Acts of caring in the shadow of violence: Reconstruction of moral masculinities among Greek leftist volunteers

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Abstract:

Recently Greece has been stuck in a state of economic and humanitarian crisis. Amid a volatile environment, some men among the Greek radical left negotiated forms of masculinity in which glorified memories of heroes, political performance on the streets, and solidarity of caring emerged. While they locally resisted European economic policies, and increasing xenophobia, they also reconstructed a moral masculinity in a hyper-masculine environment.

This paper is based on ethnographic fieldwork carried out in Athens, Greece in 2012 and 2014-2015. The analysing is based on participation in general assemblies, demonstrations, spending time in hangouts and volunteering at refugee oriented sites. 36 informal and 15 in-depth interviews with radical left Greeks were conducted.

In occupied refugee spaces, many Greek radical left men embedded the role of the caring and protecting with the *Solidary with refugees*' grassroots movement, while they coped with their own vulnerability in a precarious environment. This was done through a shared every-day space with the refugees; through the discourse of respected autonomy and humanity; and emphasised class struggle. Thus, a hegemony of anti-capitalistic moral masculinity was emerged. However, with the practice of protective patrols thought more suitable for valiant men; discourse of the

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cowardice of members of the xenophobic Golden Dawn party; and calling for recognition of young heroic Greek leftist male suffering, certain traits of hyper-masculinity was nurtured. Thus, supporting gender segregation practices, as the cooking and cleaning was mainly done by the women and the migrant men. It is worth noting that most local women would uphold this segregated practice while some men and women resisted. We therefore argue that in the space 'in-between' hegemonic and hyper-masculinities, the morality is negotiated.

Keywords: Moral masculinities, hyper-masculinities, solidarity and resistance.

Şiddetin Gölgesinde Yardımsever Eylemler: Atina'daki Radikal Solcular Arasında Erkeklerin Toplumsal Cinsiyet İnşası

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Özet:

Yunanistan son zamanlarda ekonomik ve insani bir krize saplanmış durumda. Dengesiz bir atmosferin ortasında Yunan radikal solundaki bazı erkekler, övülen kahramanlık anılarının, sokaklardaki siyasi performansın ve yardım dayanışmasının ortaya çıktığı erkeklik biçimlerini müzakere ettiler. Avrupa'nın ekonomi politikalarına ve yabancı düşmanlığını arttırmasına yerel olarak direnirken, aynı zamanda hiper-erkeksi bir ortamda ahlaki bir erkekliği yeniden inşa ettiler.

Bu yazı, 2012 ve 2014-2015 yıllarında Yunanistan'ın Atina şehrinde gerçekleştirilen etnografik saha çalışmasına dayanmaktadır. Analiz, genel kurul toplantılarına, gösterilere, mekanlarda geçirilen zamana ve mülteci odaklı alanlardaki gönüllü etkinliklere dayanmaktadır. Radikal sol Yunanlılarla 36 resmi olmayan görüşme ve 15 derinlemesine görüşme yapılmıştır.

İşgal altındaki mülteci mekânlarında pek çok Yunan radikal solcu güvencesiz bir ortamda kendi savunmasızlığıyla başa çıkarken, *Mültecilerle Dayanışma* halk hareketiyle birlikte yardım ve koruma rolüne de girdi. Bu, mültecilerle paylaşılan gündelik mekanlar aracılığıyla, hatrı sayılır özerklik ve insanlık söylemi aracılığıyla ve sınıf mücadelesi vurgusuyla yapıldı. Böylece anti-kapitalist ahlaki erkekliğin egemenliği ortaya çıktı. Öte yandan cesur erkekler için daha uygun olduğu düşünülen koruyucu

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devriyeler uygulaması; yabancı düşmanı Altın Şafak partisi üyelerinin alçaklık söylemi; ve genç kahraman Yunan solcu erkek çilekeşliğinin tanınması için yapılan çağrı ile birlikte hiper-erkekliğin belirli özellikleri de geliştirildi. Böylece yemek yapmanın ve temizliğin çoğunlukla kadınlar ve göçmen erkekler tarafından yapılması gibi cinsiyet ayrımcılığı uygulamaları da desteklenmiş oldu. Bazı erkekler ve kadınlar direnirken, bu ayırıcı uygulamayı çoğu yerel kadının desteklediğini de belirtmek gerekir. Sonuç olarak biz, hegemonik ve hiper-erkeklikler arasındaki boşlukta ahlakın müzakere edildiğini savunuyoruz.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ahlaki erkeklikler, hiper-erkeklikler, dayanışma ve direniş.

I n February 2015 the center of Athens became a place of jubilation as Athenians rallied to celebrate their resistance to the austerity measures imposed on their country since 2010 by the so-called "troika" (the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund). This moment of hope occurred just after Syriza: The Coalition of the Radical Left, a party founded in 2004, won the parliamentary election for the first time in Greece. At that time, the Syntagma Square, situated in front of the Greek Parliament, was full of people of all ages and dressed in all kinds of colorful warm clothes. All metro stations were open instead of being barred off and filled with teargas, which had been a tactic often used by the police to control demonstrations in the past. In the past, national hymns had often been broadcasted over the square by governmental forces before organized protests, so as to invoke nationalism but during this jubilation, international songs were played, such as *Sodade*, sung by the immigrant female singer Cesária Évora. Moreover, posters celebrating multiculturalism were paraded. One of the posters read: "We are all human," representing a common rhetoric of shared temporal vulnerability and the inclusive space of solidarity.

Two weeks later, Muhammed, a Pakistani man committed suicide in the Amygdaleza detention center for asylum seekers located near the police academy in the town Acharnes, a short distance from Athens. After being tortured repeatedly by members of the academy, he hanged himself from the bars of his bed, becoming the most recent victim of the detainment policy. Members of *Solidarity with Refugees* (a new initiative among activists in Athens, based in Exarhia) staged a protest, demanding the immediate closure of the detention centers and the release of the detainees being held in inhumane conditions. The reaction of the usually aggressive police confused the protesters; just weeks after Syriza formed a government with Anel: The independent Greeks, a small conservative party, the police had been forbidden to use excessive force,[1] and on this occasion only temporarily restrained two female protesters and one male. "They don't know what to do" said Yiannis, one of the leading Greek male protesters, "This is so strange. I have never seen them [the

police] act like this before. And it is like the anarchists don't know what to do!" The activists had become accustomed to reshaping their performances in reaction to persistent violent encounters with the police – therefore, the absence of action on the part of the police came as a surprise. These events marked the beginning of a period during which there was a sudden absence of state violence. Still, as the summer of 2015 brought close to a million refugees to Greek shores, male activists saw the need for protection work and, consequently, a reorientation of their masculinity.

This article, based on ethnography, explores how the European border-zone affects masculine formation among Greek activists in the context of their own struggles against neoliberal projects, the recent increase of refugees and women's participation in the grassroots activism. We will highlight the effect of the presence of refugees, and use the term hybrid masculinities (Demetriou, 2001) to propose an exploration of moral masculinities on the margins of Europe. In Demerious' theory, "hybrid masculinities" refers to practices from diverse masculinities that unite to form a hybrid bloc constituting hegemonic masculinity in a particular setting. In this way, the article will contribute to the recent field of transnational masculinities which focuses on how gender relations are formed within and across borders in context to regional, national and global positionalities, economies and flow of images (Hearn, Blagojevic and Harrison, 2013). We will demonstrate how our participants' masculinity was informed by male symbolism embedded in the historical resistance to the destructive forces of capitalism, while at the same time they sought security with others in similar vulnerable positions. During the summer of 2015, some of our participants travelled to Lesbos to assist the newly arrived refugees. The social anthropologists, professor Evthymios Papataxiarchis (2016) framed members of this initiative as solidarians. In line with the discourse of our participants, we will be using this term to identify them. The values the solidarians embraced revolve around anti-austerity protests, resistance to neoliberal projects and participation in collectively occupied spaces with an emphasis on inclusive practices

(Rozakou, 2016). Contrary to global humanitarianism, they perceived humanism (gr. *anthropia*) as less corrupt, with horizontal decisions made through assemblies. However, the vulnerability of refugees caused the solidarians to reconstruct masculine dignity through a discourse of what it means to be human, while embedding the role of protector. Hybrid masculinities emerged from an ambiguous navigation of differences, defined by the naturalization of motherhood and the weaker resistance of women, migrants and queer people towards capitalistic practices of consumption. Therefore, we will demonstrate, in the case of leftist male volunteers in Athens, how hegemonic gendered identity was reconstructed as moral masculinities on the semi-periphery of Europe.

Precarious masculinities in temporal disposition

T he concept of hegemonic masculinities, most notably used by Raewyn Connell in the 1980s, describes how an ideal 'real' man is created within patriarchal societies, keeping the gender hierarchy in balance, elevating the social status of men conforming to the image, and subordinating women and other men (2005, p. 75). Scholars have criticised Connell's concept for being too comprehensive, singular and static to apply to discourses, practices and images of diverse men in their daily existence (Beasley, 2008; Hearn, 2004). Men's negotiations with changing gender relations and various intersectionalities tend to lead to a complex formation of differences and commonalities (Melström, 2015), therefore the focus should be on the process and practices that influence men's gender identities (Hearn, 2015; Fedele, 2016). Concepts such as hybrid masculinities (Demetriou, 2001), and emergent masculinities (Inhorn, 2012) have been suggested in order to capture the complexity of moulding hegemonic masculinities in the everyday life of men as they struggle with new political landscapes. The difference between hybridity and emergence is that, as Marcia Inhorn (2012) explains, despite harsh realities, there are emerging patterns among men that point towards more gender equality, while Demetrakis Demetriou (2001) believes men belonging to the hegemonic bloc adopt bits and pieces of the newly

visible political identities, such as embracing fashion that spurs from gay culture (p. 350). In this way, privileged men maintain power through a dialogue with marginalized groups who are gaining social recognition, while simultaneously appearing more egalitarian. As such, many men may be continually searching for a way to be perceived as good humans without losing their security inside local hegemonic structures (Bridges, 2014; Jóhannsdóttir & Gíslason, 2017). We believe that the hybrid masculinity is also formed among men outside the elite and even in opposition to other hegemonic masculinities as a form of resistance as men's struggles must always be analysed in global and local context.

Following this line of thought, Marina Blagojević (2013) highlights how scholarly work tend to refer to men in the Balkans within patriarchal stereotypes of barbarism without consideration of the effect of neoliberal governmentality on local gender regimes (see also Lindisfarne & Neale, 2016). Thus, the men are commonly viewed as unable to be victims, despite their fragile economic positions and emotional losses. To demonstrate this point, Blagojević shows that the countries in the semi-periphery are in a continuous state of de-development, and people in these countries are constantly pressured to "catch up" in regard to the image of good finances, material possessions, new technology, responsible government, and gender equality. This, she believes, affects the formation of hegemonic masculinities, as men are afraid of acquiring the status of 'surplus humans'. This surplus represents humans who are disposable labourers according to neoliberal policies, or people of such low means that they are not counted as consumers. They are therefore in danger of being treated as non-human in regards to rights and responsibility (Grosfoguel, 2016). In contrast, managers of global markets and labour are considered civilized modern men.

This effect of de-development on masculinities has been demonstrated in several Greek studies. Aliki Angelidou and Dimitra Kofti's (2014) research on Greek male business managers, for example, indicated that when the Greek economy was apparently booming, Greek males tended to identify themselves as the bearers of neoliberal

civilization to former Soviet countries. In a similar context, the Greek media emphasized that the nation had finally taken its place among the major nations during the 2004 Olympic Games held in Athens (Dalakoglou, 2013), and entering the EU was perceived as a step towards morally civilizing the Greek economy (Gkintidis, 2016). However, when the economic crisis hit in 2008, it affected the global, regional and local image of the Greek man as a successful provider, and is believed to have contributed to the rising rate of male suicides (Antonakakis & Collins, 2014). This is also emphasized in Judith Butler's and Athina Athanasiou's (2013) discussions of dispossession in Greece during the economic crisis, as many Greeks felt de-humanized, or that they were being treated "like animals". However, there are several ways people reconstruct their identities to resist these social forces.

In her history of the Greek left since the First World War, Neni Panourgiá (2009) sheds significant light on the ways in which the identities among the Greek left were formed in resistance to the Greek conservatives that were supported by Britain and the United States of America. She argues that this created an ambiguous relationship between Greek leftists and the dominant Western governmentality, while nourishing an underground working-class culture. This is reflected in Blagojević's (2013) work, as she notes that the topography of the Balkans creates a discourse of 'us', as people within the semi-periphery and 'them,' meaning other Western people. Though Greek national identities have long been formed by distancing themselves from their colonial oppressors, the Ottomans (Hatziprokopiou & Evergeti, 2014), we believe, as Heath Capot (2014) has demonstrated, that with the recent increase of migrants from the south, be they refugees, immigrants or irregular migrants, a new level of complexity has been added to the discourse of 'others,' meaning migrants in relation to 'us' as Greeks and 'them' as Europeans.

The concept of hospitality in relation to migrants has been critically examined by various scholars (Tsimouris, 2014; Voutira, 2016) in Greece. It has been shown that among men, the honour is accrued by the host if the stranger integrates successfully (Cheliotis, 2014;

Papataxiarchis, 1991). This paternalistic treatment can further be seen in EU refugee procedures, and its moral and economic ambiguity is well-documented by Capot (2014) in Greece. However, Katerina Rozakou (2016) has shown that movements of solidarity with refugees in Greece seek to build a bridge of shared humanity. Within these movements, a benevolent attitude is fiercely resisted with a moral code of respecting the stranger's position, wishes, and autonomy. Nonetheless, there is a subtle encouragement towards refugees adapting to the local norms (Rozakou, 2012). Our results concur with Rozakou's, though we focus on the gender performances and power hierarchy forming within these solidarity movements.

While the hegemonic masculinities among the police and the neo-Nazi political party Golden Dawn were based on xenophobia, misogyny and nationalism (Tsimouris, 2015), we will demonstrate that the forms of masculinity among the solidarians is impacted by their own disposition made tangible by violent encounters with the police and Golden Dawn members, and further by the recent arrivals of refugees and other migrants, who are themselves dependent on the ambiguous moral economy within European states. Thus, there is a reconstruction of moral masculinities,[2] which are infused with values such as respecting the human right to a dignified life, resistance to consumerism and neoliberal hierarchies, and lastly, solidarity embedded with the notion of protecting those in a weaker position. As such, there are emerging patterns that tend towards respecting the political struggles of women, queer people, and migrants, but hegemonic masculine power is re-negotiated through the heightened value of spontaneous protests and performances of men on the streets. Stuck in the midst of global neoliberal projects in the semi-periphery, solidarian men have thus negotiated moral masculinity in a hybrid manner that responds to their social and political context.

Methodology and methods

T his article is based on ethnographic methodology that relies mainly on long-term observations of the participants, in order to understand the participants' worldviews, while at the same time remaining aware of the historical context, in order to gain a holistic perspective (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). The main fieldwork was conducted from June 2014 to September 2015[3] in Athens, where the first author, Árdís, participated in leftist political struggles, spoke out publicly for human rights and volunteered at refugee-orientated sites 3-5 times a week. This methodology should be considered engaged ethnography (Low & Merry, 2010) as it takes a stance alongside marginalized voices. During this fieldwork numerous photos and videos were taken to gain a holistic perspective of bodily performances (Pink, 2009), alongside meticulous field notes and reflective diaries (Davis, 2008). Árdís was open with the participants about the topic of her research and obtained the necessary consent in adherence with professional ethical guidelines. Interlocutors who were involved in solidarity practices with refugees were identified and approached through networks among the leftists. 15 in-depth interviews were conducted with people, in English and Greek, and a further 36 individuals were interviewed during participant observations, between the ages of 20 and 60. Overall our participants were equally men and women, mostly cisgender but not all. The methods of Kathy Charmaz's (2006) guide to Grounded Theory were used to analyse the written material in order to spot new themes emerging during the research, such as the discourse around being human. As such, Charmaz's emphasis on process and reflexivity was well-suited to this study. Reflecting on the researcher's power, a counter-method of assigning pseudonyms was used, as interlocutors were asked to choose their own secret names based on their childhood role models. To minimise exposure and ensure their safety, we will *only* describe our participants briefly as they are cited in the article.

Special attention was paid to a grassroots movement given the pseudonym Kentro, whose members participated in launching the

initiative of *Solidarity with Refugees*. Their headquarters are in Exarhia, a district in the centre of Athens generally referred to as the anarchist area, which is embedded with radical leftist fractions and reconciliations (Kallianos, 2013). Some locals have created a haven for migrants of various ethnicities at Kentro headquarters, and offer social activities, such as free language lessons, a community kitchen and coffee/tea/beer hangouts. The movement is community-based, holds regular meetings, and does not accept donations from either state or international organizations, though there are tensions around the political meanings of spontaneous and anti-structural sociality in the movement (Rosakou, 2008). Kentro serves as an umbrella for other grassroots movements, and Kentro members participate in organizing various meetings and activities that focus on human rights in Greece. This space includes locals, migrants of Asian, Arabic and African descent, as well as Europeans. Some of our participants lived in Exarhia, while others came to seek social communities there. Their leftist political affiliations tended to be fluid, and their involvement with refugees of varied temporality, but all were passionate about horizontal practices. As such, their political identities evolved around anti-authoritarianism with high scepticism of governmental structures and leading politicians.

The article will first describe the symbolic space of Exarhia, and then explore how the masculine effect of heroism is both elevated and resisted. We will then discuss the ways in which the participants negotiated their own vulnerability and that of others, and lastly, we will show that the participation of women, queers and migrants was marked by motherhood and weaker resistance towards consumption. Within the discussion we will draw this together as to show how the hybrid hierarchy were formed through moral masculinities.

Exarhia: a historical space of resistance

Panourgiá's (2009) historical ethnography shows that many of the leftist sufferings within families in Greece have been silenced. Still, she reflects that some memories are nourished and continue

to influence men across generations. One of these legends is of the student uprising in 1973 against the Junta dictatorship. The students had sought refuge within the Polytechnic University (positioned inside Exarhia), but the Junta sent in army tanks to break down the gates, resulting in many casualties. This contributed to a public revolt that ultimately led to the Junta's downfall in 1974. *Politechneio* is therefore a historical symbol of resistance, and a contemporary gathering point before protests. It is a landmark that has a special significance for locals, though the area is full of intricate and contested places of meaning[4]. Exarhia is also linked to resistance as the site of protests in 2008, when thousands of youths alongside their teachers and parents, protested every day for a month in front of the parliament against police brutality, government corruption, and desolate future prospects (Astrinaki, 2009). The protest was ignited after a police officer shoot a youth, Alexandros Grigopolous, inside Exarhia. The area, moreover, has an ambiguous reputation in regards to drugs, as there is a tendency to discredit the leftists as criminals in the right wing media and political discourses, to justify the use of state violence against them (Dalakoglou, 2013).

Before Syriza rose to power, few of the city's internal borders were, therefore, as keenly observed as Exarchia, where the presence of armed policemen was continuous, and even more so during protests. Strategically, the (predominantly male) police were assigned to the area to protect the offices of political parties in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, during the fall of 2012 the police launched its operation 'Xenios Zeus', with the publicly stated aim of reducing criminality on the streets and detaining 'illegal' migrants (Voutira, 2016). However, in practice, this operation involved massive sweeps of non-white people, and was identified as racial profiling by Human Rights Watch in Greece (2013). As part of this operation, the police would launch sudden attacks on the district with tear gas and clubs, enclosing the area with large police buses used to detain and forcefully remove people, migrants and protesting locals alike.

Exarchia was, therefore, in a continuous shadow of violence, while most locals both resisted and made an effort to reconstruct the area as

autonomous and safe. As such, in this social space of protests, the masculine role held a greater social prestige than the feminine, as we will demonstrate below, drawing on fieldnotes and interviews.

"Alexis, you live, you are our guide": the unifying young male martyrs

T he effect of male heroism on male youth or marginalized men is well-documented within Greece (Herzfeld, 1988; Kornetis, 2010; Papailias, 2003). Similarly, heroic tales of resistance were dominant among our informants. Or, as Gabriel, an interlocutor who is in his twenties, said: "It's somehow complicated, because they [leftist men] have stereotypes, I think, in the present from the past." Gabriel was from a rural village but came to Athens to study and was residing with his aunt in Exharhia. He was tall, thin, with wavy dark hair and was considered quite beautiful among the local population. In many places in Greece the image of the young, tall, unspoiled, beautiful man is most appreciated (Loizos, 1994). Among the leftists in Athens, this takes the form of the exaltation of male youths whose future has been suspended, particularly if they have met violent deaths at the hands of the police or the Golden Dawn.

Most notable was previously mentioned Alexandros Grigoropoulos, who was celebrating his friend's birthday in the district when he was shot, at the age of 15, by a police officer in December 2008. During our fieldwork, it was common to see banners idealizing Alexandros at demonstrations, with slogans such as: "Alexis you live, you are our guide" (gr. *Αλεξη ζεις, εσύ μασ οδηγεις*). Bruce, an interlocutor in his forties, was amongst those men who often carried banners in demonstrations. He was muscular, tall, with gray hair and beard stubs. He had some inheritance that he could live off and had recently bought a house in Exarhia were he was living with his girlfriend at the time. During one demonstration, Bruce, elaborated that Alexandros was not called Alexis while living, but after his death the nickname was used as to bring his commonality closer, making him a hero who comes from one of

us, and could have easily been you or your child. Or as Freddie, a musician in his thirties, recalls:

> And for me, it was like a personal, shocking, experience, it could have happened to me, or the other one beside me. It was a place that I was walking by every day. I was there three hours before the shooting.

Thus, 'Alexis' became a unifying symbol after years of apathy and political factions on the left. Moreover, Alexandros's death marked an increase in spontaneous actions against state violence or enforcements (Brekke, Dalakoglou & Vradis, 2014). Even though Alexandros did not go to Exarchia with the intent to protest, his death has been reconstructed as a sacrifice, and elevated to heroism among some leftists.

Alexandros's friend, Nikos Romanos, also became a hero after he was arrested in 2013 for attacking a bank, claiming it as an act of resistance to capitalism. After his arrest, and that of his collaborators, photographs of them severely beaten, taken on a mobile phone, were widely circulated in leftist social media circles as evidence of police brutality. In November 2014, Nikos went on a hunger strike to demand the right to attend university exams outside the prison. Coinciding with the six-year anniversary of the death of Alexandros, major protests took place to show support for Nikos. Protesters repeatedly shouted an old leftist slogan, "The passion for freedom is stronger than all the cells" (gr. *το πάθος για τη λευτεριά είναι δυνατότερο απ´ όλα τα κελιά*), celebrating his resistance and indicating that the life of a young man should be one of mobility and of autonomy from neoliberal forces. The Romanos protest also occurred at the same time as young Syrian males had organized a sit-in for refugees in front of the Greek parliament (Ingvars & Gíslason, 2018). These protests would often merge, particularly as the Greek protesters would walk past the Syrians and rephrase their slogans to indicate that the borders were the Syrians' prisons, and they too should have freedom of movement.

Often this resistance towards state violence and treatment of refugees would be combined in a martyr, as in the case of the rapper, Pavlos Fyssas, who is remembered for his public performances in

support of migrant rights. He was stabbed to death in 2013 by members of Golden Dawn while the police stood idly by. The solidarians viewed his murder as a show of cowardice by Golden Dawn members, whose strategy involved targeting an individual and attacking in larger numbers. One of our informants was Freddie. He was in his thirties, a musician of medium height, with dark curly hair and a beard. He found the anarchist movements in Greece to be stuck in its own dogma, and had left to study abroad with his girlfriend. Still, he returned regularly to contribute to struggle. His views of the Golden Dawn members were recurrent in the interviews:

> Who would have imagined that this, these sub-humans [Golden Dawn] would form a political party that would enter the parliament? … This started out as a terrorist group, they were wearing swastikas, they were beating up fellow pupils and foreigners, always attacking in groups like twenty against one.

In contrast, the young heroes of the leftists were perceived as brave because of their vulnerability, owing to the higher numbers of opponents or the state monopoly on legal violence. Thus, the use of protective violence was morally justified, and fascists, Nazis, and police officers were marked as non-human, alongside neoliberals. As such, male heroes were exalted through memorial walks and tokens raised in their names, through references to their deaths in public speeches and writings directed towards resistance, and through billboards, and banners displayed during protests. What was absent (or less visible) in these exaltations of heroism were women. Moreover, when the death of a migrant was the occasion for a resistance march, there was also less Greek leftist attendance. Women and migrant men were in this way included but less exalted.

"The political supermarket": navigating hegemonic masculinities

Participation in protests gave our participants social credibility as young men, in order to prove their hunger for justice. Or, as Trotsky, an

informant in his thirties, thin, medium height, dark hair, unemployed and living with friends, explained while sitting in an anarchist's bar organizing protests: "Energy is life". By this he meant that though he had no prospects for a decent job, it did not matter as he could use his energy and time to fight for the social reorganization of state practices and oppose European austerity measures. Thus, it is not just what men did but how they performed their normative gender role (Butler, 1990), and how it was valued as a resistance to other men (Herzfeld, 1985).

Within the interviews it was discernible that solidarians would situate themselves against a certain style that was popular in Kolonaki, area to the west of Exarhia and was associated with neoliberal politicians and businessmen, and Gazi, a gentrified party area to the south of the city centre, connected to the consumer youth:

> …in the nineties everyone wanted to become a yuppie. … I would say that brands like Levi's and Benetton back then, Timberland and all this hot friends' period in late '80s. … Then everyone decided that they wanted to buy brands and it became a status symbol wearing Timberlands. .. But in politics back then, everybody wore a suit and tie and Chinese shoes. (Bruce)
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> I used to hate men of that style more than the girls [of that style]. (Yannis)

The appearance of Golden Dawn members was identified through a militaristic appearance, or as Freddie would say: "Neo Nazis with Swastikas, they were looking like, bold, with military outfits in Anoraks." And as such, there were a lot of resentments among activists towards Golden Dawn members for colluding with the police by dressing up like anarchists in demonstration with the purpose to ignite violent confrontations. This was identified in Youtube videos.

At the same time, the anarchist performance and appearance was impacted by the militarization of the space, as black clothes became common in the struggle with the police. The clothes were used to veil their faces, so that shielded by their numbers, they could not be identified by state apparatuses (Astrinaki, 2009). One of the more

extreme anarchist groups was even called 'Black Block' (Kornetis, 2010). As such, the clothing was used to identify a commitment and, therefore, created a position of difference among the radical leftist, or as Freddie remarks:

> They confine themselves to a sect, a squad, and also a lot of outfit and style. If you weren't wearing black clothes and shoes, black red... "You are not a real anarchist, you are not wearing black, you are not doing this and you are not going there. You are not as much anarchist as we are."... They were, you know, hooded and like: "Are you ready for...". They were ready for like battle and me and my friends were a bit like more ok, we follow up but we were never into vandalizing without a reason.

Black clothing could therefore be a visible indicator of how far into violent struggles the person was willing to go and her alliance with extremism, which is in line with Christensen's (2011) analysis of hyper-masculinities among Danish leftists. She identified hyper-masculine formation through men bragging and celebrating the use of violence. Our interlocutors would, however, distance themselves from violence, as seen in quote above. That said, a certain look of the male anarchist was believed to be appealing to women, or as Freddie phrased it: "A lot of girls would be attracted to the long hair and the beard, and the black, and the physiography of the anarchist". This would be confirmed in the interviews with women as they would discuss finding men committed to the cause most attractive. However, it was not simply about wearing black, but a particular kind, as this piece of field-note shows:

> Gabriel takes off his scarf and black leather jacket before sitting down. Jason comments on the jacket, that he has not seen it before. Gabriel says he just bought it yesterday in the *Kilo* [second hand store]. He remarks on how it is in good quality even if it is used and tells us he got it for only 10 Euros. He smiles broadly. The jacket gets shown around and Jason, Hussain and Mary admire it.

So used black clothes held special value. However, this embedded underground tendency towards wearing black was also resisted, for example, by people showing up in demonstrations in pink, and disagreeing when gays were shamed for wearing feminine fashionable clothes. Many of our interlocutors would recall how they were teased for being feminine or sissies, because of the kinds of drinks they ordered, the jobs they held, the music they played, the places they liked to hang out, and the people they associated with. Most said that they considered this kind of teasing sexist and counter to inclusive practices. This shows that there were ambiguous morals among the men when it came to the hyper performance of the masculine hegemony. This is clear in Gabriel's negotiation of a complex blend of masculinities:

> They easily put a label on someone, if he doesn't participate in political parties or groups. Or they say: This is like other Greek people who only care about money, eating and having fun. It is not that exactly. Some people don't participate [in protests] because they don't consume, I say, from that political supermarket! ... I can't understand, for example, how an anarchist can wear an army jacket or suit. How can this suit your ideas? Or how can you be like a macho ... like a member of Golden Dawn on steroids. ... I think it is sexist again, what it is to be a man, to be tough ... all of this.

Gabriel's choice of words, such as "consume" and "supermarket" demonstrates that he follows the hegemony against consumerism though he distances himself from the hyper masculine performance, despite buying and wearing the black leather jacket. Moreover, he recognizes the paradox of gendered oppression among the leftists, and is trying to make space for an alternative masculine practice without losing respect among his peers.

The examples discussed in this section suggest that commitment, bravery, sacrifice, public street performances are highly valued among the activists. However, our interlocutors would mitigate such practices, as they don't want to be viewed as oppressive themselves. Therefore, the

men's sense of vulnerability, their own and others', needs to be considered contextually, as we will show in the next section.

"It is a human right not to use money": a masculine negotiation of vulnerability

Our interlocutor Kal-el, in his sixties, was in many ways representative of the older generation among the solidarians, a community in which he was greatly respected due to his care for others and for fighting the Junta in the 1970's. He was soft spoken, displayed an appreciation for women's struggle for equality, and had some health issues to deal with. He divorced in his later years and moved closer to his ailing mother to assist her, as he was greatly concerned about her well-being. Austerity measures have severely impacted the welfare state in Greece, and thus family support has become crucial (Karamessini, 2012). Our discussions highlighted the economic and emotional aspects of the family that were deeply in his mind, revealing his vulnerability in dealing with his situation.

Kal-el's account reflects a recurrent theme among our participants: emotions following the loss of a loved one, coupled with the men's concern that they would be unable to take care of their family members, such as parents or current/prospective partners or children. These worries were impacted by the high unemployment rate, the precariousness of the labour market, and patronage within Greek universities, which negatively affected men's prospects of gaining entry to higher levels of education. Thus, men would renegotiate the value of what it meant to be a good human being in today's Greece. For example, Bruce, who had some inheritance but little prospect of a permanent job, stated: "It is a human right not to use money. I mean people die out of money, out of stress, out of pressure, out of debts." Bruce's repugnance for capitalism was also embedded in his own loss, as he believed his father's death was indirectly caused by capitalism:

> My father's death came out of some kind of economic
> collapse. So, we all, in our family subconsciously, think it

> was ... business killed him. He was such a nice guy, soft spoken, light, honest, da da da, what was he doing in shipping business! I mean they are all like gangsters. So finally, they ended up ripping him off, and two, three years after that he died. So subconsciously we had in mind that business is the killing thing that kills you.

Besides blaming capitalism for his father's death, Bruce characterizes men within the shipping business as gangsters or as inhuman, due to their harshness towards his father. In a similar way, Freddie explained that in his youth he felt threatened because of increased attacks on his leftist friends and school mates in the neighbourhood of Kypseli, located to the north of Exarhia, by Golden Dawn members, whom he characterizes as sub-human. At that time, he had recently lost his mother, was rebelling against his father and sought out the anarchist district to find people with common interests:

> I remember the first time I went to the old square in 1995. ... There were punks and people listening to rock music and it was an open square. ... they were drinking beers, it was like, I think I will never forget that moment, really. ... And some friends of mine who were a bit of, you know, long hair, were like: "Come on man, why do you still hang around in your neighborhood now with all the fascists. This is the place to be!"

In this way, our interlocutors would describe loss and vulnerability while distancing themselves from nationalistic and/or neoliberal men, indicting how they would both relocate and renegotiate their masculinities. Partly this was done to find a sense of safety. This further shows that the status of 'surplus humans', that is, the non-manager or non-consumer (Blagojević, 2013) was negotiated by embedding the discourse of human rights, which was the dominant discourse used to fight for the rights of the refugees.

"A human problem": impact of others' vulnerability

Most Athenians seemed to realize the harsh realities faced by refugees, during the Syrians' sit-in protest in Syntagma Square in December 2014 (Ingvars & Gíslason, 2018). However, the solidarians had been aware of the struggles of refugees for some years. While both groups were in precarious positions, there was bound to be some hierarchy due to citizenship rights, local networks and knowledge of the place. To give some examples, volunteer teachers at Kentro were recommended to have a list of students' numbers in their phones to advise them to keep safe if confrontation broke out in the neighbourhood. And through mobile networking, solidarians (more commonly males) were also on constant alert to react to distress calls within the city. Moreover, motorcycle groups would arrive quickly at places where there was conflict. As such, the vulnerability of others gave some men a positive role to embody, including an element of benevolence. This is well described in Bruce's words about how he came to help with immigrants' and refugees' struggles, during an occupation and a hunger strike of primarily North African workers in Athens in 2011:

> We stayed for 45 days with them, tried to play the role of the friendly guy who would ask them about their family and their country, their life, their hobbies, the music that they like. … To be kind to someone by being interested in more than their ethnicity and immigrant status. This is a guy who is interested in what kind of music I like. Or how I like to party, what girlfriends I had. … The human side. And I think it helped a lot. … So, I was really kind of feeling like I did something important.

However, some men did not perform this benevolent role without reflecting on the morality of hierarchical differences in status. Our participant Yiannis was in his thirties, tall, muscular, with short black hair, and living with his pregnant wife in Exarhia. His education was in vocational training and he had some part time work. He explained that

he refused to define his working alongside refugees in terms of a paternalistic impulse:

> I have discussed this issue [of assisting migrants] with other people, and some of them told me that 'I feel strong when I help someone who has problems, and I become the person who solves their problems'. And I had to decline this way of thinking. It is their way of thinking, not mine. [Later he then goes onto say] … It concerns all the people … above ethnicities, nationalities. … I think first we are human and we are in the same class.

In this way, there was a tendency to see humanity as a common class struggle and, despite good intentions, to gloss over hierarchical positions. Furthermore, as Jack, another musician, who was in his twenties, self-identified as queer, was single, short, with black hair, quick movements and seeking a scholarship to study abroad, said, the aspect of humanity was commonly considered to be above gender:

> I don't really think that we have to separate a man from the women, because it's all about being a human. So, the question should be what it takes to be a good human to one another.

This reflects an inclusive discourse pattern, and shows how volunteerism, in the sense of sharing the burden of your fellow humans' fragility, has a growing social value among leftist men in Athens (Rozakou, 2016). In this way, the ethnic and gender distinctions tended to collapse into the idea of shared humanity. Still the gendered elements of the word human were recognizable. For example, when Gabriel was describing traditional gender roles he said: "Man needs to be tough, man needs to be rude, man needs to be **not kind** [his emphasis]"; and later, when he was discussing emotional attachment and responsibility of the male solidarians when it came to romantic relationships, he said: "So as a human being nobody can be perfect." Thus, a hard man was viewed as traditionally restrictive and in the opposite of the vulnerable female or someone in need of care. However, being human was to acknowledge

one's own fragility even as a man. In this way the men could re-negotiate their masculine role.

Embedding the caring role with horizontal dialogues, thus, points towards new emerging masculinities (Inhorn, 2012), but, alongside the protest performance, the gender relations tended to reproduce local hegemonic masculinities, as we will demonstrate further in the last section.

"Neither a slave nor a lady": a gendered and ethnic politics of difference

As we have shown, in the everyday life of solidarians, participating in protest and embedding the role of protector or guide provided the social affirmation for men. Even so, the solidarian women negotiated their own power among the men. To show how gender relations impacted the men's negotiation of gender, we will draw forth some examples of women's roles, starting with the following piece of field note from a protest in November 2014:

> Demetra showed up and noticed that again she was the only gray haired one. By this she meant she was the oldest woman showing up. We talked a little about this and recollected that an older active teacher sometimes shows up, and in 2012 an old lawyer sometimes showed up. Demetra told me she likes Exarhia a lot, for she feels there is more activity going on and she likes to be active, though her husband is more conservative, and that is why they do not live there. When their sons were younger they moved out of Exarhia as she did not feel safe there with them … Her husband thinks she is too old to be acting like this, but it does not seem to stop her. …she likes to meet all kinds of people while he mingles with close friends and family.

Interestingly, women over approximately fifty seem to be claiming space within political meetings and everyday actions among the solidarians in Greece, alongside younger women. However, their power was located

within their femininity, place and time. For example, the instigation of spontaneous protests usually came about in a bar, late in the evenings, when men were in the majority. This caused aggravation as older women, who seldom occupied the bar in later hours, would try to encourage the men to participate in longstanding community projects, which were mainly their responsibility. Men would rarely comply with such encouragements though generally great respect was shown to older women. During the summer of 2015, when the number of refugees increased dramatically, many activities had to be organized, and more emphasis was put on horizontal assemblies. Even so, our field notes showed that in meetings men would verbally dominate the space, as they usually spoke first, for a longer time, and were rarely interrupted. Older women would have some dialectic space, but were often interrupted. Last to speak were usually young women.

Younger women, therefore, often had to rely on the sexual appeal to gain power. This attitude can be discerned in Bruce's description of a proverb:

> We have this saying in Greece…. The first one is: The housewife is a slave and a lady, both. She is a slave when needed and a lady when she is needed. …. And the anarchy version of it is: Neither a slave nor a lady, just a woman. … She has to be a bit like a kind of sexy and slutty and all of that, but still at the same time be presentable.

To explain further, the notion of slavery is traced to resistance among communists in Greece towards liberal feminism, as previously it was thought demeaning for women to work and a justification for consumerism (Avdela & Psarra, 2005). Leftist men were expected to find someone they would ideologically 'click' with in regard to resisting consumerism but many of our male solidarians would try to negotiate this rule, and 'bring in' other girls. As such, there was pressure on women to be sexually appealing and many would rely on some consumer products, such as red lipstick, tight clothes or hair products to be considered appealing.

Another marker of femininity was the naturalization of motherhood, through which mothers were respected, but grandmothers even more. Therefore, cleaning and child care was mainly done by women and sometimes by male migrants, but rarely by local men in semi-public spaces. Motherhood would also prevent women from participating in the same manner as men, and this social construction would often cause women to resist men's involvement in activities that were considered feminine, such as playing with refugee children. As such, younger men often felt pushed towards participating in the violent confrontations, as Christos, a participant in his twenties, a drama school student, short, slightly overweight, with short brown hair, living with relatives in Kypseli, remarks:

> They want their men to be brave and tough and fight in political struggles and they [mothers] stay and take care of the children and help others in the neighbourhood. ... Why, they think that women, when the riot begins, must go back? Why go back? If a woman wants to throw a rock, throw a stone, hit a cop, hit! She can do that if she wants.

This indicates that the younger generation was struggling with gender expectations, as young men would often convey their desire to embed the caring role, and young women would participate in the violent protests. Middle-aged women who were not yet grandmothers, however, would often be bereft of power, or as one female teacher would say, "You don't have a voice if nobody wants to fuck you". Thus, though the solidarian space was opening new venues for women to participate in society, they were still subjected to ideas of motherhood and sexuality. This would often prove problematic.

Among the solidarians, people profiting excessively from others were ostracized, but those harassing women or transgender people, were less likely to be ostracized. For example, a local male migrant was ostracized for benefiting financially from refugees, but accusations of sexual harassment were met with mitigation by a majority of the initiative in favour of the men accused, an older local Greek and a migrant. Citing other incidents, a lesbian group therefore decided to

depart from the movement, accusing members of Kentro of supporting rape culture and misogynistic attitudes towards women and transgender people. This indicates that the support for women's rights and queer rights was more in discourse than in the daily practice.

Another example of ostracism among the larger community of anarchists was through the ideology of musical performances as pop music was connected to gay culture and thought to promote consumerism:

> Punk rock was very much connected with being anarchist in Athens. So if you didn't play that kind of music and if you had played in some non-club where you had 2 euros' entrance, you were considered as a commercial band. If you had done that so you were commercialized, you are not a believer, you are not like us, out! … if you are playing something like electro or music that was obviously gay music, they were saying that. (Freddie).

In recent decades gay culture has been increasingly absorbed by the neoliberal masculine hegemony and used to promote consumerism (Demitriou, 2001; Brigdes, 2013). As with feminism, this seems to cause marginalization of a certain kind of queers among activists in Athens. Moreover, some of our migrant interlocutors would convey frustration, as their entrepreneurship was frowned upon among the Greek activists, with the suspicion that they were profiting from the need of others. Thus, both queer and male migrants were describing difficulties of showing the 'right kind of masculinity' exalted by the locals (Kimmel, 2012).

In short, we believe there is a tendency among the solidarians to connect consumerism with feminine practices, and as such, subjecting people who do not adamantly resist consumption with a feminine weakness. Alongside the sexism, this puts women, queers and migrants in a precarious position and may have influenced the women to be protective of the motherhood role, which continued gender segregations and prevented the men's effort to embed feminine practices.

Discussion

I n a transnational world where borders and boundaries are being intensely renegotiated, it is imperative to analyse how such changes affect gender identities and practices in their local context (Ratele, 2015). Thus, the impact of the increase in refugees in the western hemisphere of the world has caught the attention of scholars of men and masculinities. Recently, Ann-Dorte Christensen (2011) demonstrated how hyper-masculinity was formed among leftist men in Copenhagen, owing to confrontation with the police and xenophobic groups attacking refugees and other migrants. As we have shown in the case of the solidarians in Athens, however, the process has occurred in a hybrid manner, in the context of their own economic and physical vulnerability.

We have drawn forth how the nurtured stories of resistance affected men's contemporary identity formation and performances of protesting in the streets. Moreover, how young martyrs became resistance heroes, unifying images of dignity, autonomy and vulnerability. Thus, our interlocutors could relocate and renegotiate their masculinities through being brave and morally good humans, instead of accepting the assigned 'surplus human' status (Blagojević, 2013). Furthermore, as they were impacted by refugees and other migrant's struggles through the discourse of human rights, the male solidarians entwined that discourse with the role of a fellow human being who was fighting the global construction of inequalities and immobility. They portrayed having ambiguous morals on subjecting others they perceived in a weaker position, and they tried to negotiate the benevolent power of a protector. This can, in the absence of violent encounters, transcend the usual pathos of Greek leftist masculinity. Still, due to the local struggles, the performance of protests prevailed as a hegemonic masculine value and the hybrid masculinities (Demetriou, 2001) were formed.

The dominant theme among the solidarians is resistance to capitalism, be it in the form of consumerism or neoliberal projects. Thus, neoliberal men are perceived as immoral while Greek traditional

masculinities as misogynistic, xenophobic and hard. Rising from a resistance culture, the hegemonic elements of the solidarian masculinities were evident in the social value of courageous performances, and the symbolism of an underground culture embodied through the wearing of black clothes. Though Greek scholars have shown how spontaneous resistance was brought forth from the home to the streets (Brekke, Dalakoglou & Vradis, 2014; Kallianos, 2013), there are few indications that this created a space for men to perform feminine activities in public. Moreover, even if women are making niches by bringing feminine acts to the protest (Vaiou, 2014) and can more easily perform 'resistance masculinity', they are still restrained by sexism, markers of motherhood and, along with queers, by what is seen to be weaker resistance towards consumerism. Lastly, migrants are selectively treated in a sheltered manner unless they were believed embedding capitalistic tendencies.

The solidarians, therefore, reconstructed their resistance identity towards a moral masculinity, which amplifies men who are brave but inclusive and creates a bond of mutually respected vulnerability across ethnicities, sexualities and gender. It is an indication of emergent masculinities (Inhorn, 2014) as it shows a discursive pattern and some practices towards an egalitarian world. However, young men's effort to perform feminine activities is somewhat resisted by women in the solidarity, their own effort not to lose respect among peers, and lastly by continuous austerity measures that inhibits them to find security and promotes protests. Therefore, moral masculinities were contextually negotiated by men stuck in global neoliberal projects of austerity in a hybrid manner.

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