

Equals in Solidarity: Orfanotrofio's Housing Squat as a Site for Political Subjectification Across Differences Amid the "Greek Crisis"

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Abstract: This article engages with the political struggles staged by illegalised migrants and activists in solidarity amid the long summer of migration and the "Greek crisis". Grounding its analysis on Orfanotrofio's housing squat in Thessaloniki, it narrates how such struggles are articulated to politicise migration and stage the equality of newcomers—migrants and refugees—and locals. Drawing on Jacques Rancière's political writings and contemporary geographical work on solidarity, the article argues that such struggles not only disrupt the exclusionary ordering of our cities but also construct political spaces and infrastructures of dissensus wherein equals in solidarity discuss common political problems and devise common political strategies. Through the notion of *equals in solidarity*, the article investigates how the performative enactment of equality can form the basis for solidarities across differences and analyses how some of the tensions that emerge around collective political subjectification are negotiated. Building on this, it explores some of the challenges and limitations that these struggles face in their efforts to transform the existing order of the city.

Resumen: Este artículo explora las luchas políticas de migrantes ilegalizados y activistas en solidaridad entre el "gran verano de la migración" y la "crisis griega". A través del análisis de la okupa Orfanotrofio en Tesalónica, se analiza cómo la articulación de estas luchas encarna la politización de la migración y la igualdad entre los recién llegados—migrantes y refugiados—y los activistas locales. Apoyado en los escritos políticos de Jacques Rancière y los trabajos de la geografía contemporánea sobre solidaridad, el artículo defiende que además de romper el orden excluyente imperante en nuestras ciudades, estas luchas construyen espacios políticos e infraestructuras de disenso en donde iguales en solidaridad discuten sobre problemas políticos comunes y articulan estrategias políticas conjuntas. A través de la noción "iguales en solidaridad", el artículo investiga cómo el carácter performativo de esta afirmación de igualdad constituye una base para la solidaridad que trasciende las diferencias, al tiempo que permite el análisis de la negociación de las tensiones colectivas que emergen en los procesos de subjetivación política. Finalmente, se exploran algunos de los desafíos y limitaciones que estas luchas afrontan en su esfuerzo de transformar el orden existente.

Keywords: political subjectification, solidarity, migrant struggles, "refugee crisis", Rancière, Greece

Introduction

Since 2015, a massive wave of migration has attempted to enter “Fortress Europe” through land and sea, quickly giving rise to official discourses around a “European refugee crisis”. Preemptively illegalising mobility for the majority of humanity, through the deeply unequal and racialised provisions of the EU border regime (De Genova 2018), EU nation-states have sought to frame the long summer of migration as a “problem” to be managed and policed. A burgeoning academic discussion around the violent restructuring of the European border regime and migration policies has since then developed (De Genova 2018; Tazzioli 2017), drawing attention to cities as key arenas in the de-localisation and proliferation of bordering and policing practices (Fauser 2019). Political mobilisations by migrants and solidarity activists have also attracted scholarly interest, particularly revolving around the multiple contestations of Europe’s heterogeneous border regime and refugee solidarity initiatives offering material and immaterial support. Self-organised refugee squats stand among the most significant initiatives in this respect (Agustín and Jørgensen 2019; Kotronaki 2018; Lafazani 2017). In this article, we contribute to this body of work by exploring the transformative potentialities of the solidarities forged through, what Peter Nyers calls, the “impossible activism” of non-status migrants (2003:1080); the politicisation of migration and the formation of collective political subjects bringing together migrants and activists in solidarity.

The article tells the story of Orfanotrofio’s housing squat, which for seven months, between December 2015 and June 2016, provided a home and a political infrastructure for migrants and solidarity activists in Thessaloniki, Greece. Through Orfanotrofio’s story, we argue that the emancipatory politics staged by newcomers¹ and activists in solidarity not only disrupted the exclusionary ordering of our cities by staging the equality of newcomers—migrants and refugees—and locals but also reconfigured the dominant partitioning of the urban sensible by putting a city of solidarity in confrontation with the city of exclusion. Orfanotrofio, thus, serves as a living laboratory to embody and further explore how the forging of solidarities through political infrastructures shapes the emergence of collective political subjects. Simultaneously, it enables a nuanced understanding of how emancipatory migration politics encounter the police order, shaping and being shaped by it (Karaliotas 2019).

To do so, we bring Jacques Rancière’s political writings in dialogue with an understanding of solidarities as “world-making processes” (Featherstone 2012:16). Rancière’s conceptualisation of political subjectification is particularly fruitful when exploring a political space like Orfanotrofio. Understanding politics as a disruptive activity centred on the performative enactment of equality through the opening of spaces (Dikeç 2013; Karaliotas 2017; Rancière 1999), Rancière’s framework allows thinking “political action in a way that is neither state- nor subject-centred” (Dikeç 2013:78). This is particularly pertinent for Orfanotrofio where participants—newcomers and locals—transcended their previous subject-positions in creating a common political space that challenged the dominant orderings of Thessaloniki’s spaces and times. However, Rancière’s emphasis on individual subjectification has little to say on the everyday

workings, potentialities and tensions of collective political subjectification (Karlottas 2017). To fill this gap, we draw on scholarship that highlights the generative role of solidarity-making in processes of political subjectification to foreground the everyday spaces, words and deeds through which equality is (or is not) actualised in-common and the political subject is shaped. In this line of argument, we introduce the notion of *equals in solidarity* to emphasise the actions and words of the political actors forming a collective political subject through the staging of Orfanotrofio as a political infrastructure. Simultaneously, understanding equality as an “enacted condition” (Ranci re 2010:93), the notion also foregrounds the internal and external tensions that mark processes of political subjectification and solidarity-making.

The analysis draws on a close ethnographic study of Orfanotrofio, conducted between December 2015 and January 2018.² Data were collected and triangulated through three key methods. First, Kapsali participated as an active participant in Orfanotrofio’s assemblies and internal and external activities, such as demonstrations, collective housework and organisation of cultural events, from the squat’s first days to its eviction. She is an activist, member of a collective that supported the squat since its inception. Thus, negotiating the balance between her position as a researcher and as an activist was a crucial challenge throughout the research. Second, this participation enabled informal conversations and formal interviews with locals and newcomers participating in the squat. Interviewing was a challenging task, given the sensitive psychological condition and transit status of many of the participants. No interviews were conducted during the first month of the squat, as it was a period of adaptation and organisation for all involved. Even later, interviews with newcomers were a challenge, as many (especially women) did not feel safe to speak. This resulted in a limited number of interviews with newcomers (five in total and all with men) which were supplemented by ten interviews with activists. Yet, informal everyday conversations and observations provided for a rich alternative source of data; at times far more eloquent and illuminating than formal interviews. Finally, we collected and analysed a series of publications from Orfanotrofio (brochures, leaflets, reports and open letters) and systematically followed and archived media and social media entries. Overall, working across the boundaries of academic research and activism was a challenging task, which brought forward both the—ethical and political—responsibilities and the benefits of “activist ethnographies” (Routledge 2009) in delving into the everyday experience of emancipatory initiatives.

The paper proceeds as follows. The first section provides a reading of Ranci re’s conceptualisation of political subjectification as a spatialised performative process. The section foregrounds the role of solidarity-making in the formation of collective political subjects and centres on the opening of political spaces and processes of translation as constitutive of political subjectification. The second section situates Orfanotrofio in the context of Thessaloniki’s long summer of migration. The third section focuses on the trajectory of Orfanotrofio through four interrelated analytical entry points emerging from the conceptual and empirical analysis: solidarity as a political imaginary and praxis; the spatialities of political subjectification

and solidarity-making; Orfanotrofio as a site where difference and tensions were negotiated; and the relations between Orfanotrofio and the police.

Everyday Political Subjectification: Solidarity, Equality, Space, and the Common

A substantial body of geographical scholarship draws on Rancière to inform readings of emancipatory politics. Schematically, this corpus has two focal points. First, scholarly work exploring the staging of dissensus through the wave of Occupy protests unfolding since 2011 (Bassett 2014; Davidson and Iveson 2014; Karaliotas 2017). Second, Rancière's work is also a key reference in debates around political movements by and in solidarity with migrants and refugees (Darling 2014; Dikeç 2013; Schaap 2011; Swerts 2017; Uitermark and Nicholls 2014). This article contributes to both bodies of work by exploring how solidarity-making—and particularly its spatialisation and everyday negotiations of the common—plays an active role in the becoming of a collective political subject. But how does Rancière conceptualise the political subject and what does political subjectification denote in his work?

The Rancièrian political subject, Schaap (2012:11) aptly summarises, emerges through the “torsion brought about by the presupposition of a universal equality (politics) and the particular forms of hierarchy inscribed within a given social order (police)”. Given the increasing geographical engagement with Rancière's work, we can briefly unpack the notions of politics and the police in this definition to situate our reading of the spatialities and tensions of political subjectification. *Politics* and the *police* are two ways of (re-)configuring the partition of the sensible; “two ways of framing a sensible space” (Rancière 2010:100). Both the terrain and stakes of political activity are, for Rancière, the “partition of the sensible” (*le partage du sensible*). Translating and expanding on Foucault's notion of *dispositif*, the partition of the sensible refers “both to what is acceptable and naturalised” and “to an ‘aesthetic’ register” (Swyngedouw 2011:375). As Dikeç (2012:673) writes, Rancière uses the word *partage* in its twofold meaning—as both partition and sharing—“to refer to what is put in common and shared in the community (understood broadly), and what is separated and excluded such as the separation of the visible and invisible, possible and impossible, speech and noise”. In Rancière's schema, then, the police refers to a “governmental logic” (Dikeç 2013:82) comprised of “all the activities which create order by distributing places, names, functions” (Rancière 1994:173). By contrast, politics is the disruptive engagement with the police order and centres on reconfiguring what is visible, audible and possible (Rancière 2010).

Politics, then, takes place when the sensibilities of our given world are reconfigured by subjects enacting their equality (Rancière 2010). Political subjectification is the production—through a series of words and deeds—of “a body and a capacity for enunciation not previously identifiable within a given field of experience, whose identification is thus part of the reconfiguration of the field of experience” (Rancière 1999:35). This process of becoming a collective political subject unfolds through the enactment of the presupposition of equality by “a part that has no

part" (Rancière 1999:11). Yet, the "part that has no part" does not correspond to a particular social group that is marginalised; it emerges through political action "as an entity that cannot be accommodated within the prevailing social order and yet demands to be" (Schaap 2011:36). Political subjectification is not the process by which a social group becomes conscious of its conditions and "finds its voice" (Rancière 1999:38) but rather moves beyond established identities. Political subjects are shaped by "transforming identities", as these are defined and allocated by the police order, "into instances of experience of a dispute" over how equality is "wronged" (Rancière 1999:36).

Rancièrian political subjectification rests upon the radical contingency of the police order and the axiomatic presupposition of equality of each and every one as speaking beings (Dikeç 2013; Rancière 2010). Equality, for Rancière, is neither a goal that politics strives toward nor instituted in the form of law but rather a presupposition discernible only through its enactment (Rancière 1999:33). Politics and political subjectification are precisely the performative enactment and verification of equality: it revolves around constructing polemical scenes where the ways in which the police "wrongs" equality become audible and visible (part of the sensible experience) through the staging of the equality of "a part that has no part" (i.e. a subject unaccounted for in the police order). It is in this sense that Dikeç (2013) describes Rancièrian politics as a "politics for equals". As May (2010:78) notes, the *we* of such collective subjects is "neither the source of the action nor its outcome. It emerges alongside [their] ongoing activity, feeding and being fed by it". It is precisely this dimension of a collective political subject in the making through the performative enactment of equality that our notion of equals in solidarity seeks to capture.

However, Rancière's insistence on politics as a disruptive activity and on political subjectification as always involving a rupture with previous subject positions has invited criticism. Reading the distinction between politics and the police as an effort to maintain some form of "purity" of "true politics" vis-à-vis the police order (Beveridge and Koch 2017; Uitermark and Nicholls 2014), critics have argued that Rancière's schema leads to an understanding of politics as sporadic and eventual (Mezzadra and Nielson 2013; Uitermark and Nicholls 2014) reducing the possibilities for a political subject to the "heroic radical[s]" (Beveridge and Koch 2017:38). While dissensus and disruption are cornerstones of Rancière's thinking, rather than attempting to police the boundaries of "true politics", Rancière (2010) insists that politics can occur anywhere and can be enacted by anyone. Rancièrian political subjectification is far from being identified with the heroic and/or revolutionary act. In his *Proletarian Nights*, an investigation of proletarian subjectification in the 19th century, Rancière (2012:10) demonstrates how seemingly mundane acts—like refusing to use the time of the night to reproduce one's labour power to instead read and write poetry and political texts—were an integral part of "transgressing the barrier that separates those who think from those who work with their hands" and, thus, key in the formation of proletarian subjectivity. Nevertheless, Rancière's writings never engage with the everyday practices and tensions of becoming a collective political subject (Karaliotas 2017). As he writes, "the weakness of my work isn't so much having sacrificed individual

subjectivisation to collective subjectivisation but the opposite" (Rancière 2016:118). There is, therefore, a need to further investigate the everyday practices and struggles that shape the collective political subject.

An engagement with the forging of solidarities through political struggle can provide fruitful insights in this respect. As Samaddar (2009:79) suggests, the "[p]olitical subject is formed through political solidarity ... for it is solidarity, which often appears as the subject". Featherstone's account of solidarities as "world-making processes" (2012:16) foregrounds the role of solidarity-making in "the process of politici[s]ation" (2012:7). Contrary to accounts of solidarity based on likeness or as "just part of the binding together of pre-existing communities" (Featherstone 2012:7), "political solidarity" (Mohanty 2003) is "a relation forged through political struggle [and] seeks to challenge forms of oppression" (Featherstone 2012:5). It is contentious, generative of political subjectivities and inventive of new socio-spatial imaginaries (Agustín and Jørgensen 2019). Similarly to Rancière's insistence not to reduce political subjectification to any given identity or to a goals-based approach, such a reading of solidarity opens up important ways for understanding the political bonds forged through political subjectification. Here, the forging of solidarities emerges not as a by-product of political activity but rather as "active in shaping political contestation" (Featherstone 2012:7). Solidarities, in other words, are assembled through contesting the existing ordering of places, roles and functions and can, in turn, contribute in re-imagining and materialising new ways of being and doing in-common (Kaika 2017). In this line of argument, the notion of equals in solidarity aims to capture precisely the everyday words and deeds of solidarity-making and how these shape politicisation and collective political subjects.

Spatialisation and the opening of spaces and infrastructures of dissensus (Kariolias 2019) are an integral part of solidarity-making and political subjectification. "The essential work of politics is the configuration of its own space. It is to make the world of its subjects and its operations seen" (Rancière 2010:45). Political subjectification and solidarity-making are "space-making action[s]" (Dikeç 2013:88) that materialise through "different ways of extending bodies, objects and practices into space" (Vasudevan 2015:318). Migrant squats are socio-material infrastructures that uproot racist regimes by re-appropriating contested spaces and experimenting with alternative ways of organising everyday social reproduction (Dadusc et al. 2019). They are part of a prefigurative praxis of constructing political spaces of equality where care is re-signified as "a radical praxis of collective liberation" (Dadusc 2019:603). While place-based, these practices and solidarities are not place-bound. As geographers highlight, solidarities are a key way in which decidedly localised initiatives articulate multiple, virtual and material, local and trans-local, links with other movements forming multi-faceted political networks and expanding the sense of community beyond and across borders (Agustín and Jørgensen 2019). A form of political infrastructure is, thus, assembled through practices of solidarity extending from specific places, like Orfanotrofio, to the urban fabric to the rest of the world.

These spaces and spatialities provide the common grounds for ongoing encounters between heterogeneous participants, "continually generat[ing]

sentiments, ideas, values and practices that manifest and encourage new modes of being" (Gould 2009:178). Solidarity-making provides the spaces to ground a practice of "translating difference and the common" (Curcio 2010:464) between participants in order "to imagine new spatial and political constellations" (Mezzadra and Sakai 2014:24). Heterogeneity and difference, in this way, are not seen as something that is impeding common political struggles. Rather, the political task becomes the forging of "transversal alliances of solidarity" (Tazzioli and Walters 2019:183) through "the claiming of differences and learning to use these differences as bridges rather than as barriers between us" (Lorde 2009:201). Solidaristic practices and their generative ability to "shape new relations, new images, new connections" (Featherstone 2012:19) are pivotal in this respect. Nevertheless, there are no a priori guarantees that these practices will automatically resolve the tensions emerging within solidarity-making and political subjectification. Solidarity is a "political relation without guarantees" (Featherstone 2012:245) and the practice of translation "always risks turning bridges into barriers" (Mezzadra and Nielson 2013:273). This is even more pertinent when solidarity refers to the building of horizontal alliances between migrants and locals, as this involves many challenges, such as the discrepant temporalities of struggle, language barriers as well as the incompatibility between the dominant gendered roles and relations in some ethnic groups and the egalitarian views of political squatters (Martínez 2017; Tazzioli and Walters 2019). And yet, it is precisely through such everyday tasks and translations that struggling communities become articulated (Arampatzi 2017b) and negotiate the *we* of their collective action (Karaliotas 2017).

In what follows, we read the trajectory of Orfanotrofio's squat through this analytical lens focusing on four interrelated points as these emerge from the preceding analysis on the role of solidarity-making in political subjectification: solidarity as a political imaginary and praxis; the spatialities of political subjectification and solidarity-making; Orfanotrofio as a site where difference and tensions were negotiated; and the relations between Orfanotrofio and the police. Before doing so, we briefly situate Orfanotrofio in the context of Thessaloniki's long summer of migration.

Contemporary Migrants' Struggles in Thessaloniki and the Long Summer of Migration

Since the early 2000s, migration flows to Greece and Thessaloniki began to diversify beyond the first wave of migration to the city since WWII that came predominantly from the Balkans and mostly Albania. People fleeing war zones or dictatorial regimes in Asia, the Middle East and Africa, started arriving in EU's southeastern end as part of an intensifying wave of migration. Arriving in Thessaloniki, newcomers became caught up in a prolonged regime of precariousness, which deepened since the outbreak of the "Greek crisis". Exploitative and abusive working conditions were coupled with a sharp increase in racist and xenophobic discourses as well as physical attacks and pogroms by the Golden Dawn neo-Nazis, the extreme-right and the police (Dalakoglou 2013). As wars and conflicts

escalated in Northern Africa and mainly Syria, the number of people arriving in Greece reached unprecedented levels, turning the country into one of the prime loci of the long summer of migration.

In 2015, approximately one million refugees made their way to Greece by land and sea, marking the biggest population movement since WWII (UNHCR 2019).³ In this context, during the summer of 2015, the Greek-Macedonian border at Idomeni became a popular passage for people on their way to central/western Europe. Concomitantly, Thessaloniki, located close to Idomeni, became a major stopover for newcomers. Soon, however, the crossing-point turned into a filtering point for the identification of “genuine refugees” with “little or any legal basis and ... without the application of proper asylum procedures” (Christodoulou et al. 2016:324). In November 2015, this filtering point transformed into a “holding space” as part of a chain-reaction of border policing and gate-keeping practices of various EU and Balkan states (Christodoulou et al. 2016:325). A makeshift refugee camp was created in Idomeni—hosting at its peak more than 14,000 people—supported by NGOs and activists. On 1 December 2015, the European Council ordered a Frontex eviction operation at Idomeni. Since then, the majority of the NGOs left the area and refugees were urged to move to Athens and Thessaloniki.

In line with the widespread adoption of bordering practices and policing technologies by EU states (Maestri and Hughes 2017), the Greek state—under SYRIZA’s (Coalition of the Radical Left) government—established “First Reception Centres” on the islands and “Temporary Accommodation Centres” (TACs) in the mainland. Eleven TACs were created on the outskirts of Thessaloniki, hosting around 8200 people in 2016. TAC residents only came into contact with representatives of state authorities or NGOs in the camps, being excluded from Thessaloniki’s social and political life. Newcomers were to be kept away from the urban fabric—invisible to urban dwellers and silenced as de-humanised objects in need of care. As the “normative foundations of solidarity” in Europe (Christodoulou et al. 2016:322) were trembling, multiple grassroots solidarity initiatives and migrant political acts began to challenge this dominant ordering through activities ranging from housing squats by and for newcomers to solidarity kitchens and legal support teams. Against the backdrop of the generalised socially-induced precarity (Butler 2015) created at the intersection of the “Greek financial crisis” and the “refugee crisis”, locals and newcomers sought to trace and address their common problems through the building of solidarity networks. Already existing networks built as part of anti-austerity struggles (Arampatzi 2017a; Roussos 2019) constituted the basis on which migrant solidarity networks were fabricated in Greek and other European cities (Dadusc et al. 2019; Stierl 2019). It is within this sequence of politicisation of migration that Orfanotrofio’s squat occurred.

Orfanotrofio’s Housing Squat: Living and Fighting in Common, Re-Configuring Thessaloniki’s Partitioning

In December 2015, a group of leftist and anarchist activists from Thessaloniki and other European cities together with a group of migrants and refugees

vacating Idomeni occupied a vacant building near the city-centre to create a housing structure for newcomers. The building's history as a housing squat, between 2005 and 2012, ignited the collective memory of activists who revived the squat to "house migrants and provide a place for the concentration of struggles related to migration issues" (Orfanotrofio 2016a:1). In the months that followed—up until its eviction and demolition on 27 June 2016—Orfanotrofio operated as a self-organised, horizontal structure that housed around 100 newcomers—mainly from Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan—and occasionally a small number of European activists participating in the solidarity movement. Most newcomers arrived in Orfanotrofio driven out of necessity to find a safe space to live away from the Idomeni makeshift camp. While they were informed about the nature of the squat and the danger of criminalisation and prosecution, the sense of safety and solidarity cultivated among participants operated as a safety belt for them. As Evi, a member of the squat's legal group, mentioned "we clarified to everyone that Orfanotrofio is not the safest choice in legal terms, but we also highlighted that we will be in solidarity with them in any case" (Activist, Interview 2017).

Simultaneously, Orfanotrofio served as a political infrastructure for struggle and solidarity-making. For its participants, such solidarities were to be built *across differences* and not grounded in likeness. Bridging these differences was the participants' dissensus against institutional and everyday racism in Thessaloniki. In the words of Orfanotrofio's assembly: "Against the impasse created by power, against the dilemma between 'life not worthy of living or death', we answer with solidarity in practical and political terms. Part of this, are the housing squats that materialise the self-organization of the social needs of locals and migrants" (Orfanotrofio 2015:1).

The political framework underlying Orfanotrofio's operation was mainly formed by activists, before the arrival of migrants in the squat. Despite different political ideologies, Orfanotrofio's activists reached a consensus on three basic demands: "(1) free movement for all; (2) free access to healthcare for all; and (3) papers for all migrants" (Orfanotrofio 2016a). Moreover, a clear set of "rules", dictating collective ownership, horizontal decision-making and opposition to gender, religious and ethnic discrimination, was established to regulate everyday life in the squat.

Orfanotrofio was a space that balanced between being a social squat (Martínez 2017) providing shelter to those in need, and a political squat (*ibid.*) against racist and xenophobic anti-migration policies and practices. Hence, a complex and unstable, yet empowering, process of creating a collective political subject took place in the squat. In what follows, we demonstrate how Orfanotrofio's working existence acted as a relatively durable urban political infrastructure; as a key node in putting a city of solidarity in confrontation with the city of exclusion and ordering. We refrain, however, from romanticising Orfanotrofio either by portraying it as a space of pure equality or by disregarding its limitations. Rather, we unpack the squat's internal tensions and the ways in which it encountered and intersected with the police order to elucidate both the potentialities and limitations of such spaces in reconfiguring the partition of the urban sensible.

Solidarity as a Political Imaginary and Praxis: Beyond Racism and Humanitarianism

For Orfanotrofio's participants, solidarity as an imaginary and praxis was a political response to an order that saw newcomers as a threat, a vilified "other" to be policed or even eliminated. The opening of the squat's space was, thus, for local activists, in the first instance an act demonstrating that in opposition to exclusion and racism, "[w]e want migrants in our neighbourhoods, in our workplaces, in our homes and in our schools together with our children" (Orfanotrofio 2016b:3). Simultaneously, it was also a response to the depoliticising humanitarian responses that create(d) an asymmetry between "us"—the locals, the rescuers—and "them"—the refugees, the victims (Mezzadra 2018). These two logics of racism and charity share more than is immediately obvious: the "othering" of newcomers results in reducing migrants into de-humanised objects rather than subjects capable of engaging in politics (Kaika 2017:1276). For newcomers, the very act of denying to be accommodated in TACs was an act of asserting their autonomy as subjects striving for a "dignified life" (Sami, Refugee, Interview 2017) and capable of doing politics. Indeed, Orfanotrofio's assembly repeatedly criticised humanitarianism "as a decompression valve that rinses the consciousness of western people and *buries any political reading of migration issues*" (Orfanotrofio 2016c:1).

Contrary to approaches which (re)produced a distribution of roles and places that maintained a distancing between ethnic Greeks and newcomers as fundamentally distinct subjects, Orfanotrofio foregrounded dissensus with the logics of bordering, exclusion, inequality and the "wrongs" that these (re)produce as something that brought locals and newcomers together. Refusing and contesting frameworks of institutionalised or humanitarian solidarity based on pre-given identities, such as "citizen" and "refugee", political solidarity-making in Orfanotrofio was based on an account of equality in the here and now where the "right to have rights" was claimed and assumed through presence (Squire and Darling 2013) in Thessaloniki. Dissensus with the logic of the police was, thus, not the only grounds upon which Orfanotrofio was building. The second anchoring point for its imagining and practising of solidarity was the equality of each and every one of its participants. This logic fuelled a radical openness seeking to forge solidarities across differences. Similarly to what Lafazani (2017) observes for the case of City Plaza Hotel, newcomers in Orfanotrofio were neither romanticised as the new "revolutionary subjects" nor victimised as people in need of help and support. To quote Orfanotrofio's assembly:

we perceive refugees as equals, and through our solidarity we seek to trace our common concerns, to build relations and communities of struggle against the anti-migrant policies of Fortress Europe and to explore collective solutions to our common problems. (Orfanotrofio 2016c:2)

The *we* of Orfanotrofio was a plural and diverse collective in-the-making. A *we* that understood the common as grounded on the co-existence of difference and multiplicity seeking to always remain open to newcomers as equals (Rancière 2010). A *we* whose only precondition was the equality of each and everyone. A

we of equals in solidarity forged through struggle and in support of multiple struggles. Beginning from the presupposition of equality does not, of course, mean that power relations were not existent in the squat, but rather that equality was the starting point in a pre-figurative strategy in search of alternative ways of being, doing and saying in-common (Karaliotas 2017).

It was through everyday praxis in the spaces of Orfanotrofio that equals in solidarity sought to trace such ways. Orfanotrofio's everyday life was horizontally organised through two assemblies: one revolving around political issues, such as Greece's and EU's migration policies, organisation of solidarity acts and networking; and the other addressing practical issues around housekeeping. The necessity to organise two different assemblies stemmed from the twofold nature of Orfanotrofio, which operated both as a social *and* a political squat (Martínez 2017). Everyone was encouraged to participate in both assemblies. Yet, their transit status and language barriers hindered newcomers from actively participating in the political assembly. The housekeeping assembly, however, ran chiefly through newcomers' responsibility, with the activists' support when necessary. This latter assembly was, in turn, split into smaller working groups that managed everyday life on the basis of its inhabitants' equal participation in housekeeping activities.

This aspect of living-in-common was crucial and radically different from TACs. After visiting many official structures, Nizar described:

at the camps, people are just sitting, waiting and given something. They [NGO representatives] say "we will do this for refugees" and they leave. But, in Orfanotrofio we cooked together. We discussed together. I learnt to care of myself by myself ... This is the difference. (Refugee, Interview 2017)

Newcomers and activists in Orfanotrofio articulated a politics of inhabitation (Dadusc et al. 2019) and constructed, in material and affective terms, a political space of home (Brun and Fábos 2015). Cooking and preparing food may seem trivial activities but they embody significant connotations of care and belonging (Darling 2011). Instead of being provided with food, in Orfanotrofio's kitchen newcomers carved a space where they could perform everyday activities, like "being at home". Much like Darling's (2011) argument on tea-making in drop-in centres, by preparing food, newcomers performed the hosts; subjects who were at home, albeit temporarily. The homely space of Orfanotrofio opened up spaces for "meaningful encounters" where people discussed, laughed and played, creating an "everyday space of (be)friending" (Askins 2015). Importantly, this process of *making home* was entirely different from the housing practices orchestrated by official actors, exceeding statist limits of hospitality not only discursively but also through embodied, material and affective everyday praxis. Orfanotrofio was not just a space for *being housed*, but demarcated an active appropriation of space and social relations and an "affirmation of presence, a here-and-now praxis of existence" (Dadusc 2019:594). It was a "centre of collective life" (Federici 2012:147) where the everyday work of caring and reproduction were collectivised and distinctions such as "citizen" and "noncitizen" were put into question. Participants did not strive towards inclusion or abstract forms of justice "to come" but

appeared as equals in solidarity by disrupting exclusion and enacting a politics of rightful presence (Squire and Darling 2013).

Spatialities of Political Subjectification and Solidarity Networks

The re-appropriation of urban spaces from their allocation in the police order and the opening up of new spaces and spatialities was an integral part of Orfanotrofio's politics. To begin with, the act of squatting an unused building constituted a moment of rupture in the existing ordering of Thessaloniki. By occupying the building, activists and newcomers made an explicit political performance even prior to articulating their claims through words. As Butler (2015:19) states, "however important words are ... they do not exhaust the political importance of plural and embodied action". Squatters opposed in praxis the enclosure and policing of urban space and opened it up as a radical political infrastructure of dissensus. The squatted structure thoroughly disrupted the dominant ordering of the "refugee crisis" that sought to keep refugees invisible and away from everyday life in urban centres. Although two more migrant solidarity squats existed in Thessaloniki by December 2015, Orfanotrofio had a breakthrough impact on the city's socio-political situation both because of its broader popularity among local and European activists and its more intense and extrovert political practices. Moreover, the squat's location was a catalyst for the—albeit limited—participation of newcomers in the city's everyday life.

Being *in* the city, Orfanotrofio enabled newcomers to get to know Thessaloniki by walking in it and socialising with people in the neighbourhood. This was not easy for newcomers. Sami recalls his experience:

At first, I stayed in the building, learning English and taking care of myself. I was afraid to go outside, I didn't know the city. But one day, a guy from Switzerland gave me his bicycle ... Since then I cycle and walk often and now I know the city, I am not afraid of people; but this took time. (Refugee, Interview 2017)

Sami's insecurity about experiencing the city was common among Orfanotrofio's residents as a result of their psychological condition, their transit status and gender and cultural stereotypes. Activists informed newcomers about police controls and Thessaloniki's safest neighbourhoods (Nizar, Refugee, Interview 2017). Moreover, women activists encouraged women newcomers to use public transport and walk with them around the city (Mara, Activist, Interview 2017). Nevertheless, apart from those staying long-term in the squat, most newcomers preferred to socialise by visiting solidarity spaces in the neighbourhood or the city-centre, rather than other public spaces. Despite its limited geographical extension, the network of safe spaces that was gradually developed by Orfanotrofio's residents enabled new and more inclusive understandings of the city. Even sporadically using and appropriating urban spaces in Thessaloniki, newcomers enacted their social and spatial visibility. This was not only an act of citizenship—i.e. a disruptive and performative collective practice (Butler 2004; Isin 2017)—but also an act of dissensus; an act whereby "the unaccounted for" (Rancière 2010) enacted their equality. Rather than being just a rights claim-making process, appropriating

urban spaces radically questioned and destabilised normative understandings of belonging (Turner 2016). Even quotidian acts, such as walking in the street or cycling in the waterfront, were part of a performative politics of equality; acts through which newcomers refused to stay in the place assigned to them.

Orfanotrofio's infrastructure also acted as a nodal space in the articulation of plural political action, revolving around demonstrations and visits to TACs. Demonstrations had both embodied and discursive importance. The embodied and symbolic act of demonstrating in the city's streets disrupted their ordering as spaces of circulation, transforming them into spaces where thousands of bodies made political claims. Newcomers—subjects who were incapable of doing politics in the eyes of the police—came together with locals to articulate and voice political demands interrupting the city's everyday routines with slogans like "You talk about [migration] flows, we talk about lives" and "Our solidarity demolishes borders, fences and concentration camps". Moreover, solidarity visits to the Idomeni makeshift camp and TACs were employed as a means to demonstrate against their inhuman living conditions and provide psychological and material support to refugees living there. Importantly, such visits and demonstrations also sparked political discussions among activists and newcomers at Orfanotrofio and were an integral part in the process of individual and collective political subjectification. Karam's words are indicative in this respect:

When I went to camps, people at my age told me that "we need to go". And I told them "yes, you need to go but now you are here and you should do something to change things". I don't mean to fight with the police but to make more people understand that we are just humans. I don't feel like a refugee. I feel like a human, like all the others. Why can we not do things like other people? This is making me confused ... it's not fair. (Refugee, Interview 2017)

Karam's words manifest the importance of these insurgent practices for the politicisation of participating newcomers. Through both demonstrations and visits to TACs, migrant participants individually dis-identified from the ordering of newcomers as de-humanised objects and (re-)identified themselves as subjects who think and act politically. Simultaneously, these acts of dissensus fuelled the politicisation of migration. Local and newcomer participants in Orfanotrofio were opening up scenes for uttering political claims and curving up spaces for the formation of a collective political subject.

The forging of solidarity networks through Orfanotrofio further extended the reach of the reconfiguration of the urban sensible that the squat brought about. Orfanotrofio's operation was based on the solidarity of local and trans-local political initiatives while also receiving support from the neighbourhood. On the one hand, neighbours and activists from leftist and anarchist initiatives significantly contributed to the covering of the everyday needs of the squat's inhabitants. Local shop-owners and vendors of the local open-air market regularly provided food, fruits and vegetables but also heaters, mattresses or cleaning products (Nikoleta, Activist, Interview 2017). Simultaneously, many local political initiatives often undertook everyday responsibilities, such as cooking, and organised "solidarity bars" to financially support the squat. On the other hand, Orfanotrofio

forged trans-local solidarity networks with refugee solidarity initiatives from both elsewhere in Greece and abroad. Through these networks, solidarians shared information about the policing of migration and empowered each other through the organisation of open discussions, meetings and events.

Notwithstanding the significance of these solidarity networks, Orfanotrofio's participants often criticised large-scale solidarity events, valuing more the contribution of embodied everyday networks of solidarity. Indicative in this respect is the No Border Camp, organised in Thessaloniki in July 2016, whose contribution in the ongoing migrant struggles in Thessaloniki raised questions among local activists and newcomers. Activists from Thessaloniki emphasised that European activists often lacked a nuanced understanding of the situation in Thessaloniki. Anastasia, for instance, pointed towards a lack of alertness concerning the squat's protection from eviction or an emphasis on the articulation of political action rather than on covering Orfanotrofio's everyday needs (Activist, Interview 2017). Moreover, Farid mentioned that "No Border meant nothing for me. People came just to discuss, drink and go out and left. No Border was totally different from Orfanotrofio" (Refugee, Interview 2017). Despite the ambivalent attitude of newcomers and activists toward the No Border Camp, networks of solidarity, as Nicholls and Uitermark (2016) document with regards to undocumented migrant activism, were pivotal in securing the durability of the wider political movement around migration, in shaping Orfanotrofio's repertoire of political activity and, ultimately, in the formation of a collective in and through the squat.

By staging the possibility of locals and newcomers living and doing politics in-common as equals, Orfanotrofio thoroughly challenged the police partitioning of Thessaloniki's spaces and times seeking to depoliticise questions of migration and keep newcomers invisible and inaudible. In this sense, Orfanotrofio was a key node in a network that was putting a city of solidarity in confrontation with the city of exclusion; a network that was not only challenging the "wrongs" of the existing order but also articulating and performing equality in the here and now.

Translating the Common: Convergences and Tensions on the Terrain of Political Subjectification and Solidarity-Making

The squatted structure and its extensive spatialities opened up "intervals of subjectification: intervals constructed between identities, between spaces and places" (Rancière 1999:137). In coming-together and acting politically in Orfanotrofio, newcomers and locals begun to perform an act of "disidentification" from a fixed belonging in ethnic, sexual, religious, or territorial identities; an act through which they opened their identities to mutual exchange tracing solidarities across differences. Orfanotrofio was exactly that space where individual political subjectification was being translated to fuel the forging of a political community; the making of a collective political subject. This was a political community in-between different names, identities and statuses (see Rancière 2010): between citizenship and non-citizenship, between the migrant as a de-humanised "other" and a speaking human being, between a "transient and precarious population—migrants and austerity-hit Greeks" (Christodoulou et al. 2016:322)—and a dissenting collective

political subject. In this sense, Orfanotrofio offered “opportunities as well as tools for translating differences between views, between actions, and between subjectivities ... without reducing them to common denominators” (Stavrides 2014:548).

Nevertheless, this process of translation was far from being “linear and smooth” (Curcio 2010:474) or free from power relations. It would be naïve to portray Orfanotrofio as a space of pure equality. A key example in this respect is the negotiation of the squat’s political framework and everyday operation. The birth of Orfanotrofio was marked by a power imbalance. While Orfanotrofio was a space for the coming together of activists and newcomers as equals, local activists were those who took the initiative to organise the squat and “invited” newcomers to participate. Activists, thus, assumed a certain authority by forming the squat’s political framework and the key “rules” of everyday co-existence in its early days. Power imbalances were also fuelled by the fact that most newcomers saw Orfanotrofio as a temporary stopover in their journeys to Western Europe; a sense of temporality which oscillated in response to formal processes of border openings/closures. These differences concerning the aims and temporality of struggle as well as activists’ privilege and capital—money, status, cultural capital and so on (Martínez 2017)—undeniably marked political subjectification in and through Orfanotrofio, creating an uneven space with local activists driving the process.

Nevertheless, activists repeatedly expressed their willingness to step back and allow newcomers to participate in equal terms in decision-making. As Stella described “we made everything to avoid having people moving in different speeds, e.g. some who took decisions, others who cleaned ... But we tried a lot, it wasn’t easy” (Activist, Interview 2017). Similarly, Mara pointed out the importance of avoiding acting from a privileged position and giving space and time to newcomers to re-appropriate their lives and articulate their voices (Activist, Interview 2017). A crucial step toward this direction was taken when newcomers organised a second assembly or “house meeting” as they called it. Participation in the house meeting contributed to newcomers’ self-confidence and empowerment, paving the ground for their more central participation in the political assembly too. Even with the gradual participation of newcomers in the political assembly, however, a constant challenge was the communication between different participants, as they spoke many different languages, Greek, English, Arabic or Farsi. The majority of the assemblies were held in English but there was still the need to translate the discussion into Arabic or Farsi. Activists sought to address the non-participation of certain residents by arranging for translators to be present in every assembly. The task of translating was also undertaken by newcomers. This was a challenging task, especially during the first months when a wide range of issues were discussed, often in an unorganised and ad hoc way. Moreover, the translator was often in the difficult and uncomfortable position of having to mediate confrontations between, for instance, Farsi and Arabic speakers, often ending up being considered as some kind of judge. Thus, despite efforts to the contrary, barriers and structural inequalities did not, of course, wither away in Orfanotrofio. Spaces and processes like Orfanotrofio need to constantly reflect on how such

partitionings and inequalities are shaping their internal dynamics and strive to move beyond them (Tazzioli and Walters 2019).

Further problems remained contentious throughout the occupation, particularly relating to gender hierarchies and stereotypes for both newcomers and activists. Concerning newcomers, the majority of inhabitants were men, with women being only around 30%. Women were involved in the common affairs of the “house” in different degrees—depending on their family status, age or whether they came alone or with friends. Yet, while women participated in the assemblies, they were absent from public political activities in the city. Newcomer-women did not completely transcend gender norms assigning their “proper” place within the contours of the home, even in the case of Orfanotrofio, where home was a common politicising space. However, through their contact with female activists and the close interpersonal relations developed with them, they were encouraged to take initiatives, such as strolling around the city centre alone or expressing their needs and desires, without fear of the “male gaze”. Concerning female local activists, many interviewees referred to the prevalence of male and macho or older and allegedly more politically experienced figures in the assemblies. Women were more directly involved in the day-to-day organisation, while men were mainly involved with “larger” issues, such as the assemblies or the production of political discourse through brochures. Such discordant moments, where male and female activists are differently related to the everyday practices of activism, have also been observed by scholars in several recent political initiatives. Indicatively, Gonick (2016) narrates how male activists in Madrid prioritise practices of radical disobedience and revolution while failing to develop an affective interest on the different necessities of people affected by the crisis. Nevertheless, female activists’ involvement in Orfanotrofio changed the way some issues were discussed, inserting the concepts of care and everyday embodied experience with Orfanotrofios’ inhabitants. Women participants acted as critical bridge subjects (Taylor 1999); often behind-the-scenes in terms of mainstream squatting political activities, but holding key roles in forging solidarity bonds among locals and newcomers in terms of everyday life and organisation.

Finally, the squat’s networking and public image was also a source for conflicts. Indicative here is the decision-making process on networking with local media. While Orfanotrofio rejected the covering of its activities from dominant media, networking with alternative media was an issue under constant negotiation. For instance, when a leftist online outlet approached the squat to publicise its activities, a long discussion ensued on whether this should be allowed. While activists’ stance was mainly formed based on their different ideological positioning, newcomers’ attitude depended on their legal status, their degree of politicisation and/or their gender and cultural background. Nabil, a Syrian refugee not politically active in Syria described:

I don’t understand what exactly they [the activists] talk about ... I know that I fight for my freedom, for papers ... In Orfanotrofio, I have started to speak to other refugees and I also want to speak to journalists. I tell my friends that we should talk about what we want, it’s about justice ... (Refugee, Interview 2017)

Such negotiations are at the core of forming a collective political subject. By debating different positions, desires and needs, local and newcomer participants opened Orfanotrofio as a potential space of “transversal alliances of solidarity” (Tazzioli and Walters 2019:183). Given the challenges and difficulties analysed above, the building of common political claims was not always successful. Tensions were decisive for the internal relations in Orfanotrofio’s community and conflicts were often not resolved. Despite the difficulties they pose(d), however, such conflicts should be considered not only unavoidable but also necessary in translating individual political subjectification into the formation of a political community. A community of equals in solidarity, such as the one created in Orfanotrofio, is inherently incomplete and fractured. It is across differences, and not through homogeneity, that such communities are created. In Orfanotrofio, solidarity operated as a bridge—“situat[ing] people in relation and inter-dependence” (Rakopoulos 2016:143)—and as a site of tension. Instead of “flattening asymmetrical and racialised power relations” as often happens in humanitarian discourses that employ the language of solidarity (Tazzioli and Walters 2019:180), activists and newcomers in Orfanotrofio sought to acknowledge pre-existing power relations and rework them through performing equality in solidarity. In this context, tensions and negotiations constitute(d) the terrain for the formation of the collective political subject (Karaliotas 2017).

Orfanotrofio and Its Outside

Orfanotrofio was not an isolated island but a space that emerged through the re-appropriation and reconfiguration of the spaces of the existing urban order. The Greek Orthodox Church, the owner of the plot where Orfanotrofio was established, claimed its ownership rights multiple times through press releases and standing protests in front of the squat. On 27 June 2016, Orfanotrofio was forcibly evicted by the police and the building was subsequently demolished. Orfanotrofio’s eviction was not an individual case. It depicted a shift in SYRIZA’s stance toward refugee housing squats. After the signing of the EU-Turkey agreement,⁴ the Greek government adopted a more aggressive stance towards insurgent refugee solidarity initiatives. This was the period when two other refugee squats in Thessaloniki, Nikis and Hürriya, were also evicted. SYRIZA a left-wing party that had in previous years acted in solidarity with migrant activism and supported insurgent acts of citizenship like the 2011 hunger strike by 300 illegalised migrants, would, as a government, pit institutional solidarity against insurgent practices. According to the Deputy Minister for Citizen Protection, Nikos Toskas, the eviction of the squat was necessary, as it provided nothing more than shelter for 32 people, in comparison to TACs that housed 8500 people. In his words:

these squats are squats without a cause. They are a caricature of symbols that create insecurity, they provoke an illusion of freedom, they are not an expression of rights claiming ... The big effort is the *organised* effort, it is not the effort of self-organised actions ... Why did all these well-intended people that were gathered there not support the organised structures? (Toskas 2016:2)

Yet, Orfanotrofio's importance cannot be understood by just focusing on numbers. On the contrary, as the previous analysis emphasised, Orfanotrofio constituted a "home" where these people *lived with dignity*. As newcomers put it after the eviction: "This was home for me and my children, and for 30 more families ... We were living like one family and we came from all over the world. It was our school, it was our culture ... And just when we thought we were at last safe ... they decided we ought to live in the camps, far removed from the world" (Orfanotrofio 2016d:1).

It is this common political house organised by newcomers and activists that was "not in harmony with the general interest of the city and the state", as Toskas (2016:3) put it. Not because of its undeniable limitations but exactly because it refused to accept the de-politicised rendering of the "refugee crisis" as a "problem" to be solved through techno-managerial and humanitarian responses, foregrounding instead the equality of locals and newcomers as the common ground for politicising migration by building a city of solidarity in and against the city of exclusion, racism and bordering. It is this city of solidarity and the politicisation of migration that the evictions of refugee housing squats sought to silence.

For the government, Orfanotrofio's eviction was to be followed by the relocation of its refugee-inhabitants in TACs around the city; returning everyone to their allocated places. Orfanotrofio's eviction was followed by a wave of repression of similar initiatives in Athens and Thessaloniki. In 2019, the newly elected Government of New Democracy evacuated more than four refugee solidarity squats in Athens and residents were either transferred into formal structures or deported, depending on their legal status. These events undeniably mark a retreat of the solidarity movement staged during the long summer of migration. Nevertheless, the solidarities, practices, memories and imaginaries nurtured in Orfanotrofio and similar structures continue to inform the ongoing efforts to make Greek cities open to newcomers and fuel the collective imagination around migration politics. Despite their precariousness and instability, solidarity practices are sedimented and can get transmitted over time. In this sense, Orfanotrofio was part of a network of spaces of "unstable mobile commoning" (Tazzioli and Walters 2019:182), which entails an ongoing "laborious work of translation across spaces of practical knowledges and of their reactivation over time" (Tazzioli and Walters 2019:183). Talking about Orfanotrofio's legacy, Kostas emphasised that "squats are not their walls. Of course, the building had a historical importance for us but beyond this, people continued to maintain relations [after the eviction] and to fight together" (Activist, Interview 2017). Interpersonal relations of trust, solidarity bonds and radical political imaginaries constitute the solid ground upon which the collective political subject—forged in and through Orfanotrofio and other solidarity squats and initiatives—continues to expand and translate its struggles even in mundane and everyday ways. As Greece is currently experiencing a new wave of migration, similar initiatives continue to emerge across the country and pre-existing movements turn their activities to solidarity with newcomers building on the experiences and solidarities forged through Orfanotrofio and other similar structures.

Conclusion

In this article, we recounted the story of Orfanotrofio's housing squat to provide a nuanced reading of the possibilities, challenges and limitations facing the struggles staged by newcomers and activists in solidarity in the wake of the Greek long summer of migration. To do so, we staged a dialogue between Rancière's political writings and scholarship on the spatialities of solidarity-making and migrant activism. Rancière's conceptualisation of politics and political subjectification as a world-making activity articulated around the presupposition of equality has served to foreground the generative role that spaces like Orfanotrofio hold in disrupting the exclusionary ordering of our cities by politicising migration and staging a collective political subject bringing together newcomers and locals. Yet, highlighting Rancière's lack of emphasis on collective political subjectification, we turned to geographical scholarship on solidarity and recent work on squatting and migration to illuminate the everyday words and deeds of caring and reproduction but also tensions and power relations that shape processes of collective political subjectification. Bringing together these bodies of work, we introduced the notion of *equals in solidarity* to understand, theorise and analyse the everyday workings of the spatialised and performative processes of collective political subjectification unfolding in spaces like Orfanotrofio. In a Rancièrian line of argument, rather than designating an end-state, equals in solidarity is more a performative presupposition that informs and fuels the politics of spaces like Orfanotrofio; a presupposition vindicated (or not) in their everyday workings. We, thus, proposed four interrelated entry points in analysing the trajectory of initiatives like Orfanotrofio: solidarity as a political imaginary and praxis; the spatialities of political subjectification and solidarity-making; translating the common; and the relations between emancipatory initiatives and the police. Brought together these lines of analysis provide for a nuanced understanding of everyday collective political subjectification lacking in Rancière's political work. Simultaneously, drawing on Rancière's work, they foreground how solidarity-making reconfigures the partitioning of our cities by staging and performatively enacting a world where newcomers and locals live and do politics in-common.

Reading Orfanotrofio through this lens, we traced how it constituted the opening of a political space and infrastructure where newcomers and locals came together to discuss common political problems and devise common political strategies. Coming-together to live and fight in-common, newcomers and locals refused to observe the gap separating them in the police order and disrupted the logics of racism and humanitarianism seeking to construct migrants as de-humanised objects to be policed and ordered—if not eliminated—or in need of help. Solidarity was instead the political imaginary and praxis shaping Orfanotrofio's workings and challenging the dominant partitioning of the urban. A key element in this process was the opening up of specific political spaces and the carving out of political spatialities through the networking of solidarity initiatives. On the one hand, Orfanotrofio's infrastructure challenged the dominant ordering that kept migrant bodies invisible from Thessaloniki's everyday life as it made possible the wider participation of newcomers in urban life while also enabling the staging of political acts like demonstrations and solidarity visits. On the other, the squat also

became a key node in the wider networking of migrant solidarity movements, shaping them and being shaped by them.

Foregrounding everyday life in Orfanotrofio, we traced how through these acts and practices locals and newcomers began to dis-identify with their previous subject positions and negotiate the formation of a collective political subject. Zooming in on the workings of the squat, we demonstrated the generative role of solidarity-making in negotiating and bridging differences between individuals as well as political imaginaries and practices. Nevertheless, we also insisted that this process of translation is never a straightforward task but is rather an uneven process marked by power relations, inequalities and tensions. The perpetuation of a divide and hierarchy between activists and newcomers and the reproduction of gendered power relations in the spaces of the squat are two of the most prominent ways in which dominant power relations also shaped Orfanotrofio's life despite participants' efforts. It is here actually that a radical insistence on the presupposition of equality can serve as a constant reminder of how internal exclusions and power relations also—in part—shape solidarity-making and how these can be negotiated.

These internal challenges are not the only ones faced by migrant movements. We highlighted how initiatives like Orfanotrofio and their networking face the question of duration and endurance in the midst of a hostile ordering of the city. We insist on the need to resist the temptation to either romanticise or to fully dismiss the political potentialities of initiatives like Orfanotrofio. Rather, we argue that Orfanotrofio and the solidarities forged in and around it played a pivotal role in putting a city of equality and solidarity in confrontation with the city of inequality, exclusion and racism. As Orfanotrofio's story also attests, assembling this city of equality will always face multiple and diverse challenges, limitations and setbacks. It will often fail in the face of brutal exclusion and deeply unequal power relations as well as internal tensions. Nevertheless, this is not a reason to dismiss the transformative potentialities of such forms of "impossible activism" (Nyers 2003:1080) but rather to fully embrace the inherently open logic of equality and solidarity-making. Even in their short-lived working existence such spaces encounter, challenge and reshape the police ordering of our cities. They stage an emancipatory politics without guarantees: a politics whose outcome is never a given but insists on the equality of each and every one.

Acknowledgements

We thank the editor and the four anonymous reviewers for their generous and constructive feedback that helped clarify and sharpen our arguments. We also thank Walter Nichols and Thomas Swerts for the invitation to be part of the special issue and their support in preparing the manuscript. Thanks also to Maria Karagianni, Aliki Koutlou and Ana Santamarina Guerrero for their comments on earlier drafts.

Matina Kapsali acknowledges funding from the State Scholarships Foundation (IKY) through the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning" in the context of the project "Scholarships programme for post-graduate studies—2nd Study Cycle".

Endnotes

¹ Throughout the article we refer to Orfanotrofio's migrant and refugee participants as newcomers in order to move beyond the police(d) categories of "migrant" and "refugee" and signify the squat's political attitude (see also Rancière 2010).

² Fieldwork in Orfanotrofio was conducted as Kapsali's PhD research (Kapsali 2019).

³ Since then, and until November 2019, more than 300,000 additional people have arrived in Greece.

⁴ Signed on 18 March 2016, the agreement stipulated that all irregular migrants arriving from Turkey to Greek islands should be returned to Turkey and resulted in delays in asylum processes, differentiated treatment of nationalities and the worsening of living conditions for migrants living on islands.

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