfolding events unreservedly entangled with continuous sexism and racism. In declaring a

sense of liminality and inbetweenness of a ‘insider/outsider’ positionality, as a member of the diaspora, I refer to being (through kinship and family based in the ancestral homeland) politically and emotionally invested in the equality struggles of the people residing in Greece. But I have not given up, as I am at the same time inspired by moments of clarity, when, for example, we speak our truths of equity and justice and when we rekindle solidarities in remaking our societies.

This article is a modest attempt to spark some of that energy into a journey of revitalising some vigour into the depleted feminist and anti-racist struggle in contemporary Greece; a country whose cultural dynamism is evaporating under the multiple oppressive regimes of austerity, poverty, death by despair and the demise of several social institutions once thriving. While longitudinal research on the crisis in Greece serves as the backbone to extend the conversation further, this paper builds further and so extends from published works of this research (drawing on auto/ethnographic accounts) the theoretical grounding (Christou, 2018a), in order to explore visual renditions of some of the core issues depicted and articulated in several contemporary Greek films. Methodologically, the paper offers cultural analysis and focuses on the cultural politics of the themes discussed with an eye toward political praxis, drawing on particular filmography, and hence the analytical framing is contextualised and enriched through a longitudinal ethnographic lens (Christou, 2018b).

The global financial crisis of 2007-2008 is considered by many economists (Stewart, 2008; Worstall, 2014) the largest and most severe financial event since the Great Depression of the 1930s, as it reshaped not just the world of finance and banking, but it also has had lasting social and economic effects in several regions of the world. The current pandemic-driven social, economic and energy crises in Europe are now the next chapter in what seems like a perpetual state of the crisis-conundrum engulfing Greece.

As a prime example, the persistent and pernicious social effects of the economic crisis in Greece have impacted on the lives of many residents with acute devastation felt by youth, ageing, migrant and minority groups, rendering the current context as that of a ‘debt colony’ and ‘neo-colonial social necrophilia’ (Christou, 2018a). This is a context that exemplifies ‘a “suicidal state” (which) can only function with a zombie economy and zombie residents, who will endure living with a dilapidated social contract, and, under continuous attack of social responsibility to alleviate social problems, for what are increasingly perceived to be disposable communities’ (Christou, 2018a: 15). Research participants¹ based in the northern regional periphery of Pindos, Greece articulate this double demise of *social death* and *neo-colonialism*:

These are the new occupying forces; we have become the great estate (*tsifliki*) of Europe. The Germans have returned to take our land, to rape us of our resources. With their technology they take our sun, with their austerity they cripple our nation. And now the same rocks upon which we stand are no longer Greek. (Argenti and Knight, 2015: 781).

In the interim period, a few years ago, the left-wing anti-austerity SYRIZA (Coalition of the Radical Left) party, historically the first democratically elected left-wing government in Europe came to power after a general election held on 25 January 2015, on a radical platform campaign based on promises to renegotiate the terms of the international bail-out agreement. The election of SYRIZA was essentially a no-confidence vote against Troika² austerity and the two-party political establishment that had governed Greece by holding a tight grip on all centres of power since the fall of the 1974 military junta. Against a backdrop of Hellenic crises and enduring despair coupled with disappointment by the ‘SYRIZA wave surging and crashing with the Greek Left’ (Sheehan, 2017), I take another critical plunge into building a cultural analysis from an abyss of crises to deconstructing the cultural politics of visibility in order to

make sense of how discursive tropes of racist and fascist depictions in a selection of recent filmography can serve to re-energise feminist efforts and dialogues.

As Sheehan (2017) argues, for those of us who caught the SYRIZA wave, there was a minute of ‘precarious hope’, in what I would claim the otherwise precarious and unliveable lives for a major part of those residing in austerity shaped contemporary Greece. As an ‘outsider’ not currently residing in Greece, but frequently present because of research and transnational family caring responsibilities, this challenging liminality of ‘between and betwixt’, coupled with auto/ethnographic analytical insights into the issue explored in this paper combines the use of visual and cultural politics discursive methodological tools.

In terms of studies incorporating autoethnographic approaches, it is important to keep in mind the core objective:

Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience. This approach challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others and treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act. A researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write autoethnography. Thus, as a method, autoethnography is both process and product. (Ellis et al., 2011: 1)

Hence, in its processual unfolding, autoethnography offers the researcher the opportunity to embark on a socially just and justice-conscious political act of writing the personal as political in order to understand the cultural experience of the collective. It is a process that allows the author to make critical reflections, often into deeply vulnerable terrain in experiencing emotions, materialities and embodied engagements with personal projects that are simultaneously political, social and cultural (cf. Kiskiras, 2016).

At the same time, autoethnographic immersion into a field site of an austerity draining and hostility inducing epoch that resembles a battleground, can become quite a destabilising and challenging series of encounters coupled with crisis and racisms. Experiencing the narration of trauma and exclusion can result into chronic fieldwork fatigue that requires additional layers of reflexivity to cope with and manage during the analytical and writing process. While writing about such intense lived experiences can trigger a myriad of emotions, it can also act as a cathartic, even therapeutic stage in resolving parts of the existential crisis that may emerge during those difficult in the field encounters. The experience, predicament and at times privilege to be researching and writing Greece in the un/making of its post/modern social, cultural and political narrative/s since the mid-90s has had such a profound impact on myself the researcher, the diasporan, the heir to the mythologies, ideologies and pathologies that define and sustain Hellenisms.

The fiscal crisis surmounting Greece over the last decade has been attributed to a combination of social, historical, political and economic factors that have created a powerful and explosive mixture eroding its institutions and debasing its residents. Beyond a decade and a half now, it has proven to be a crisis like no other: a long- lasting, psychologically degrading, deeply dehumanising and ethically questionable crisis. One that has triggered painful recollections of past political oppressions and national catastrophes, but has at the same time, generated new ones in the face of far-right extremism, fascism, racism and xenophobia entering the very supreme democratic institution that represents the citizens, the Hellenic Parliament, through its former representatives of the Golden Dawn party.

But the various crises are not devoid of internal responsibility by the citizenry themselves. Characteristically, as Kiskiras (2016: 183) a self-proclaimed Greek, describing personal culture asserts: “They are also due to our unwillingness to acknowledge our losses, mourn, and come to terms with the fact that we are not as important as we think we are-that the world does not

owe anything to modern Greeks because of our presumed affinity with ancient Greeks; and that we need to deal with our national darkness.” Shadows of the latter unfold in a particularly devastating emergence of current national darkness in the deadly actions, racist words and fascist organising of the Golden Dawn party. In the darkest of ironies, this is a rare occasion when the modern Greeks are seen to be teaching others such racist practices as declared by a self-identified white supremacist on a video interview following the aftermath of a deadly August 2017 weekend in the United States when a white supremacist march led to the death of an anti-racist demonstrator.³

Emerging as a ferocious winner in the 2015 general election in Greece while consolidating parliamentary presence and power in the streets, Golden Dawn, the neo-fascist party with leaders on trial accused of murder, armed attacks, money laundering and trafficking, showcasing an emblem resembling a swastika and advancing virulent anti-immigrant, antisemitic, anti-EU rhetoric, is an abhorrent political party which has spread its tentacles deep into Greek society (Smith, 2015). The emergence of such a neo-Nazi party and the widespread support it has among Greek residents and Greeks of the diaspora (cf. Ledes, 2014⁴) is one of the darkest moments in history for the nation that often prides itself as inhabiting the land which is the birthplace of modern democracy.

The selection of the two films presented here has a chronological specificity in terms of Filippou Tsitos's 'Akadimia Platonos' released in 2009, around the first years of austerity emergence and reaching the apex of the global financial crisis, and, Christopher Papakaliatis's 'Worlds Apart' released at the end of 2015, technically marking a quarter of a century since the arrival of the first wave of mass migrations from Eastern Europe to Greece in 1990 to the subsequent Mediterranean migration crisis that same year as the film release.

In the next section I offer some insight into various dimensions of the human suffering exacerbated by the crisis in unpacking the storied threads of the latter. The section that follows will set the analytical scene in juxtaposing conceptual threads with the visual nodes of the two films. The discussion that will emerge after that section articulates the representational depictions of the far right, and the paper will conclude by pulling together these two conceptual terrains with feminist practices as a core contributor to a refreshed and energised future of hope, compassion, justice and equity.

The spectacle of suffering: situating sites and stories of the crisis

A few days following April Fool's Day in 2012, in what certainly was no hoax, Dimitris Christoulas, a 77-year-old Greek pensioner and retired pharmacist⁵, distraught over his financial state following an onslaught of austerity driven cuts on his pension which led to him struggling to pay for his medication, stood near the Greek Parliament in the Athenian capital's busy main square and shot himself in the head. Witnesses said that before he pulled the trigger, he shouted: 'I don't want to leave debts to my child,' while the note he left stated the following:

The Tsolakoglou (the collaborationist occupation government established after the Nazi Germany invasion of Greece during World War Two) government has annihilated any chance of my survival, which was based on a very dignified pension that I alone paid for 35 years without state support. And since my advanced age does not allow me a way of dynamically reacting (although if a fellow Greek were to grab a Kalashnikov, I would be right behind them), I see no other solution than this dignified end to my life, so I don't find myself fishing through trash cans for my sustenance. I believe that youth who have no future, will one day take up arms and hang the traitors of this country upside-down in Syntagma square, just like the Italians did to Mussolini in 1945. (Demetis, 2018)

While by no means was this the last of debt triggered deaths by despair and other instances of suicide (cf. Knight, 2012; Pipyrrou, 2014; Davis, 2015) it highlighted the extensive spread of a new hegemony, that of a social necropolitics and a new occupation in the form of neo-colonial debtocracy (Christou, 2018). The impact of such a situation is complex and manifests several invisible ways in which it affects women in their everyday lives, and, as shaped by precariousness of employment, the dismantling of social services and the restructuring of care, as well as emotional and embodied practices of coping with and resisting the crisis (cf. Kentikelenis et al., 2014; Vaiou, 2014).

The fact that the austerity programme imposed on Greece was the outcome of a ‘prevailing orthodoxy’ (Matsiganas, 2013) and dictated by international agencies without immediate accountability to the Greek citizenry, rather than through domestic progressive political actors (committed at the time to a vision of radical social renewal) highlighted that hegemonic externalities implicitly stripped away national sovereignty and dignity. This very act served as the backbone to fuel a nationalist-exclusionist-populist toxicity that swiftly transformed from discourse to parliamentary representation.

Without diminishing the dehumanising effects of the crisis, in a nutshell, to demonstrate the poisonous platform above, the social cost of the Greek crisis has been unprecedentedly and unnecessarily extraordinary. For instance, during the apex of the crisis:

National income has declined by almost a quarter. The gap in living standards relative to the rest of Western Europe is back to what it was half a century ago. Unemployment affects over a quarter of the workforce. Average real earnings for those in employment are below their level in the late 1990s. The proportion of the population below the 2009 poverty line 38 per cent in 2012 and was even higher among families of unemployed workers with children, whose plight has become the new social question. The average

real income of those in the poorest 10 per cent of population in 2012 was 56.5 per cent lower than that of the poorest 10 per cent of population in 2009. Inequality remained stable at first but began to take off as the economy sank deeper into recession. The austerity policies pursued did not compensate, and eventually reinforced, the adverse effects of the recession on income distribution. This was not inevitable. The policy content and distributional impact of austerity policies need not necessarily be regressive (Matsaganis, 2013: 33).

Parallel to the social and economic impacts above, the crisis at the same time triggered additional devastating consequences challenging central democratic institutions and political sovereignty with the emergence of Golden Dawn. The consolidation of the far-right fascist party Golden Dawn was assisted by a particular discourse advanced, what Vassilopoulou and Halikiopoulou (2015) have termed as the ‘nationalist solution’ to a wider crisis of the nation-state in Greece and has de facto been a direct outcome of the economic crisis. As Vassilopoulou and Halikiopoulou explain, this is because Greece differs significantly from the other European countries that also faced economic hardship where such did not propel far right extremism to the same extent. The point being, that the nature of the crisis was such, that it penetrated all spheres of society in shaking to the core all salient political and ideological democratic dimensions. As such, it seeped into the weakest of institutional foundations as a democratic crisis, a nation-state crisis, a social contract crisis, leaving porous the rest of the country’s building blocks where extreme, racist, ultra-nationalist narratives trickled through in endorsing guiding principles of ‘blood and honour’ as survival strategies for the nation under attack from within and outside its borders. Symbolically captured in its logo (the ancient Greek meander resembles the Nazi swastika) and articulated in its logos (discourse) of a Nazi ideology translated into principles of morality and purity, are the key representations that define the party’s racist endorsements.

Feminism unbound: films, futures and the far right depicted

‘Akadimia (or Akademia) Platonos’ (Plato’s Academy/Ακαδημία Πλάτωνος) is a residential area located about 2 miles west-northwest of the downtown part of the Greek capital of Athens. The area is named after Plato's Academy. This neighbourhood is mostly a working-class region of the Attica prefecture, which is densely populated, and consequently, most people are mainly living in five to seven storey dilapidated old buildings. Historically, in ancient times, Plato's Academy was first built in the area, but in modern times the area saw dense housing developments in the early part of the 20th century when Athens began to expand. An industrial zone was also developed during this time, and then taller buildings were constructed after the Second World War and the Greek Civil War.

Akadimia Platonos is both the location and the title of the first movie referred to in this paper and which was released in 2009 and directed by Filippos Tsitos. Stavros, the main Greek protagonist is a xenophobic ethno-nationalist shopkeeper who is divorced and lives with his elderly frail mother in a small apartment just above his mini-supermarket shop. It is the flavour of bittersweet dramedy that makes the viewer want to love to hate Stavros, a sensitive enough guy to show genuine care and affection for his mother and ex-wife, and simultaneously, rigidly racist when it comes to what he considers the invasion of migrants and foreign elements in his neighbourhood. These intruders include newcomers as residents, shop owners, workers or even the new statue about to be erected in the centre of the square, adjacent to his shop, in celebration of multiculturalism and diversity, to which he and his Greek friends fiercely vocally and in embodied ways vociferously oppose.

Stavros keeps his standard daily routine intact, in starting his morning by opening his store, displaying the daily newspapers in the front of the store, setting out the plastic chairs where his mother sits for a while on the one side, and he and his friends sit all day on the other side,

complaining throughout the day about the influx of migrants. They sit there idly, yet proudly, observing the dog belonging to one of them, named 'Patriot', who is tied up on the adjacent side of the store near an intersection surrounded by crumbling buildings where some of the migrant businesses are moving in, such as the new Chinese store. Stavros and his friends are very proud of Patriot who, according to his owner, barks violently at every single Albanian who passes by. This is indeed tested by the friends and followed by laughs and cheers when Patriot accomplishes his mission of loudly barking at the local Albanian worker.

The twist of the story emerges when the very same Albanian worker is warmly embraced by Stavros's early dementia diagnosed mother, who (without previous occurrence) speaks to him in fluent Albanian, calling him 'my son'. An angry, and in denial, Stavros could not possibly accept that his 'roots' are Albanian, and his existential drama of questioning his origins as either Greek or Albanian is exacerbated by the suspicious and distant reception from his friends. The collective racist chant ('Albanian, Albanian, you'll never become a Greek'...) they use to sing to mock migrants and to assert their ethno-national superiority, becomes a tested terrain of exclusion for Stavros, who now must renegotiate the terms and conditions of his belonging, identity, roots, family and cultural narrative.

The film exemplifies a banal and mundane depiction of xenophobia and racism as experienced and expressed by ordinary people leading ordinary lives. Yet, the twist of an extraordinary event whereupon one of those racist xenophobes learns that he might very well be one of those people he hates, becomes the *divergent narrative* of how ethno-nationalism captures sheer destruction; in the latter case ironically to what the protagonist stands for. This is a satirical reality that bites deeply into the fragmented web of a multiculturalism in crisis, unfolding in a society drowning in constant crises, and exposes through the protagonist's story, the desperation for educational, policy and social attention to the ferocity of racism.

The sheer destructiveness of ethno-nationalist racist and xenophobic stances becomes an even more elusive node that brings together quite masterfully the life stories of four family members

in the film *Worlds Apart* (2015). While both parents and the two children are in some way involved with migrants, none have any idea of each other's implication, until death becomes the revealing trauma that brings tragic awareness. In remarkable tragic extremes, the father's activities are those as a member of a far-right group that physically assaults and aims to kill foreigners, while the mother, older son and younger daughter develop romantic relationships with foreigners. Beyond a simple melodrama, *Worlds Apart* offers a tragic triangle of a family narrative that sees the father as the apex of violent anti-immigrant actions, implicitly responsible for the death of his daughter, when she and her Syrian lover are caught during one such attacks in the abandoned former Athens airport, where a great number of refugees have found shelter among the ruins. The son whose marriage is on the rocks, initially unaware that his one-night stand with a Swedish executive freshly arrived in Athens to downsize the company he works for, will lead to his best friend taking his own life because of redundancy; and, the wife, a troubled over finances and her husband's bizarre behaviour, sixty year old housewife, struggling to make the weekly supermarket shop, has a mesmerising encounter with Sebastian, a retired German professor who is infatuated with her, as much as he is with Greek history.

Athens is the set for the film, depicting the tragically interwoven love/life stories of the four family members, and the evocative portrayal of an epoch saturated by poverty and violent tensions between the native and immigrant populations. There is a genuine emotional strain here, in how in/humanity is depicted, at the crossroads of migrant/native encounters. The first such encounter is somewhat stereotypical to the point of being formulaic in how it unfolds: Daphne, a young Greek woman (the daughter) is heading back home from one of her evening university classes when she is attacked by several male migrants. When Farris, a Syrian refugee, witnesses the incident, he comes to assist by chasing the attackers and eventually getting a hold of her stolen broken mobile. When their paths cross again on an Athenian bus,

the phone is returned, and a new romance begins. As indicated earlier, the tragic end to that relationship culminates with the violent incident which breaks out, and Daphne is shot by a bullet that was meant for Farris.

The second encounter revolves around the passionate relationship that unfolds during a one-night stand between Giorgos (the son) and Elise, a Swedish executive who has arrived in Athens as part of her efficiency portfolio to reduce the payroll of the company where Giorgos holds a management position. Their affair is intended to remain secretive and fun, but it becomes complicated when Giorgos pleads with Elise to spare his friend from being axed, news that would be devastating with the fact that the friend and his wife are expecting their first child. But tragedy does strike, and this is the friend's suicide mentioned earlier. Two stories so far, and the death toll added up to double the loss of human life.

The third and rather poignant story entangled in the plot is one depicting an unlikely romance between two sixty-year-olds who neither speaks the other's language but seem to have a compelling embodied magnetism that triggers emotions of friendship, compassion, tenderness. Maria is the wife and mother of the other three protagonists previously mentioned, and, although extremely reluctant to reciprocate the besotted feelings of Sebastian, the retired German professor of history who has recently moved to Greece, she is deeply moved by his genuine affection. But as the death of her daughter interjects this segment of the storied triangle, she stops going to the supermarket while Sebastian patiently visits the place every week, for a year, in the hope that Maria will turn up again. It is hard to envisage a different ending than that of drama, despair and loss; the dismantling of lives, feelings and futures. It is a mirror image of the crisis itself, exemplified by the toxic tentacles of racism, while the far right is engulfing Greece.

The study by Christopoulos et al. (2014: 10) mapping the penetration of ultra-right extremism, xenophobia and racism within the Greek State apparatus inclusive of the judiciary, the police, the military and the Church, asserts that ‘ultra-right ideology is deeply rooted in Greek political history. A major part of Greek political culture is based on a compact and continuous background of totalitarianism and authoritarianism’. Their study is not just an account of evidence for mapping the ultra-right within the Greek State, but primarily a testament to the urgent need to develop ‘a different strategy for resetting the country’. I concur with this pressing objective and would underscore that the country requires a *holistic* strategy to re-establish pedagogies of liberation from the oppressions of racisms and sexism that will rebuild inclusive citizenships for all (cf. Christou and Michail, 2021). In the concluding section we highlight how resistance can be re-conceptualised into pedagogic action.

Conclusion: solidarity revisited – resistance re-conceptualised

Critical praxis, solidarity, community resistance and ethical positionality in the hands of academic activists require movements beyond our ‘smug campus careers’ (cf. Fuller and Kitchin, 2004) in immersing energies and ideologies in the objective of social change. This is part and parcel of feminist pedagogies and critical political praxis. They are in a sense interrelated:

Feminist pedagogy is grounded in the primary goal of social change. The foundations of feminist pedagogy can be unlocked by looking at its origins in grassroots political activity. Women’s consciousness-raising groups that formed in the late 1960s were based on friendships, common political commitments, and discussions of shared experiences. Furthermore, they emphasized reliance on experience and feeling, sharing common experiences in collective leaderless groups, and the shared assumption that

understanding and theoretical analysis were the first steps towards revolutionary change. (Sayles-Hannon, 2007: 35)

The local and global rise of the Far Right demands a solid, sustained and critically formulated interdisciplinary feminist approach that requires attention, implementation and solidarity *now*. In the case of Greece, a twofold approach is required for social change involving feminist pedagogy in educational and social settings. First and foremost, the curriculum needs to be revisited and revised to incorporate inclusive learning that embraces diversity, equity and social justice through feminist principles. From primary, to secondary and even higher education programmes, students in Greece, apart from sharing the same classrooms and desks with migrant and minority students, there is a total lack of a holistic learning approach to promote principles of diversity in the curriculum. The idea here is teaching *to* and *through* ethno-cultural diversity and learning *with* feminist principles. Studies (Sakka, 2010: 98) investigating Greek primary and secondary teachers' cross-cultural awareness and views on cultural diversity showed 'the contradictory and dilemmatic character of teachers' attitudes towards cultural diversity and point to the need of implementing new teacher training programs that would incorporate not only strategies for teaching new curricula but teachers' needs as well, as in today's multicultural classroom'. In addition to facilitating diversity of learning, the introduction of feminist principles in learning can foster a culture of ethical global citizenship.

Bridging the divide among academic and activist feminism through the incorporation of feminist practice in everyday social and working life should be a primary goal of re-igniting the spark of contemporary feminism in Greece. While we applaud the efforts to showcase and celebrate the feminist movement in Greece in the period of what is termed 'Metapolitefsi' from 1974 (the re-constitution of democracy after a dark and deadly seven-year military junta) to 1990 in an exhibition (July-December 2017) at the Hellenic Parliament, it has become even more imperative to consider the importance of *feminism in Greece today*, in 2023. In

considering the importance of feminism today for Greece and future generations, past stigmatisation and current resistance needs to be dispelled with education, training, information and incorporation of its principles in everyday political and social life.

But when sexism, misogyny and gendered violence occurs in the public space of televised discussions even by the very politicians elected to represent citizens (Baboulias, 2013), one can only ponder alarmingly what happens in other workplaces as confirmed by participant observation and personal discussions with women/migrants in various employment spaces in Greece (cf. Gropas and Triandafyllidou, 2008). In terms of academic dialogue, by incorporating feminist interdisciplinary approaches we destabilise the prominence of Western *epistemology* that prevails in many disciplines (and most of the practices of academia) and the dominant *masculinist methodologies* within (Sunberg, 2003), to more effectively engage with diverse approaches and intercultural worldviews.

While the ‘Greek Spring’ (and summer) of 2011 was a promising fresh era of resistance that saw thousands of people taking to the Athenian streets and other large cities across the country in massive demonstrations, occupations and people’s assemblies, reclaiming democracy and dignity, with LGBTQ+ and feminist activism taking centre stage (e.g. Athanasiou, 2014), the current context more than a decade later has seen a numbness of action, reduced resistance and fragmented voices against fascism, racism, sexism, misogyny and femicide in Greece. The burden of idleness was particularly pronounced under a Left Radical Coalition government that should promote loud and clear gendered equity and justice. Very little has been done and while governments have changed, the first elected female head of state in Greece two years ago, the #MeToo Greece movement barely a year into public discourse and what Greece has seen during this period is effectively a woman murdered every month. That is, the number of women who were killed in episodes of domestic violence not only has doubled recently but also the

brutality of the killings in Greece last year shocked, while dominating coverage in the news media and, in some cases, made international headlines. So, change needs to happen *now*.

Notes

¹ Not from the author's work, but a different study.

² Since 2010, Greece is under the rule of the Troika (IMF, European Commission [EC], European Central Bank [ECB]), which rules under the terms of the financial bailout as designated through the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), a document expounding what is expected to be executed by the Greek government. The life and the future of eleven million people hang from the policies of the Troika, which are dominated by the German dictates of a severely punitive austerity characterised by deep cuts in wages and pensions and heavy taxation of individuals and businesses. Since 2009, salaries in the public sector have been cut up to over 50 percent, wages in the private sector have been reduced by 40 percent, and pensions have been cut up to 45 percent. From 2010 to 2013 the tax on the average income has increased by 25 percent, while the income of most people has gone down by over 29 percent. Taxation of real estate has increased by 552 percent. The value added tax was raised from 19 to 23 percent, and numerous other indirect taxes have been added or gone up. In 2014, revenue from tax increases imposed on businesses is expected to increase by 137.2 percent (Tzanos, 2015).

³ Halfway through the short documentary interview, at 10.40 minutes into the video, one of the self-identified white supremacists boasts at following the organising principles of the Golden Dawn party: <https://news.vice.com/story/vice-news-tonight-full-episode-charlottesville-race-and-terror>

⁴ For instance, 'Golden Dawn, NYC', a short documentary directed by Richard Ledes, 2014: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdCEY2uNk88>

⁵ The violent and despair driven public suicide death of the pensioner caused a nationwide outpouring of anger and grief (Kitsantonis, 2012; Smith, 2012).

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