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Chapter 6

Occupied squares, societies in movement

A legitimacy crisis?

We can't yet agree even on what name should be given to a series of phenomena that erupted almost unexpectedly throughout the world from 2011 and on. Was it an occupied squares movement, a worldwide set of collective acts of civil disobedience, a series of consecutive uprisings against undemocratic regimes or simply mass mobilizations against unjust economic policies? Maybe it is too early to try to distil out of these phenomena a common cause or common aspirations. It is important, however, to see them both as a result and as an aspect of a socio-economic crisis that is sweeping the capitalist world. What these phenomena clearly show is that capitalism has lost the power to promise a better future for all. And this happened exactly when ruling elites thought they had managed to reach the heavens of the absolute capitalist utopia: the heavens in which money begets money without any interference of often disobedient and unpredictable real people as well of always-problematic production procedures. The arrogance and power of bankers and stockbrokers is symptomatic of such a paroxysmal utopianism.

'Those below' have to be reintegrated into a system which, caught in its own paroxysmal utopia, thought it could do without them. As so many social eruptions and statistics show, people are losing their faith in a system which presents itself misleadingly

as a mechanism of potential wealth distribution to which they expect to have access.

Collective disappointment, either explicitly expressed in riots or implicitly expressed in solitary depression, poses new problems of governability: it seems that two crucial tasks are laid before this necessary 'return to politics' for the governing elites. The first is to ensure that people continue to be defined by social bonds which constitute individuals as economic subjects, as subjects whose behaviour and motives can be analysed, channelled, predicted upon and, ultimately, controlled by the use of economic parameters and measures only. The second task is to ensure that people continue to act and dream without any form of connectedness and coordination with others. Collective actions and aspirations, especially those that produce common spaces, are to be blocked.

In a period of crisis these two priorities in population governance aim at producing individuals who share with others only fear.⁵ Fear about everything that keeps on destabilizing their life conditions and plans. At the same time, each one alone has to believe that he or she 'will make it'. And that can possibly happen only at the expense of any other's opportunity to make it too.

Cracks and ruptures manifest themselves, often violently, in the ambitious yet precarious edifice of this governing model. Outraged and rebellious people enter again the field of politics and acquire visibility and power to transform implemented policies. And out of these collective acts, public space acquires new meaning. It is as if people reclaim space as a locus of dissident acts, a locus separated from the dominant mediatic space of simulated participation. It is as if people explicitly or implicitly redefine the meaning of space sharing and of publicness.

It is certainly too early to say that the dominant policies have entered into a crisis of no return, even though history travels with an amazing speed these days and indications of a deepening of crisis proliferate. We can, however, observe in various parts of the world two interconnected series of phenomena that deeply affect what we could diagnose as a crisis of legitimacy.

The first series includes phenomena that have to do with the role of information and communication in destabilizing collective faith in the system. From the Latin American movements and uprisings (such as the *Argentinazo* or the people's massive protests in São Paulo) to the Arab revolutions (especially those in Tunisia and Egypt), including the 'indignant' square occupations in European cities and the North American Occupy movement, communication and information exchanges through social media and interactive communication devices have played a very important role in moulding collective action.

The second series includes phenomena that have to do with community- oriented or community-inspired actions that, often quite distinct from neocommunitarian neoconservative ideologies, create or even reinvent communities-in-the-making. These are often unstable but always metastatic and expanding communities in movement.

Both series of phenomena converge in practices of redefining and reappropriating public space; both contribute to the emergence of common spaces. And both series of phenomena are characterized by forms of hybridization, the mixing of incompatible and often opposing elements in the creation of 'unauthorized' combinations.

According to Homi Bhabha, hybridity characterizes a specific form of agency, 'subaltern agency'. As he suggests, 'subaltern

agency emerges as relocation and re-inscription' (Bhabha 2004: 227). We can attribute these two characteristics, re-inscription and relocation (understanding them not only metaphorically but also as descriptive terms), to a series of urban practices that are focused on the collective reinvention of public space as common space. These practices, which may well be characterized as subaltern, create, use and disseminate information through the new communicative media already mentioned, but they are not practices of information exchange only. These practices 'mark' the city through the information exchange they make possible.

'Reinscription' can invoke the material results of these practices on the city's body. It is a process of marking out specific places through inscriptions that not only disseminate information (as in the case of wall writings or graffiti) but also connect places and create shared points of reference for specific emerging collectivities that recognize them. This happened, for example, during the December 2008 youth uprising in Athens,⁶ when a 'migrant' stencil art spread all over the city centre and condensed the uprising's messages into emblematic images. Some of these markings of the city's body were short-lived while others survive: inscriptions over other inscriptions, messages and traces in combat with other traces. A reinscription process, indeed, can effectively transfer the feeling of a city in movement, a city in turmoil. Similar reinscription acts spread in Tunis and Cairo during the 2010–12 Arab uprisings and in Barcelona, Athens, Madrid and other European cities due to the 'squares movement' in 2011.

'Relocation' has to do with one very important characteristic of information dissemination: these new urban practices of public space appropriation and collective dissent use information exchanges with the aim of potentially coordinating those who

participate in the exchanges. Information is not a flow, in this context, but an arrow directed towards potential receivers and returned as a promise of mutual involvement.

One of the early examples of such practices was the case of the '*pasalo*' mobilizations in Barcelona and Madrid on 13 March 2004. During the 'night of the short messages' people exchanged through the internet and by SMS a message that would overthrow a government: 'Liars murderers. Your war our dead. *Pasalo* (Pass it on).' This message was circulated the day before general elections and accused the government of systematically hiding from the people the real reasons for the bomb explosions which had killed 200 persons in three suburban trains. Huge demonstrations occupied the central squares in Barcelona and Madrid, which were defined by the messages of protesters as meeting points.⁷

In this process, information ('they are not telling us the truth') addresses people as potential actors. Information acquires a power to mobilize people through sharing and participation. The city thus is not simply the background or the medium through which information spreads but an active element in the transformation of information to a call: defined meeting points punctuate the city's body and organize a network of locations connected by a common cause, a common will for action. A fragile and migrational set of common spaces is thus developed. To borrow and recontextualize De Certeau's beautiful phrase, '[a] *migrational*, or metaphorical, city thus slips into the clear text of the planned and readable city' (De Certeau 1984: 93). This process can be described as a series of relocation acts which support expanding social movements. Spaces and actions are redefined by being connected in new ways. Analogous urban inventive

forms of coordination developed during the Athens December, the Tunisian 'Jasmine revolution', and the squares '*indignados*' actions.

Rumours and gossip used to be forms of information exchange, which, in traditional societies, participated in the reproduction or refashioning of existing social and personal relations. These were communities which pre-existed face-to-face interactive 'media', and community values or general hierarchies were rarely questioned. In contemporary societies, however, interactive technologies mediate the creation of communities of collective action that are not necessarily communities of people sharing a common identity or common values. These communities of collective action are communities in movement, communities developed through common action and the sharing of an emerging common space.

The occupation of Syntagma Square in Athens in 2011 was an act directly inspired by the Spanish squares occupation and the news which came from the Arab uprisings. Alternative media played a crucial role in this. But, more important, it was through a call on social media (which literally came from five young people) that Syntagma Square became unexpectedly filled with 30,000 anonymous protesters. It was 25 May 2011 and thousands of people flooded the central squares in thirty-eight cities all over Greece. The initial call spread via Facebook at an amazing speed, managing to mobilize all these people, something the radical left had failed to do three months earlier by using the typical forms of mass demonstration initiatives.

It is not that opportunities are created by interactive media. It is that through the processes of reinscription and relocation, shared information and shared meeting points bind people.

In a curious reversal, the reterritorializing of politics happens through the active mediation of de-territorializing communication technologies. Communities become located in urban space and develop by redefining and reappropriating their surroundings.

Common space in the squares

Communities in movement 'secrete' their own space almost as snails and seashells secrete the substances through which their 'home' is being constructed. This is not the public space as we know it: space given from a certain authority to the public under specific conditions that ultimately affirm the authority's legitimacy. Nor is it private space either, if by this we mean space controlled and used by a limited group of people excluding all others. Communities in movement create common space,⁸ space used under conditions decided on by communities and open to anyone who participates in the actions and accepts the rules which were collectively decided upon. The use, maintenance and creation of common space does not simply mirror the community. The community is formed, developed and reproduced through practices focused on common space. To generalize this principle: the community is developed through commoning, through acts and forms of organization oriented towards the production of the common.

To get a clearer view of the importance of space-commoning for the creation and support of communities in movement, let us look more closely at the example of the Syntagma Square occupation. 'A view from afar' would describe this occupation as a meeting point for protesters, just in front of the parliament building, to denounce harsh, unjust and undemocratic austerity

measures. Of course this view is not wrong: it just misses what is new in this occupation-protest. Syntagma Square developed into a network of connected micro-squares, each one with a distinct character and spatial arrangement, all contained or, rather, territorialized in the area of what was known to be *the* central Athens public square. Each micro-square had its own group of people who lived there for some days, in their tents, people who focused their actions and their micro-urban environment on a specific task: a children's playground, a free reading and meditation area, a homeless campaign meeting point, a 'time bank' (a form of exchange of services based on the elimination of money and profit), a 'we don't pay' campaign meeting point (focused on organizing an active boycott of transportation fees and road tolls), a first aid centre, a multimedia group node and a translation group stand, et cetera. There were various levels on which those micro-communities were connected and, of course, all of them had to follow the general assembly's rules and decisions. However, differences in space arrangement choices and in media of expression (with the use of banners, placards, stickers, images, 'works of art', etc.) were more than apparent. Although the common cause and common target (the parliament) were dominant, each micro-square established different routines and different aesthetics and organized different micro-events during the occupation.

The benches became the holders of the exhibits of the artists, the grass lawn was full of sleeping bags and tents, the trees supported the loudspeakers and the placards, the central fountain became the source to rinse the square from the tear gas and the paved area became a great seat for all. Therefore, the common space

created was the result of the interconnectivity and interaction of a society in motion. (Galatoula 2013)

Space-commoning was not a centralized procedure, then, although the assembly and the assembly area acquired a symbolically as well as functionally central role. Space-commoning was, rather, practised as a collectively improvised process which was marked by a centrality–dispersion dialectics: dispersed activities and micro-events but also coordinated activities. Of those coordinated activities the most important were the ones connected to the General Assembly's decision to organize massive protests on 28 and 29 June in the square. Those protests were meant to encircle the parliament building in an effort to obstruct the voting of a devastating agreement with the International Monetary Fund, European Union and European Central Bank titled 'Emergency Implementation Measures for the Mid-term Fiscal Adjustment Strategy 2012–2015'.

The mobilizations characterized by a massive participation of people in Syntagma Square as well as in organized road blocks were confronted by very aggressive police riot squads which unleashed an unprecedented chemical war against the protesters. People on and around the square did not scatter and managed peacefully to return to the square and organize an unforgettable ad hoc concert which the police did not dare to challenge. Huge open discussions organized by the Assembly on topics such as 'real democracy', 'public debt and austerity policies' and public education, et cetera were also important expressions of the occupation's collective coordinating spirit. In those unique public events, people's participation was amazingly great, and collective management of space was organized in ways that possibly

prefigure a democratic and egalitarian contemporary *agora* [the ancient Greek marketplace used for public assemblies].

The square did not attempt to barricade itself either symbolically or literally, even when police aggression was imminent. All the occupied square's activities and initiatives kept the square's space open and connected to the rest of the city. In place of a public space that was routinely shaped by the intersection of incessant pedestrian flows directed to the underground station's entrance, a rich common space was created in the heart of Athens. Furthermore, a constant flow of messages which arranged meetings and spread information had kept this space connected with many other places in the city. As in the case of Madrid's occupied Puerta del Sol,

The space-time created in the last days has one single obsession: continuity. Paradoxically, this is only possible to maintain through intermittancy. Through a physical entering-and-leaving of Sol. Keep the experience alive even though you are not present. For this reason (and so many others) the camp at Sol cannot be understood without the social networks. The continuity of the experience is achieved by deterritorializing it. (Kaejane 2011)

Space-commoning in the reappropriated squares of the 2010–12 uprisings involves the production and use of in-between spaces. Common spaces emerge as threshold spaces, spaces which are not demarcated by a defining perimeter. Whereas public space bears the mark of a prevailing authority which defines it and controls its use, common space is opened space, space in a process of opening towards 'newcomers'. Parallel to Rancière's understanding of a 'democracy to come', common

space is characterized by 'an infinite openness to the Other or the newcomer' (Rancière 2010: 59). Common spaces are porous spaces, spaces in movement and spaces-as-passages.

Divisions in space, which were necessary for the creation of micro-communities (or, indeed, micro-squares), did not result in space departmentalization. Micro-squares were porous themselves, and a network of spaces-as-passages constituted a spatial arrangement which resembled a miniature city, a miniature tent city with its open-air spaces. This form of expanding and inventive space-commoning characterized all the occupied square encampments. In Tahrir Square, 'Sleeping quarters that started as mere blankets evolved into full-fledged campsites with tents, electricity rigged from street lights and supervised children's quarters' (Kamel 2012: 38). And publicly used areas and installations included a self-managed field hospital and many field pharmacies, a stage with a microphone to be used by anybody who wanted to speak in public (*ibid.*), kitchens for hot meals, an artists' corner (Alexander 2011: 56), and so on. In important turning points of the struggle the square even became a collectively recognized 'epiphanic space', a 'parallel capital' (*ibid.*: 55). A 'communal atmosphere' (*ibid.*: 57) transformed the square into 'a living and breathing microcosm of a civil sphere' (*ibid.*: 56). Cooperation both in peaceful moments and in moments of confrontation with the police and Mubarak's thugs had produced a well-organized micro-city (Abul-Magd 2012: 566) with common spaces created and arranged according to common needs and aspirations.

In the Gezi Park occupation which also took place in Istanbul in 2013, public space was transformed into a network of common spaces (Postvirtual 2013) in which no clear limits were visible

between the quasi-private personal spaces of those who camped in the occupied park and the spaces for public use. A mixture of second-hand materials and objects created an anarchic, urban-like diversity which contributed to the blurring of uses. Collective identities were emphatically expressed, however, in the arrangement of different spaces, although such a cultural, religious and political compartmentalization did not erect barriers between different collectivities but, rather, established forms of encounter and collaboration even between groups that used to be very hostile to each other. Kemalists and Muslim activists, gay activists and hooligan fans, feminists and religious men devoted to family values, anarchists and leftists, Kurds and Turks through their coexistence and collaboration found unexpected common ground (Bektaş 2013: 14–15).

In the occupied public spaces of the squares movement, common spaces became live, albeit temporary, urban thresholds. Such spaces neither define people who use them nor are defined by them. They, rather, mediate negotiations between people about the meaning and use of the space they share. Common threshold spaces thus correspond to a process of identity opening which characterized the squares experience. A miniature city emerged in the form of a 'city of thresholds' (Stavrides 2010b) in which encounters and dispersed initiatives built spaces of negotiation and osmosis by collectively shaping a public culture based on solidarity and mutual respect.

Communities in movement in Syntagma and the other 'insurgent squares' were not created through organizational schemes that presupposed a centre of decision making or the absolute predominance of a central space. Spaces as well as decisions were decentralized and recentralized. So was the process of creating

those social bonds-in-the-making which gave form to communities in constant remaking.

Reinventing community

Commoning procedures understood as a dialectics of dispersion–centralization leave room for differentiated initiatives and individual improvisations. What was often described as an antithesis between spontaneous and organized acts and individual and collective behaviours (often by those of the left and the anarchist movement who considered themselves ‘guardians’ of oppositional politics) was most of the time the result of this dialectics. Not everybody came to Syntagma to participate in the assembly. Many came only to shout and express their anger and disapproval. Some even used laser beam pointers to perform a kind of contemporary version of voodoo magic (in a symbolical-aggressive gesture they focused the laser beams as metaphoric pins on the parliament building’s ‘body’). On Sundays some brought their children along simply to enjoy the air of a public space that was ‘different’.

To search desperately for a locatable common identity that could include these people was and still is a serious mistake. Sometimes it made participating activists of the left misunderstand completely the motives, practices and expressions of all those who participated more or less regularly.

An important methodological problem resurfaces in the description and interpretation of dilemmas stemming from the Syntagma and squares experience. Does one have to recognize in these phenomena, acts, utterances and expressions a hidden meaning? Is interpretation a process of revealing the hidden logic of these events as embedded in their form? Or do we have

to rethink our categories of understanding social events and forms of collective subjectivation as we face a process which possibly redefines dissident politics and communities in action?

One example: were those holding 'their' national flags (in Syntagma, in Tunis, in Barcelona and elsewhere) simply nationalists? Was this therefore a potentially dangerous community resurfacing in a period of crisis? If this was the case then the possibility of Syntagma or Tahrir becoming an enclosed, exclusive nationalist world would have been a huge threat. But this did not happen. In the squares people used national symbols in various ways which depart from a nationalist expression vocabulary. In Athens one person 'wore' the flag as a kind of shield against those who 'sell the country' (literally, indeed). Other participants used flag waving to appeal to an injured collective dignity: 'rise up', 'wake up', 'we are here', as the Spaniards are in their squares, as should be the Italians, the French, et cetera

One more example: one way to judge the long discussions about real or direct democracy (in assemblies but also in smaller commissions or groups) which were predominant throughout the European squares experience was to analyse the words and ideas used. One could say that this or that kind of discourse was depoliticized, utopian, ineffective, and so on. But one could instead try to compare words, acts and forms of expression. 'Real' or direct democracy was performed in various ways in the squares. No matter what observers would say, women's participation in Tahrir Square in Cairo was a *de facto* practising of common space as democratic space. And people in the squares devised ways to make decisions and to defend themselves against police aggression which *de facto* established new forms of direct egalitarian democracy. Just after one such

incident in Athens – a brutal police charge on 15 June in which the people had been chased, hit and tear-gassed – the square of Syntagma was peacefully reoccupied. Then people formed long human chains that transported, from hand to hand, small bottles of water to cleanse the square of the poisonous tear gas remains. Collective inventiveness (in order to meet the lack of sufficient water) created a democratic egalitarian solidarity. Those human chains, improvised to face a pressing situation, emblemize a community in movement which reinvents ‘real’ democracy in action. Sometimes those human chains took the form of circle dancing, either to celebrate a victory (as in Tahrir after the announcement of Mubarak’s fall) or to exorcise fear (as in Syntagma: people danced in the square as the police were ‘bombing’ the area with suffocating gas grenades).

Discourses, practices and forms of expression can and should be interpreted as acts in movement. Their correspondences are sometimes strengthened, but one should not deduce a pre-existing pattern that maps their common ground. Discrepancies, ambiguities, and contradictions are necessary ingredients of a potential community in action, a community of different people who remain different but recognize themselves as co-producers of a common space in-the-making.

Who were those people? Can a social identity include all of them? Can a common ideology describe them? Can patterns of action delimit their potential collective practices?

One thing that seems to have united those people, no matter how different their country’s context was in regard to the global economic-social crisis, was the collectively felt loss of power’s legitimacy. In myriads of inventive expressions, people mocked power, expressed their anger against power’s symbols

and ridiculed individual leaders. Consensus was shown to be in a deep crisis. Both societies of simulated democratic consensus and those that are outright 'autarchic' seem to have entered today into a deep legitimacy crisis. Fear and state terror are the only means to control rebellious or simply outraged and disappointed people.

'We' and space-commoning

A peculiar 'we' surfaced in the squares and an ambiguous 'we' condensed, but could also evaporate, in these uprisings. Is this the 'we' that marks the emergence of new political subjects, the emergence of those who did not count before but who demand to take part (Rancière 2010: 32–3)?

Here are some examples from writings in the squares: 'We are ordinary people. We are like you, people who get up every morning to study, to work or find a job, people who have families and friends. People who work hard every day to provide a better future for those around us' (Barcelona).⁹ 'We are unemployed people, working people, pensioners, students, schoolchildren, farmers, immigrants, outraged with all those who plunder our lives and decide without us' (Heraklion, Greece). From Patras, Greece: 'We call on everybody, working people, jobless people, young people, we call on society to fill St George's Square in Patras. Let's reclaim our lives.' Finally, from Syntagma: 'For a long time decisions have been made for us, without us. We are working people, jobless people, pensioners and young who come to Syntagma to fight and struggle for our lives and our future.'¹⁰ 'We are nobody' (Syntagma Square anonymous placard).

This is a 'we' of common people, an inclusive 'we' that demands life and justice. This is a 'we' that does not name, differentiate

or erect barriers. Most important perhaps, this is a 'we' that is formed in complete opposition to the 'national' or 'cosmopolitan' 'we' that the governing elites and the mainstream media attempt to impose. 'We are not responsible, you are.' 'We don't have to pay your debts,' 'We don't have to fight your wars' (*pasalo* mobilizations). 'We are not you.' Opposed to a recognizable outside, the outside that contains all those who destroy the future, there is a multifaceted 'we', a kaleidoscopic 'we' full of refractions and open to ever-new arrangements of differences.

Is it the 'we' of the multitude? Perhaps, if the multitude is characterized by heterogeneous multiplicity. But the reasoning behind using multitude to describe the crowd in the current phase of capitalism is based on the idea that the multitude emerges as the productive human force in the period of biopolitical production. The multitude, according to Hardt and Negri, 'is a multiplicity of singularities that produce and are produced in the biopolitical field of the common' (Hardt and Negri 2009: 165).¹¹

In the squares and in the 2010–12 uprisings, the multitude does not present itself as a productive force, though, even if we allow the term *production* to contain almost every form of human activity, as Hardt and Negri do. True, capitalism attempts to distil out of every human activity its productive power on which the production of value and profit necessarily are based. People in the squares, however, are creating rather than producing. Hardt and Negri clearly insist that today 'labor cannot be limited to waged labor but must refer to human creative capacities in all their generality' (Hardt and Negri 2005: 105). Virno believes that 'the dividing line between Work and Action [poiesis and praxis] ... has now disappeared altogether' (Virno 1996: 190), and that '[t]here is no longer anything which distinguishes labor

from the rest of human activities' (Virno 2004: 102). There is, however, a movement that opposes the continuing entrapment of creative action by the logic of capital, which can be recognized in the squares' commoning experiences. Perhaps it is more appropriate to speak of a potential temporary emancipation of 'doing' in the context of an 'anti-politics of dignity' as theorized by Holloway (2010: 245–9). This precarious emancipation of doing can be directly connected to the emergence of 'political subjects' as collective subjects who do not fit into the existing social order. As Rancière insists, politics 'occurs' when the dominant social order ('police') is disrupted and thus redefined. This may happen through acts which can be considered as creative not because they produce something (tangible or not) but because they form the emergent subjectivity of the acting subjects: 'The political process of subjectivation ... continually *creates* newcomers' (Rancière 2010: 59, emphasis added).

Forms of sharing and forms of encounter in public are created while being performed. Cannot these forms potentially be manipulated by dominant institutions and appropriated by the market by being turned into mechanisms of exploitation? Yes, but one should not judge only in terms of possibilities. What we can know about the present shows us instead that forms of commoning are directly opposed to the main targets of the dominant politics and to the hegemonic project of governing the crisis as well as the metropolis.

What the theory of multitude can offer us along with other attempts (including Agamben's and Rancière's) to rethink the political, is that politics is necessarily linked to processes of collective subjectivation. What these theories attempt to rethink is not simply about changes in the definition of the political subject

but, rather, about the processes of collective subjects' constitution. Agamben uses 'whatever singularities' to describe the subjectivities of a coming community,¹² and Rancière speaks of the 'democratic practice as the inscription of the part of those who have no part – which does not mean the "excluded" but *anybody whoever*' (Rancière 2010: 60, emphasis added). Hardt and Negri insist on the 'making' of the multitude as a process which does not eliminate differences but creates common ground among singularities.¹³

Political subjectivation, thus, can be considered as a process which moves not towards the construction of collective identities and unified social bodies but towards new forms of coordination and interaction based on commoning practices which create open communities of commoners.

Probably these theorizations can only hint at the possibility of a future different society, developing ideas about forms of collective action that can indeed prefigure egalitarian and emancipating social relations. Is this enough today? Probably not, and so it is urgently necessary to understand contemporary movements and learn from their actions, discourses and forms of organization.

One thing we know already is that these events had the power to overthrow governments even in societies with a long past of absolutist regimes. And we also know that these events mark the return of people to collective action. Surely, those people cannot be described as the most disadvantaged or the marginalized ones, even though marginalized or disadvantaged people *have* participated in the squares or the uprisings. There is no obvious common economic or social definition that can include all the people in a square, though. A crisis of power legitimation unites

them along with a shared feeling of a total absence of justice. Everyone draws experiences from his or her own life that verify this prevailing injustice. In the Tunisia uprising, this feeling was expressed in a revolt against a corrupt family that had ruled the country for many years. In the December 2008 Athens uprising, this feeling was everywhere in young people's actions, because the killing of a young boy by a policeman condensed into a single act all the dominant measures, politics and ideologies that imprison youth in a predetermined future of antagonisms and disappointments. And in the squares, this feeling took the form of a collectively recognized economic injustice (imposed or, rather, accelerated through austerity measures). It seems likely that this feeling was also behind the 2011 UK riots.

All these events indicate societies in movement. And this movement goes beyond any agglomeration of particular demands that are expressed by different social groups in pursuit of their interests. In practices of collective improvisation and collective inventiveness common spaces are created in which people not only express their anger and needs but also develop forms of life-in-common. True, those forms are fragile, precarious, often ephemeral and sometimes contradictory in terms of ideological premises or values. But this collective and de facto production of common spaces reinvents dissident politics and gives new form to practices which overstep the boundaries of dominant social roles. Space-commoning practices are recapturing the 'movement of doing', to use Holloway's vocabulary, and go against the dominant classifications which constrain 'dead doing', 'within an identity, within a role or character mask' (Holloway 2002: 63).

Sharing and solidarity are not introduced as values or ideologically sanctioned imperatives but are experienced in practice,

in solving practical problems and in collectively organizing actions of protest. In such a context, there is no difference between the solidarity which supports the organizing of a defence against state aggression and the solidarity expressed in the collection of rubbish in the occupied squares. Solidarity is not simply a force that sustains people in clashes with the state forces. Solidarity has become and becomes a creative force. In Chomsky's words, 'the most exciting aspect of the Occupy movement is the construction of the associations, bonds, linkages and networks that are taking place all over' (Chomsky 2012: 45). In a period of crisis this proves to be not only ethically gratifying, but also effective. People are forced to devise, to invent and to discover ways to survive the crisis. And through the squares experiences, practices of collective invention acquire the form of social experiment.

The most urgent and promising task, which can oppose the dominant urban governance model, is the reinvention of common spaces. The realm of the common emerges in a constant confrontation with state-controlled 'authorized' public space. Commenting on the Occupy movement's strategies, Marina Sitrin, who has studied extensively the *Argentinazo* uprising, suggests: 'Our point of reference should continue to be one another and the creation of directly democratic spaces, but we must also find ways to negotiate issues of institutional power while maintaining our agenda' (Sitrin 2012: 7). This level of negotiations, however, depends heavily on the development of open commoning institutions which are meant to obstruct any kind of accumulation of power in and through a commoning movement. Means should look like ends: one cannot fantasize that the struggle for an egalitarian society of sharing may win by adopting forms of inequality and enclosure. No matter how

impossible this may at times seem, we can hope to approach such a society only if our common worlds and our shared practices are shaped in a constant struggle against dominant forms of hierarchical collaboration and controlled distribution.

The creation of common spaces is probably a process full of contradictions and quite difficult to predict, as the experiences of the squares movement show, but it is absolutely necessary for any effort to transcend capitalism and domination. In the common realm, crafted by communities in movement, people find room to compare their dreams and needs, to rediscover solidarity and to fight the destructive individualization imposed by the dominant policies. Behind a multifarious and plural demand for justice and dignity, new roads to collective emancipation are tested and invented. And, as the Zapatistas say, we can create these roads only while walking. But we have to listen, to observe and to feel the walking movement.