Video-activism and small-scale resistance: The Visual Rhetoric of YouTube Videos by the Greek Anarchist Group *Rouvikonas*

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Introduction

April 12, 2018, Athens-Greece: Rouvikonas (a Greek anarchist group) invades at the offices of VresNET, a Greek company in Athens, to protest against the unjust firing of a pregnant woman employee. Its intervention is recorded by one of the group members and uploaded on the movement's YouTube channel. The video shows a group of three to four people invading the offices and protesting about the situation to one of the employees at the offices. They provide information about the firing of the woman and her mistreating by the company. No faces can be seen. One of the members forewarns that if the company does not do justice to the employee they will come back and retaliate. This is just one example of a series of short videos that the specific social movement has uploaded on its own YouTube channel.

The twenty-first century witnessed the development of a massive wave of protests around the world, as a result of the 2007/8 financial crisis and the subsequent 'austerity' policies that were imposed in many European countries. While there is a rich body of literature on mass mobilisations (Flesher Fominaya, 2014; della Porta, 2015), smaller scale resistance and

solidarity initiatives have attracted much less attention (Rovisco, Veneti and Poulakidakos, 2018). As a result of the long-lasting financial crisis, many European countries saw the emergence of new social and solidarity initiatives that offer a rich terrain for examination to anyone interested in exploring new forms of protest and urban resistance (Biekart and Fowler, 2013; Douzinas, 2013). In this chapter, we look at the case of the Greek anarchist group Rouvikonas (Rubicon) for the purpose of examining the methods it employs in order to challenge power, communicate its causes and identity and gain the public's attention.

Since 2015, Rouvikonas has maintained a steady presence in Greek public life, through its diverse forms of protest; protests aimed at expressing its discontent towards the neoliberal (favour free-market capitalism) capitalist agenda and having as their main targets various politicians, political parties, governmental institutions as well as businesses. Rouvikonas makes a particularly interesting case study as, in contrast to most post-2010 social movements in Greece which keep a safe distance from political parties and specific ideologies (e.g. the Greek Indignants), this movement is characterised by a clear political ideology rooted in anarchism, which, to a great extent, defines its strategy and tactics. Moreover, the group has been the cause of much controversy in Greek public discourse as has been described mostly by mainstream media as showing solidarity to national terrorist groups.

Of particular interest to the study of social movements, Rouvikonas capitalises on the affordances of new media technologies, namely through the creation of videos that capture the group's protest activities and which are then broadcasted on its own YouTube channel. A considerable and significant body of literature has shown that new media technologies, particularly social media, are increasingly important in protest movements for communication and organisation (Cammaerts, Mattoni and McCurdy, 2013; Mattoni and

Treré, 2014). Studies on social protest have examined the novel ways in which activists construct their messages through the use of symbols, images, words, music and the appropriation of space and then disseminate them through various online platforms in order to communicate their causes and identity to wider audiences (Poell and Van Djik, 2018). The use of imagery holds a central role in such communication practices, as it allows movements to produce visual rhetoric "a form of communication that uses images for creating meaning or constructing an argument," usually in an emotional register, for the purposes of persuasion (Bulmer & Buchanan-Oliver, 2006: 55). Within contexts of the prevalence of symbolic communication and imagery with respect to protest movements, this chapter examines Rouvikona's communication strategy and tactics through its utilisation of visual rhetoric. We argue that Rouvikonas uses video activism, through the deployment of YouTube videos, in order to communicate its collective identity and make its voice being heard by bypassing mainstream media. Our analysis sits on social movements and the use of new media technologies, and visual rhetoric scholarship. Rouvikonas makes a great example of how small-scale social movements capitalise on new media technologies to get their message to a wider audience. Through a mixed, qualitative and quantitative, content analysis of Rouvikonas' YouTube videos, we endeavour to contribute to current literature on video activism studies (Mateos and Gaona, 2015; Askanius, 2013).

Grass-roots Resistance in Greece and the Case of *Rouvikonas*

Following the signing of the bailout treaty in May 2010, Greece witnessed an unprecedented wave of anti-austerity protests involving mass mobilisations.[i] This anti-austerity resistance came about as much as a response to the austerity policies imposed on Greece and the subsequent dismantling of the welfare state (Simiti, 2014: 4-5), as an attempt to find new solutions at the national level with regards to social inequality and political power

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distribution (Prentoulis and Thomassen, 2012: 6-7) at a time when citizens had lost faith in traditional political systems and institutions (Rovisco, et. al., 2018). Much of this anti-austerity resistance was enacted by autonomous actors that embrace principles of non-partisanship (Kaldor and Selchow, 2013), though as Kanellopoulos et al. (2016:114-115) argue, Greek leftist parties were also involved in these mobilisations.

In Greece, beyond the mass mobilisations, collective action has also been practiced through everyday forms of grassroots resistance and solidarity initiatives, such as solidarity economy initiatives, social pharmacies, food banks and other such collective/social initiatives (Rovisco et al., 2018; Vaiou and Kalandides, 2017). As Vaiou and Kalandides (2017: 451) argue "daily routines of solidarity produce new interactions between people, create new spaces of emotional or material support, induce practices of exchange and inevitably conflict." In their study of the Greek 'Do Not Pay' social movement, Rovisco et al. (2018) outline how the movement employed a series of micro-acts of resistance, such as the blocking of house confiscations and reconnecting electricity cut-offs to private households, to alleviate some of the effects of the crisis. As Rovisco et al. (2018:42) argue, the movement aims at "disseminating the rationale of civic disobedience, through a grassroots activism, against the unfair legislations and policies that suppress the lower and middle classes of society."

Within this climate of political and social crisis, characterised by a growing anti-capitalist sentiment, other more radical activist groups have also emerged. One such example is the case of Rouvikonas, a Greek anarchist movement that was formed in 2013 primarily by those participating in the VOX squat in the area of Exarchia[ii]. According to police sources, the group consists of approximately 120 to 150 members (Chatzistavrou, 2018: 258). What differentiates this movement from those mentioned above, is that Rouvikonas' ideology is predicated on the classic principles of anarchism (for an introduction on anarchism see:

Heywood, 2017:137-162). Defining anarchism has always been a contentious issue, as anarchist struggles are driven by diverse theoretical perspectives and methodological influences, but "do share commitments towards non-authoritarian organization based on mutual aid, affinity-based organizing and prefigurative politics" (Clough and Blumberg, 2012: 340). Rouvikonas self-identifies as a "political, fighting, anarchist formulation" that advocates stateless societies and whose main purpose is to overturn the *status quo* and support social struggles against exploitation and oppression (Rouvikonas, 2017). The movement ensures that any action it initiates is clearly carried out in its name, as they want to be the sole responsible for their political activity. The movement's primary targets include politicians, parties and mainstream media, as well as well-known businessmen. According to Giorgos Kalaitzidis, a member of the movement, Rouvikonas chooses targets that "should be able to speak for themselves" (Rouvikonas, 2017).

Rouvikonas employs a variety of tactics ranging from occupation of offices, the distribution of flyers and paint attacks, to more aggressive ones that include the destruction of property. Recent examples include: paint attacks at the Turkish, French and Austrian embassies,an attack (smashing windows and throwing paints) at the Canadian Embassy, due to the Canadian government's support for the Eldorado Gold mining company, which was responsible for the mass destruction of natural habitat in the Chalkidiki region, the destruction of newly installed electronic ticket barriers at Athens metro stations, and the smashing of glass doors at the offices of Novartis, a Swiss pharmaceuticals firm which has been involved in a series of financial and political scandals (The Economist, 2018). The movement acknowledges that some of its actions violate the law, but argues that its ideology justifies political violence, as potentially inevitable in such political battles (Rouvikonas, 2017). Such perception is being made clearer in what Graeber argues that anarchism has

"tended to be an ethical discourse about revolutionary practice", stressing that revolutionary means must echo desired ends (Graeber, 2009:106 in Clough and Blumberg, 2012:338). Issues about injustices are central to Rouvikonas' discourse and subsequently reflected to the movement's protest tactics and selection of targets. Giorgos Kalaitzidis, (member of the movement) argues that "we believe that political violence is an integral part of social movements across time and countries. [...] However, using violence comes with pre-requisites: it should be effective, just, ethical, and to be understood by the people. Thereupon the targets need to be self evident and not subject to any moral doubts." (Rouvikonas, 2017). Rouvikonas unconventional and more radical tactics along with allegations regarding the group's relationship to the Greek urban guerrilla group Conspiracy of the Cells of Fire and Dimitris Koufontinas, a member of the 17 November terrorist organisation, have raised much controversy in Greek society.

 A predominantly negative portrayal of the group, in the Greek and international mainstream media, relies on a very negative, mainstream - both historical and contemporary – portrayal and conception of anarchism as developed in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Europe and America; whereby "individual acts of violence by discontented members confirmed for the mainstream the inherent criminal nature of the entire movement" (Goyens, 2009:441; Merriman 2009). As with other social movements' protests, to a great extend mainstream media tend to marginalise the protesters and delegitimise their causes through an obsessive focus on violent confrontations even if these only burst out on the fringes of a protest (Xu, 2013).

Visual Rhetoric and Video-activism

The intensive use of new media technologies by activists to transform the communication and organisation of protest has generated a considerable scholarly interest, and it is not possible here to do full justice to the depth and breadth of the debates and concepts one can find therein (Cammaerts, 2018; Castells, 2015). Instead, we concentrate on the literature that deals with the visual dimension of social movements' communication practices and in particular the literature exploring the visual rhetoric of video-activism - and how this has been employed in order for movements to communicate their collective identities and activist practices.

Visual rhetoric, or visual strategies used for persuasion and the construction of meaning, is not a new practice for social movements, but its importance has been amplified by new media technologies (Hocks, 2003). Olson, Finnegan and Hope (2008: 3) define visual rhetoric as, "symbolic actions enacted primarily through visual means, made meaningful through [cultural context]". The main purpose of such symbolic visual actions is to influence and persuade audiences through visual means (Olson et al., 2008). Images help us to understand the world around us and to form opinions and develop attitudes (Machin and Polzer, 2015). Visuals have considerable persuasive power, being less intrusive than words and able to evoke strong emotional responses (Lilleker, 2019; Rodriguez and Dimitrova, 2011). Protest is intrinsically emotive, especially for, but not only with respect to, those protesting (Jasper, 1998; Juris, 2008). In the context of protest, emotional imagery is used in order to influence and affect an audience's perspective in a favourable way and to elicit and develop empathy (DeLuca, 1999; Johnson, 2007). However, as Bloomfied and Doolin (2012: 506) argue, such use can also prove to be tricky as "there is a risk that the emotional dissonance experienced

by the viewer can instead lead to anger at the protesters themselves" (Sandlin & Callahan, 2009 cited in Bloomfield and Doolin, 2012).

A rich body of literature has shown how contemporary social movements and new activism use images and symbols (in various forms such as photos, internet memes and posters and spaces) to express their goals and identities (Blaagaard, 2019), to reignite civic engagement (Adi, Gerodimos and Lilleker, 2018), to attract and shape media coverage, and to win the support of a range of publics (DeLuca, 1999). Doerr (2017) and Rovisco (2017) have shed light on protesters' struggles for visibility and the ways in which images and specific locations can acquire symbolic significance in a transnational communicative space. From the Indignados encampments in various cities in 2011, to the Gezi Park protests in Istanbul in 2014 and the Occupy squares, the use of space has always been central to social movements. In their study of the rhetoric of place, Endres & Senda-Cook (2011) argue that the appropriation and (re)construction of place can be considered a rhetorical tactic employed by social movements. They focus on "how words and bodies interact in and with place" (Endres & Senda-Cook 2011:258). To do so, they conceptualise place-as-rhetoric in three distinctive ways: first, protesters may "build on a pre-existing meaning of a place to help make their point"; secondly, "protesters can temporarily reconstruct the meaning (and challenge the dominant meaning) of a particular place", and finally, "repeated reconstructions over time can result in new place meanings" (259). Within such a paradigm then, the utilisation of place can constitute rhetorical tactics for protests working towards social change.

Such uses of images, symbols and places also provide examples of the ingenuous ways in which activists appropriate new communication technologies in order to extend their action repertoire and achieve the goals associated with their struggles (Cammaerts, Mattoni and

McCurdy, 2013; Mattoni and Treré, 2014; Cammaerts, 2018; Prentoulis and Kyriakidou, 2019). As Treré, Jeppesen and Mattoni (2017:407) argue "the ways in which digital technologies are imagined, including how specific perceived meanings, values, capabilities, and ideologies are ascribed to them, shape the practices developed to engage with them and can thereby configure distinct types of digital activism." The recent wave of social movements has been actively engaged in the creation of websites, podcasts, blogs, video activism and much more, in terms of the utilisation of new communication technologies. Research on the non for-profit sector, has shown that such organisations use different types of videos to tell their stories in emotional ways that enable them to effectively communicate their causes and build their identities (Alexander & Levine, 2008). In a similar manner, social movements create their own videos and capitalise on the affordances of social media, which, as Waters and Jones (2011:253) argue, facilitates control over the sharing of content and thus enables the shaping of the organisation's messages and identity.

Mateos and Gaona (2015: 2) describe video activism as "an audiovisual discursive practice that sets out to counter a discursive abuse or gap and is carried out by actors outside the dominant power structures." Such audiovisual practice, when deployed by activists, constitutes a political intervention (Buchloh, 1985; Harding 2001; Widgington, 2005). One that can include various objectives, such as; the construction of a collective identity, education, denunciation, and social rebellion with the aim of bringing about social change (Mateos & Gaona, 2015). Despite a burgeoning interest in video activism, the lack of a comprehensive conceptual framework and few systematic classifications do not yet allow for any comparative studies.

Among the more systematic studies, Askanius (2013: 5-8) has proposed a taxonomy, consisting of five types of video activism, designed to facilitate an analysis of such video production. These include 1) mobilisation videos, "calling for political action", 2) witness videos, "documenting specific unjust conditions or political wrong-doings/doers, police brutality, human rights violations etc.", 3) documentation videos, that "document activist marches, speeches, community meetings, direct actions, [...]", 4) archived radical videos, "from historical Left-wing collectives", and 5) political mash-up videos, "the amalgamation of multiple source materials that are montaged together to construct a political argument." Preceding Askanius, other scholars have also contributed to this field of study through the examination of similar and further aspects of video production and use, in an attempt to describe and analyse the aims of video activist productions – these include bearing witness (Gregory et al., 2005) and 'call for action' videos (MacPhee and Reuland, 2007). Other studies have pointed to the significance of revealing (mis)information about certain situations and events (Waugh, 1976), and to the educational potential of being able to disseminate valuable information and guidance for building skills that people can develop in order to be empowered (O´Neil and Wayne, 2008). Further, relevant literature has also examined the relationships between members of activist groups that are involved in video production, as well as the structures of dominance and responsibility that form within such groups (Lynn Petray, 2013).

Following a similarly structure-based approach, Presence (2014) has suggested a four-fold classification, through studying video activism in Britain in the late 1990s, which primarily focuses on the composition and relationships of the activist groups in charge of the video production practices. Examining NGOs video activism, Presence (2014) emphasises the impact that the supporting or funding bodies (e.g. governments), of groups utilising such

practices, may have on the transformative or revolutionary nature of the final outcome. He also suggests that video activism should be examined not only from the production perspective, but as a distribution and exhibition practice as well. Drawing on Presence's work, Mateos and Gaona (2015:10) suggest that video activist typologies should take into consideration parameters such as: "Type of communicative activity (production, exhibition, distribution, subtitling); Type of subject-producer (integrated or external, government or activist, etc.); Type of production (own production, collage, found footage, etc.); and type of discursive strategy."

Within this context and through focusing on the discursive strategies of activist videos, Mateos and Gaona (2015: 12-17) propose a taxonomy that consists of five categories: the first two, namely *document* and *rally call,* draw on previous work on witness and mobilising videos, as described above; the third category is called *re discursive reaction* and refers to the strategies of response employed to either challenge and alter a meaning that is circulated in the dominant media, offer new interpretations or reveal information that has been concealed; the fourth category concerns self-representation and the *construction of identity*; and the final one is the *didactic,* which describes "educational material dominated by an explanatory discourse aimed at facilitating the understanding and assimilation of ideas and approaches." Videos can play a key role with respect to self-representation and the construction of identity of social movements, through the production of discourses and frames that allow them to form meanings and establish ideological boundaries. Collectivity is still an important aspect of contemporary social movements, and as Poell and Van Djik (2018: 550) argue, "a 'collective sense of self' does emerge in the mass sharing of protest slogans and materials on social media platforms." This collective sense of self can be perceived as a manifestation of collective identity (Bakardjieva, 2015; Gerbaudo, 2015; Kavada, 2015).

Drawing upon this literature, we focus on two research questions:

RQ1: What kind of visual rhetoric is being produced by Rouvikonas' YouTube videos?

RQ 2: How does the movement use video-activism in order to communicate its collective identity?

Methodology

To answer these research questions, we conducted a mixed methods, qualitative and quantitative, content analysis (Schram, 2014) on the videos that Rouvikonas has uploaded on its YouTube channel. Such a methodological approach allowed us to analyse the movement's videos in order to explore their visual rhetoric and dissect the ways in which they construct identities and civic narratives. As of January 2019, the Rouvikonas YouTube channel had 2,592 subscribers. The sample analysed consisted of all the videos that were uploaded at the time we began our analysis (see Appendix). The total number of videos was thirty-six. The analysis was conducted by both researchers during February 2019.

Coding Procedures and Coding Scheme

The qualitative visual analysis is supplemented by a quantitative content analysis that provides us with basic quantitative parameters of the videos under scrutiny. The unit of analysis for this research was the video. The whole duration of the video was examined and coded by both researchers. The data entry for the quantitative content analysis and the elaboration of the results was conducted with the use of SPSS 25.0. Both researchers participated in coding training sessions and discussions on the variables, in order to achieve a consensus for the final coding scheme. After the training sessions the coders' reliability was

measured with Cohen's K, with 75% as minimum reliability at the 95% significance level. Generic coding procedures included the title of the video, duration, date of upload, and number of views (until February 2019). Further, our scheme includes auditory and visual variables in order to reveal the visual rhetoric that Rouvikonas adopts as a means to communicate its messages and form the movement's collective identity. Such an examination allows us to gain a deeper understanding of the movement's values, motivations and tactics (Stewart, Smith and Denton, 2001).

More specifically, further to the generic variables, the coding scheme includes eighteen specific variables that derive from the current literature. In certain cases, these variables have been adapted so as to specifically address the scope of this research. For the type of content, we draw on Askanius' (2013) five types of video activism: mobilisation, witness, documentation, archives, and political mash-ups. In order to investigate the ways in which Rouvikonas formulates its collective identity through visual elements, we have included five variables: the appearance of the group members faces (yes, no), appearance of other agents' faces (yes, no), the number of active interlocutors on behalf of Rouvikonas (none, one, more than one, majority), the appearance of the movement's logo (Waters and Jones, 2011), and finally, drawing on (Poell & Van Dijck, 2018), we included an action frame (personal, collective). To provide a more detailed examination of the movement's identity we created a variable to identify the targets of their activities: governmental institutions, e.g. Ministries, public organisations, e.g. public hospitals, public transport, NGOs (Greek and international), foreign political/governmental institutions, e.g. embassies, EU offices, politicians, political parties, e.g. their offices, private business, media organisations, other, N/A.

To examine the use and role of space, three variables were included: the type of space (public, private, N/A), the type of setting (inside, outside, both), and we included Endres &

Senda-Cook's (2011) concept of place-as-rhetoric (yes, no), though only with respect to their first conceptualisation i.e. "build on a pre-existing meaning of a place to help make their point". Their other conceptualisations could not be operationalised in the context of this research, as it would have been impossible for the researchers to accurately code for whether activists were trying to reconstruct the meaning of a particular place with the purpose of challenging the dominant meaning. With regards to discourse in the video, there are four variables: the existence of discourse (yes, no), the type of discourse (no discourse, monologue, conversation, slogans, combination), denounce (yes, no), and we also explored whether there was any kind of confrontation both in terms of the discourse and in the non-discursive context (yes, no). Moreover, in order to examine the cinematic techniques the movement employs, we included the following variables: existence of music (yes, no), video camera angle (close-up, medium shot, long shot), and the quality of the video (blurred, clear).

Findings and Discussion

Visual Rhetoric in Resistance Strategy and Tactics

Our analysis proposes that all of Rouvikonas' YouTube videos belong to the 'documentation type', as described by Askanius (2013). The videos constitute recordings of the group's interventions in various public and private spaces (see Figure 1). All of the chosen targets are related to some kind of injustice that took place and of which the group has become aware. The causes of interventions with respect to private organisations vary from perceived unjust firings of employees to environmental and political issues. They include the unjust firing of a pregnant woman from private business, exhausting work shifts, the negative impact on the environment as a result of oil drilling in Ipiros, and the attack at the Hellenic-American Chamber as an indication of solidarity with the Palestinians. With regard to interventions at

public organisations, these primarily concerned unfair actions that affected the most vulnerable segments of society such as confiscation of houses, massive power cuts by the Public Electricity Company and cuts in water supply by the Public Water Company. In these respects, Rouvikonas' actions are characterised by an ethical dimension (they protest against those that exploit and mistreat citizens) that prescribes its revolutionary action (Graeber, 2009 in Clough and Blumberg, 2012:338).
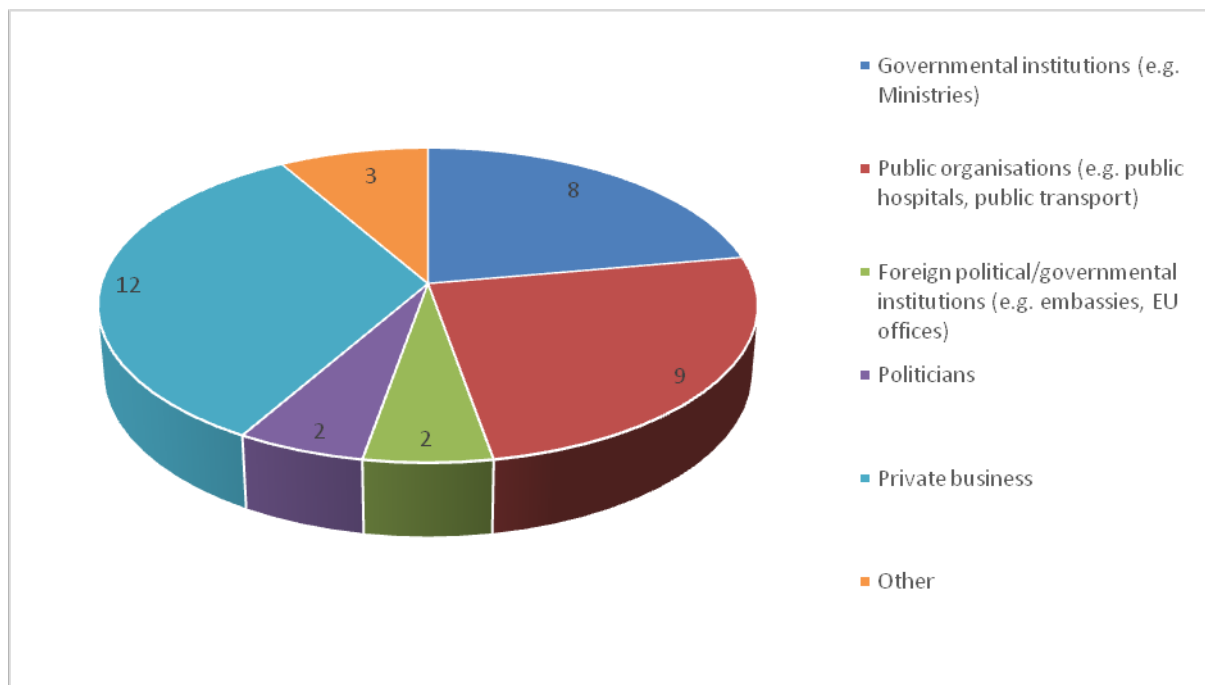

Figure 1: Rouvikonas' targets

The tactics that Rouvikonas employs and records in these videos fall within what Vaiou and Kalandides (2017) categorise as micro acts of resistance. A protest repertoire that, instead of mass mobilisations, involves smaller-scale protest tactics that range from the brief occupation of offices, the distribution of flyers, parading and shouting slogans, and paint attacks, to more aggressive tactics such as the destruction of property, in order to express

their indignation at social injustices. It is important to note here that examples of the destruction of property is limited to a very small number of the videos, mainly from 2016 and early 2017.

Some forms of aggressiveness can also be found in the discourse of some of the videos. Overall, we found that 22 out of the 36 videos included some type of discourse. We identified four types of discourse, as follows: five videos with monologues by Rouvikonas' members, ten videos that included conversations between group members and other agent(s) involved, three videos that had distinct sections which involved both monologues and dialogues, and four videos where group members were merely shouting slogans. Nineteen of the twenty-two videos with discourse are characterised by a denouncing type of discourse on the behalf of Rouvikonas. The denunciations were embedded in various types of argument, including the description of an unjust situation, the revelation of new information (at least as the group presented it), and more radically, arguments inthe form of threats. In certain cases, members of the group clearly engaged in what Mateos and Gaona (2015) describe as *re discursive reaction*, an attempt to provide new interpretations of an event or reveal information that has been concealed. This took the form of either monologues on behalf of the group members or conversations with targeted agents. In some of these cases, we found some kind of confrontation that varied in intensity (see Figure2).
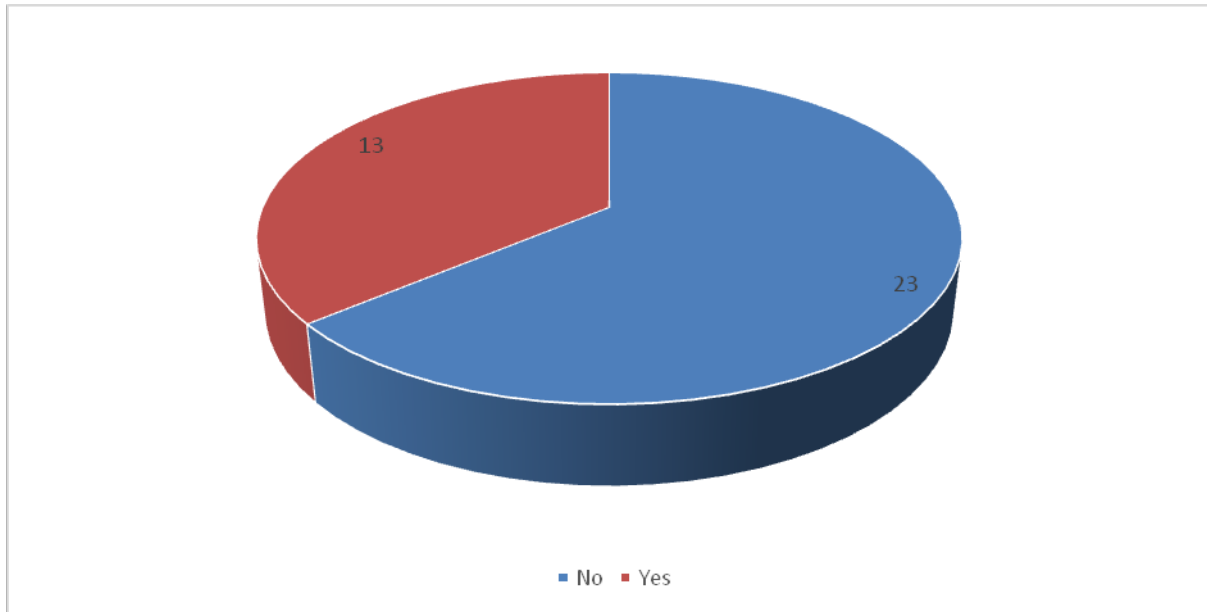
Figure 2. Confrontation in discourse

The denunciating rhetoric was also evident, and indeed stronger, in both the flyers that Rouvikonas was distributing and in the captions for the videos. Although they do not form a central part of the examination of this study, it seems worth explaining that the captions of the videos were, in many cases, rather long texts that described the situation and the reasons behind the movement's actions. The flyers possess a unique symbolic meaning in these videos. On the one hand, they serve as a practice of resistance, through having the movement's members distributing them en masse in prohibited places, such as governmental buildings. On the other hand, they serve as the group's visual language, especially in cases where there was no verbal discourse. Rouvikonas was able to communicate its message visually, through showing close-ups of the flyers such that their content could be read. Such close ups were frequently accompanied by music, leading to potential for audiovisual viewing that could create a powerful emotional experience (Sandlin & Callahan, 2009, cited in Bloomfield and Doolin, 2012). Such examples of flyers include: "We won't live like slaves. We won't die begging"; "Hands off benefits for arduous and hazardous jobs";

"Whoever confiscates poor people's houses will learn to fear"; "From the rights to your home to your rights to strike, SYRIZA is robbing you no end"; and "Solidarity is the weapon of the people. War to bosses' war." Another video begins with a long shot image of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by the following caption - "Against imperialism and the preparation of war. Solidarity to the people of Palestine." Once again, we can see the ethical dimension of the movement's rhetoric as all slogans are about injustices and support to those in need.

In the same vein, their targets are those that the group considers as the predators of such actions of injustice. The selection of their targets, and also the selection of images used in their videos (as for instance with the image of the Ministry of Defence, described above), places and specific locations play a crucial symbolic role in Rouvikonas' video activism. The videos recorded actions taking place in 22 public spaces (including government buildings) and 14 private spaces. Whether actions took place inside or outside (see Figure 3), the specific location was centrally relevant with the group attempting to make a statement either by actually entering the buildings to report injustices or/and by distributing flyers at these places as mentioned above. Their intervention at the Evelpidon Athens Courts provides an interesting case, as here the video shows group members strolling around the courts' yards distributing flyers, with slogans such as "When injustice becomes law, then resistance becomes duty" and "Justice is like snakes, they bite the barefoot", with the public and police staring at them in astonishment. What is also worth noting here is that, through the use of close ups of relevant signage, the group ensures that the specific nature and identity of the governmental building that they target is clear. For instance, during their intervention at the Home Office, concerning unhealthy working conditions, there are camera close-ups of both the signage that indicated the identity of the building as well as those indicating the office of the Minister. The depiction of such signage through this specific camera technique and the

recording of the subsequent use of the space, serve to help construct the group's conceptualisation of the space. As Endres & Senda-Cook (2011) argue, such appropriation of place can be considered a rhetorical tactic of social movements. Following Endres & Senda-Cook's (2011:259) argument, we suggest that Rouvikonas uses place as rhetoric in its protest repertoire, by building on the pre-existing meanings attached to a place to help make its points and construct its arguments. Such is the case of their intervention at the court (mentioned above) in order to showcase injustices in court decisions.
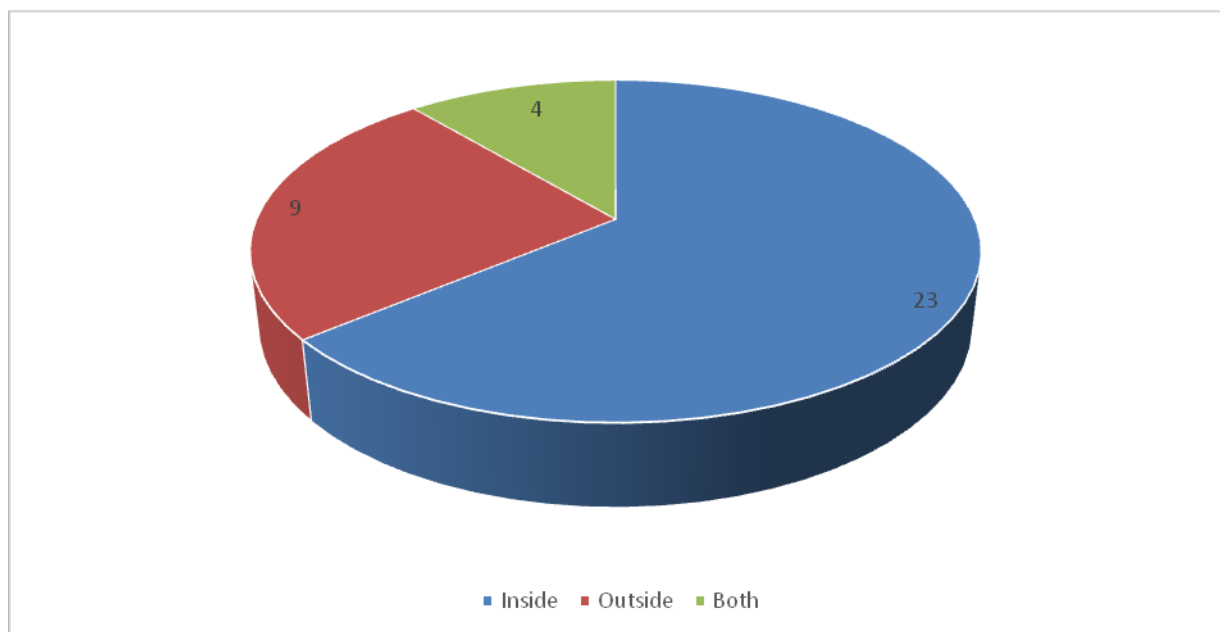

Figure 3: Setting of activist action

The above analysis suggests that Rouvikonas has a very specific logic of protest tactics, realised through the form of their *interventions* in private and public spaces that signify their resistance to various types of social injustice. In a similar manner to that outlined in the research of Askanius (2015), Rouvikonas' YouTube videos work primarily (a) as an archive of action and thus activist memory, and (b) as a tool to raise awareness of social injustice. The latter is realised through either the appropriation of private and public spaces (with a

focus on the visual and no, or minimal, discourse) or through audiovisual evidence (where discourse, in the form of monologue or dialogue, is involved). Although there is no explicit call to action made, we would suggest that an implicit call is made through the raising of awareness about such social injustice, which then works as a latent mobilisation for civil disobedience against those who provoked these situations.

Another interesting aspect of Rouvikonas' videoactivism is that the group utilises YouTube to ensure the dissemination of its self-generated material in the group's preferred way. Several studies have foregrounded the importance for social movements of being able to generate and disseminate their own material or reveal information about specific situations, in order to raise awareness and educate the general public (Waugh, 1976; O´Neil and Wayne, 2008). As a means of combating mainstream media's negative coverage (marginalisation of the protesters and delegitimisation of their causes)in a similar manner to other post-2010 social movements, Rouvikonas exploits the affordances of new media technologies to communicate who they are and what they are doing to larger audience (Cammaerts, et.al, 2013). As a Rouvikonas member points out: "Activist propaganda needs communication channels. Thereupon, we use those media that we consider …secure us a greater audience and the assurance that our message will not be distorted [...] New media platforms give us this chance" (Rouvikonas, 2017).

Communicating Rouvikonas' Collective Identity

Through the use of videoactivism, Rouvikonas not only makes its activist strategy and tactics known to the public but also constructs and communicates its collective identity. The movement's YouTube videos constitute a documentation of Rouvikonas' collective activism.

In the action frame that we examined, all interventions involved small or large groups, never just individuals. As Poell and Van Djik (2018) argue, this collective sense of self that is represented can be perceived as a manifestation of collective identity. Their collective identity was also evident in their discursive activities. As Figure 4 shows, when some kind of discourse was taking place there was always more than one member of the group participating. Even in those cases where one member of the group initiated or led the discussion, other members of the group then got involved in the conversations that took place. Research has shown that exploring the relationships between subjects involved in action can demonstrate structures of dominance and responsibility (Lynn Petray, 2013). In the case of Rouvikonas, videos depict a clearly horizontal structure of the group in action, characterised by equal relationship dynamics.
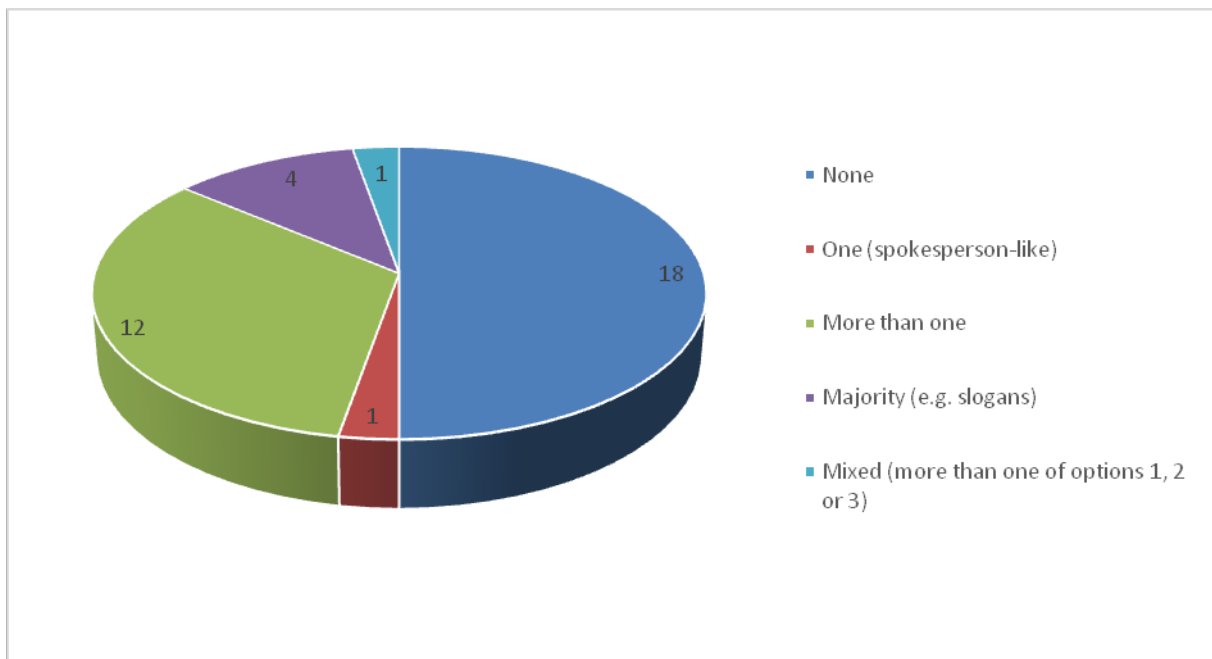

Figure 4: Number of Rouvikonas' speakers

Through the use of a very specific visual strategy, the group members marked a clear differentiation between the group and their targets. More specifically, in the majority of the videos, the group does not reveal the faces of the group members, through keeping them blurred (see Figure 5), mainly as a way to protect themselves from any kind of legal action against them. With regards to other subjects, the faces of those that are direct targets are apparent in 10 videos. These were usually CEOs of companies or higher-level officials in public or governmental organisations. Faces of citizens or employees, not directly involved with the situation, are also blurred. However, the identity of the movement is always apparent in the video footage, either through the shouting out of the name of the group or through the inclusion of the group's logo at various phases of the videos. Twenty two out of the thirty-six videos included the group's logo. Research on organisations and the not-for profit sector has demonstrated that use of distinctive characteristics, such as particular colours and logos, help them shape their brand and identity (Aust, 2004). In a similar vein, Rouvikonas forms and communicates its own identity and capitalises on the YouTube phenomenon, through the creation of videos that enable the group to communicate its mission, raise awareness of what it perceives as social injustice and create an emotional connection with its publics (Waters and Jones, 2011). Although it is hard to assess the appeal of the group beyond like-minded people, its denunciation rhetoric, similar to the radical anti-capitalist discourse that was expressed by anti-austerity movements in Europe (Rovisco et al, 2017), has a vital effective and affective dimension in building the movement's collective identity.
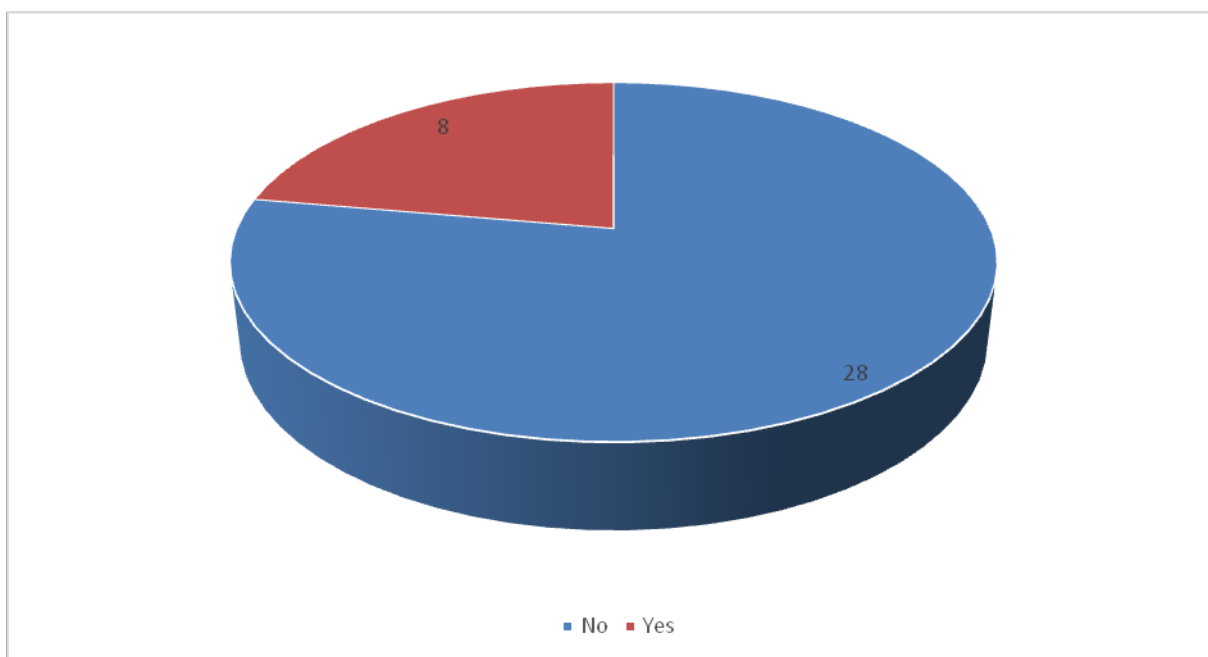
Figure 5. Rouvikonas members' faces shown in the videos

Cinematic Techniques

Having examined Rouvikonas' YouTube videos, it can be argued that the group does not seek to utilise either a sophisticated use of video techniques, nor the production of high quality audiovisual material. Rouvikonas' YouTube videos are primarily amateur creations. The videos are recorded with hand-held cameras (most likely cameras on mobile phones), which are conveniently sized to allow freedom of motion during filming. Hand-held cameras often result in rather shaky images and unclear frames. As a result, most of the videos are quite unclear as a result of the use of such cameras, especially by amateurs. However, as discussed above, in some cases there is intentional blurring, to protect the identity of the subjects depicted. We found nine videos with clear image throughout, eleven videos which were blurred throughout, and sixteen videos which were partially blurred, especially when the focus was on members' faces. Although the group does not employ any advanced cinematic

techniques, it uses some traditional video and camera techniques in seeking to emphasise and better communicate its messages. However, with the exception of the close-ups of flyers and the focus on relevant building signage as explained above, there is no clear rationale or obvious visual strategy with regards to the selection of long shots over close-ups. As Figure 6 shows, the group has been using a variety of camera shots.
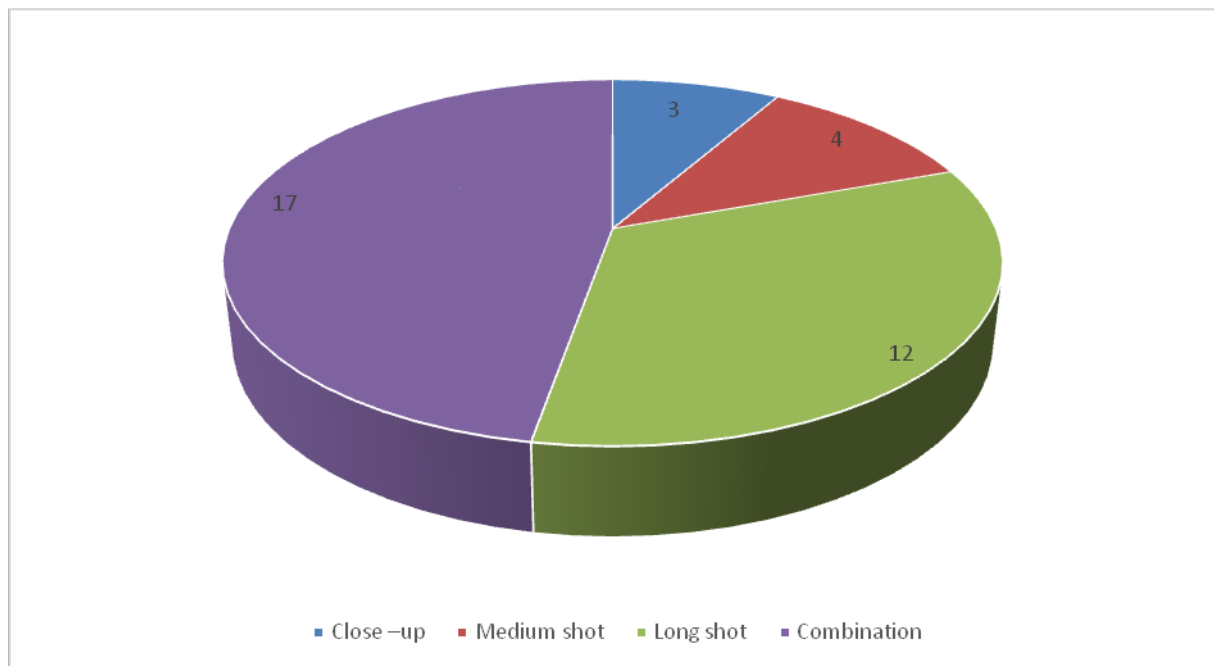

Figure 6: Camera angle

In contrast to the predominantly random use of camera angles, the group seems to have a rather well defined strategy with regards to the use of music in their videos. Although only ten, out of the thirty-six, videos had music, those videos were very carefully curated. Both in cases where the music served as background support and in those where music was the protagonist (music videoclip style), the music selection represented the revolutionary nature of the movement and supported or even drove the messaging. The music in Rouvikonas videos comes mainly from alternative hip hop, hard rock and alternative metal genres. Some of the songs used in their videos are; *Red from the blood* (Felix Dance), *Bottle uh booze*

(Tone), *Harper Lewis* (Russian Circles), *Fragile earth* (Steve Baker), *F**k authority* (Pennywise) and *Use your fist and not your mouth* (Marilyn Manson). Research has shown that music affects the flow of videos and constitutes a powerful way to create desired emotions around one's message (Aufderheide, 1986). As Wes Hughes, an award-winning composer and saxophonist, has said "…Music helps guide the audience towards what is important to the story and helps invite them into an experience where they can feel empathy and an emotional connection…" (Lavigne and Mills, 2019). Concurrent with other research, we argue that the use of music serves both as a vehicle to evoke specific emotions around the various messages embedded in these videos and through the creation of such an emotive environment, (of particular importance with respect to where there is considerable contestation over issues and spaces, specifically important in contested places), further nurtures the collective identity of the movement (Eyerman and Jamison, 1998; Danaher, 2010).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have examined the video activism of the Greek anarchist movement Rouvikonas, as practiced through the movement's own YouTube channel. Two defining elements that impact considerably on the sort of political activism that this case study examines are ((a) the new information environment that has served to radically change not only the way that activists organise and coordinate themselves (Kavada, 2015), but also their communicative strategies and tactics, through creating new forms of expression and new communicative ecologies for the sharing and dissemination of a wide range of content and information (Cammaerts, 2018; Treré, 2015), and b) the anarchist political ideology of the movement, which is reflected in the revolutionary nature of its protest tactics and its anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist rhetoric (Clough and Blumberg, 2012; Gerbaudo, 2015).

Our analysis suggests that there are three main dimensions that describe how these videos work for Rouvikonas and serve its objectives. Firstly, concurrent with Askanius's (2012) research, these videos operate as an archive for action and activist memory. Secondly, they act as a tool to raise awareness of social injustices. Although there is no direct call to action, Rouvikonas' protest repertoire and choice of targets reflect a very clear strategy. The movement's main targets include politicians, political parties and mainstream media, as well as businessmen. The movement employs a specific logic of *tactics- interventions* in private and public spaces; more specifically a usually small number of group members invades in various spaces (as discussed above) from governmental buildings to private companies in order to express its discontent towards social injustice. The group's main communicative tools are its anti-mainstream discourse, and a careful and strategic use of symbols, places, music and words. Through such practices, Rouvikonas attempts to attract public attention to social injustices in a disruptive and affective way. Thirdly, these videos work as a tool to communicate the collective identity of the movement. The production, and control over the dissemination, of their own material, allows the movement to share their own messages in their preferred way. This is of crucial importance, especially for fringe social movements whose relationship with mainstream media is rather thorny (Shoemaker, 1984; Arpan et al., 2006). Our findings reflect and suggest a range of purposes that visual rhetoric, in the form of video-activism, can serve for social movements.

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APPENDIX

Rouvikonas' YouTube videos [The video titles below are those given to each intervention/action by the movement itself]

No	Video title	Duration	Date of upload	Views
1	Intervention at the Ministry of Agriculture regarding the use of ROUNDUP	2:37	Sep 6, 2018	3,362
2	Intervention at Kaliabakos' office	3:24	Jun 4, 2018	7,297

	regarding oil drilling in Ipiros			
3	Intervention at VresNET offices in Kallithea regarding the firing of the pregnant woman	1:30	Apr 12, 2018	10,854
4	Intervention at GEK Terna Holding Real Estate Construction regarding the death of an employee	5:51	Mar 15, 2018	8,784
5	Intervention at the Home Office regarding unhealthy working conditions	1:05	Mar 13, 2018	5,430
6	Intervention at the Hellenic-American Chamber	0:47	Feb 8, 2018	3,473
7	Rouvikonas – Anarchist Collectivity NF: Intervention at the Evelpidon Athens courts	2:36	Jan 25, 2018	4,861
8	Intervention at the IZ Revenue offices in Athens	3:21	Jan 24, 2018	13,296
9	Intervention at the Ministry of Economics	1:47	Jan 17, 2018	9,692
10	Intervention at Market In	3:05	Dec 17, 2017	22,102

11	Intervention at the headquarters of the Public Electricity Company	3:31	Nov 30, 2017	11,565
12	Rouvikonas – Anarchist Collectivity NF: invasion at the pentagon (Ministry of Defence)	0:30	Nov 17, 2017	107,807
13	Occupation of the Psichiko Revenue Offices	1:11	Oct 5, 2017	3,210
14	Intervention at the Ministry of Justice	1:39	Sep 27, 2017	5,615
15	Rouvikonas – Anarchist Collectivity NF: Intervention at the Ministry of Shipping in Piraeus	2:20	Sep 22, 2017	8,706
16	Intervention at the Vice Mayor of Zografou house	1:09	Sep 13, 2017	6,510
17	Intervention at Kiriakos Mitsotakis' house	0:47	Aug 5, 2017	14,416
18	Rouvikonas – Anarchist Collectivity NF:	2:30	Jul 19, 2017	13,941

	intrusion at the Bank of Greece			
19	Intervention at the headquarters of the Public Water Company	4:17	Jun 26, 2017	29,335
20	My market / firing of pregnant woman / Intervention at 4 of its shops	2:53	Jun 22, 2017	6,882
21	Occupation of the offices of the Hellenic Hoteliers Federation	1:08	Jun 14, 2017	3,418
22	Intervention during the Minister's of Health speech about the Inferno 1/6/2017	3:48	Jun 2, 2017	5,346
23	Rouvikonas – Anarchist Collectivity NF: ASYKAMO intervention at the headquarters of METRO SA regarding the firing of a pregnant employee	7:54	May 17, 2017	18,219
24	Intervention/ Patrol at the Pedion Areos	3:25	May 11, 2017	23,363

25	Intervention at the Hellenic Council of State	1:54	Apr 26, 2017	7,028
26	Inauguration of the new antifascist/ antiauthoritarian spot "DISTOMO" 25/03/17	2:39	Mar 26, 2017	16,734
27	Video from Rouvikonas' attack at the offices of Perfect Clean		Mar 22, 2017	9,375
28	Attack at the headquarters of MIKEL franchise regarding during work assassination	1:21	Mar 16, 2017	77,973
29	Intervention at the headquarters of Speedex	10:23	Mar 8, 2017	28,785
30	Attack at the auction craws at Fotopoulo's notary office	2:18	Mar 1, 2017	31,562
31	Attack at the Turkish Consulate in Komotini	0:39	Feb 6, 2017	30,878

32	In the Ministerial office during the invasion at the Ministry of Labour	1:08	Feb 2, 2017	4,440
33	Intervention from the anarchist group Rouvikonas at the Turkish Embassy	0:24	Jul 26, 2016	11,536
34	Intervention at the Athens Court (Eirinodikeio) regarding house auctions	0:46	Jul 20, 2016	5,243
35	Intervention now at the Israeli airlines EL-AL at the EL Venizelos airport	2:50	Jul 7, 2016	6,562
36	Antifascist patrol at the centre of Athens	4:03	Feb 10, 2016	97,583

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[i] In May 2010 Greece signed the first bailout treaty with the so-called Troika (European Commission, European Central Bank, IMF). As a result, Greece had to implement austerity measures and conduct structural changes in the Greek economy. The first programme was based on bilateral loans, and the second and the third were financed by the European Financial Stability Facility and the European Stability Mechanism respectively, which were also monitoring the implementation of the adjustment policies.

[ii] In 2012, members of anarchist and anti-authoritarian groups occupied the VOX building, a former cinema-cum-bar (property of the public 'Social Insurance Institute'–IKA), in Exarchia's central square in Athens.