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Resisting extractivism as a feminist critical socio-spatial practice

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Email: mdaskalaki@brookes.ac.uk**Abstract**

This paper draws on feminist geographies of space, proposing a feminist critical spatial practice approach to study social movement organizing. Inspired by the work of Jane Rendell, a feminist theorist and architectural historian, we propose embodiment, materiality, affectivity, and alterity as co-constitutive of feminist organizing. Specifically, we prioritize the intertwining of space and body in resisting extractivism to analyze visual artifacts produced by artists/activists who have joined the anti-extractivist struggle against mining in Northern Greece, Chalkidiki area. In particular, we focus on how bodies transgress and reconstitute space by affecting its materiality during artistic performances. We argue that the protesting (moving and ensounded) body enacts affective solidarities and invites collective action against exploitative neoliberal regimes. Finally, the article brings together body-land territory and territorial-community feminism literature to enrich our understanding of spatial practices of resistance against neoliberal extractivist regimes while highlighting the role of emotions and affect as a means of mobilizing for action and maintaining momentum.

KEYWORDS

critical spatial practice, extractivism, feminist posthumanism, Greece, social movements

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1 | INTRODUCTION

The neoliberal doctrine relies on the relentless growth and fetishization of individualistic consumption. It equates growth with consuming goods and services rather than flourishing and protecting life. It goes together with undermining state and deregulation, stripping environmental laws and labor rights across countries and regions. The modern notion of development as a cyclical and organic process of growth and decay underpinning it emerges from the Enlightenment idea of progress as linear and upward social trajectories (Cowen & Shenton, 1996; Kallis, 2011). In search of new territories for the flow of capital, neoliberal expansionism exploits the planet's ecosystems, slowing down any technological or other breakthroughs that would enable alternative responses to environmental problems, including climate change (e.g., Connolly, 2013; Poletti & Sicurelli, 2018).

Economic policies framing the environment as another commodity in a vast capitalist process of commodity accumulation through different forms of extractivism have exacerbated these processes (Gago & Mezzadra, 2017; Martínez-Alier, 2003; Pérez Trento, 2021). The cost of commodifying the commons, targeting all communal or common ownership under the authority of states or civic communities (Mandalaki & Fotaki, 2020; Schierup & Ålund, 2018), is environmental degradation on the unseen scale and privatization of the public spaces. Political ecologists have noted the interrelation between enclosures/dispossessions constitutive of capitalist hegemony (e.g., Brand & Görg, 2013; De Angelis, 2001; García López et al., 2017) and struggles that emerge to defend and reproduce commons (Caffentzis & Federici, 2014; De Angelis, 2012; Varvarousis & Kallis, 2017). Extractivism's expansion has resulted in rising opposition from affected populations (Acosta, 2013; Brand et al., 2016; Ceci Misoczky, 2011; Fotaki & Daskalaki, 2021; Lahiri-Dutt, 2012; Mutti et al., 2012).

Early literature on resistance to extractivist economic policies focused on environmental movements and their efforts to construct a moral economy of the environment (see, e.g., Martínez-Alier, 1990). However, the label “environmental” employed in much of this work needs to be revised: Social movements directly linked to independence struggles, anti-corruption, and political reform (Haynes, 1999), challenge ecocentric environmentalism in the developed world. For instance, in the “environmentalism of the poor,” the grassroots resistance movements (e.g., the *La Via Compesina*) emerge from embodied experiences of the everyday (Guha, 2002; see also, Kallianos & Fumanti, 2021), often focused more broadly on issues of justice, calling for the democratization of local resources, which crosscuts the environment-poverty axis (Peet & Watts, 2004). These early approaches also fail to account for the specific social practices that produce, reproduce, and transform different values. Contemporary discourses of sustainable development often depend on modernist assumptions of rationality, scientific inquiry, and the separation of people from the biophysical environment (Banerjee & Arjaliès, 2021; Macnaghten & Urry, 1998). They promote “doctrines” that reproduce the Enlightenment ideals of individual emancipation and nature as reduced to a resource, available to be indefinitely shaped by human desires (Harvey, 1996). Velicu and Kaika (2016) argue that this impedes understanding social movements' fight for justice—not as a formalized and preconceived “thing” to be delivered or applied but as an open, egalitarian ideal that they redefine in embodied and performed ways in time and space across the world. Significantly, such works often neglect women's crucial role despite their significant involvement in struggles for land and environment, defending their territory from extractive business practices. Researchers and associations promoting the rights of local communities exposed the highly gendered nature of the global mining industry and women's role in resisting extractivist mining (for a review, see Carvajal et al., 2015; Jenkins, 2014).

The article draws on one of many examples of nonviolent resistance initiated by women activists opposing extractivist mining in Chalkidiki, Greece (Fotaki & Daskalaki, 2021), fighting the destruction of their communities and the environment in which they live. We use this example to discuss the politics of human/nonhuman relations and the role of space, materiality, and affect in emplaced protest and social movement organizing. We adopt a “feminist critical spatial practice” (Rendell, 2016) framework that treats struggles against different forms of gendered violence (such as extractivist mining, for instance) and ecological crisis as intertwined. Attending to prior work on gendered spatialities (Sasson-Levy & Rapoport, 2003; Tyler & Cohen, 2010; Young, 2005) and the role of the private reproductive female body in public/rural space (Fotaki & Daskalaki, 2021), we explore emplaced practices of protest

and resistance against ecocide, as constantly shaped and re-shaped through their socio-spatial positionality (Leitner et al., 2008). Specifically, taking inspiration from feminist geography and feminist political ecology and informed by a broader analysis of place and geographies of protest (Endres & Senda-Cook, 2011; Nagar, 2019; Oslender, 2004; Routledge, 2017; Shin, 2018), we move beyond the structures and process of protest organizing to examine what gives a protest movement its shape, that Oslender (2004, p. 958) calls, the “soils” of resistance or the “pre-existing people, cultures, and places [...] from which a social movement emerges. To achieve this, we turn to the bodies’ fluidity and permeability: “one substance moving through another, expanded beyond the material to the immaterial” (Larrington-Spencer et al., 2021, p. 231) and discuss the affect, the materiality of the place, and protest together through a feminist lens. We also consider how they become part of struggles for economies that offer an alternative to separating the natural from the social/cultural world and challenge anthropocentric conceptualizations of progress and development (Escobar, 1996).

The study makes the following contributions. First is to the literature on body-land territory and territorial-community feminism (Cabnal, 2010; Carvajal et al., 2015; Castro-Rodríguez, 2021; Hartviksen, 2021) by adding a spatial-organizational dimension to better understand resistance; we argue that critical spatial practices are considered intrinsic and indispensable to organizing (see also Daskalaki & Kokkinidis, 2017; Komporozos-Athanasiou et al., 2018). The second contribution is to the inter-disciplinary literature on the affective dynamics in social movements from a feminist perspective. Focusing on the affective dimensions of critical spatial practices, we stress the role of emotions and affect in environmental conflict, commoning, and mobilization as channels for enabling the subversion of hegemonic power (González-Hidalgo, 2021; Mandalaki & Fotaki, 2020). Thus, we respond to the call enriching mainstream analyses that tended to mask the everyday emotional engagements of environmental movements, collectives, and communities by being exposed to conflict and active in it. We also highlight the embodied affect role as a means of mobilizing for action and maintaining momentum. The feminist approach focusing on embodied affect provides more granular insight into understanding the needs and experiences of women in feminist and broader social justice movements in different sectors and spaces (Jiménez Thomas Rodríguez et al., 2021). Our final contribution is to rethink post-capitalist futures and imaginaries through feminist, activist, and artistic praxis (Mandalaki et al., 2022) that nurtures, respects, and reconnects “the intimate fabric of corporeality, including that of human becoming, to the seemingly indifferent stuff of the world that makes living possible” (Whatmore, 2013, p. 36). Overall, the study contributes to expanding socio-ecological imaginations (Castoriadis, 1975; Herbert, 2021) through a feminist lens.

The remainder of the study is structured as follows. First, we discuss the feminist literature on social movements and posthumanist geographies, focusing on spatiality, embodiment, and affect. Next, we discuss our theoretical framing that draws on the work of Rendell (2008, 2016) and her critical feminist spatial practices. The subsequent section presents the context of the anti-extractivist mining protests in Northern Greece and the methodology and analytical framework of the study. Finally, we present our findings and the theoretical contributions of this work.

2 | THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 | Moving beyond anthropocentrism: Ecofeminist and posthumanist perspectives

Capitalist relations of production and consumption have been built upon the misuse of science and technology, placing humans above the environment and opposing all life forms. They rest on the dualism between human beings (as agents) and natural resources (objects) and the logic of exploitation. This assumption of the nature-culture dichotomy, which is foundational to the Enlightenment’s belief in the linear advancement of the scientific knowledge “out there” to be discovered, has brought environmental degradation in the name of progress, growth, and development (Dunlap & Catton, 1979; Escobar, 1996, 2018). Critics from the fields of anthropology (Rakopoulos, 2014), human ecology (Burkhart et al., 2013), the economics of transition (Turley & Luke, 2012), degrowth (D’Alisa et al., 2014; Fournier, 2008), and researchers on the commons (Bollier & Helfrich, 2012) have attempted to move beyond such

anthropocentric and normative positivistic perspectives. They have proposed alternative conceptualizations of economy, culture, and society (e.g., Castells, 2017; Gladwin et al., 1995; Prothero & Fitchett, 2000; Purser et al., 1995). However, the well-developed holistic conceptualizations of culture and nature by posthumanist feminists have not been sufficiently utilized or incorporated into these proposals.

A shift to ecofeminist ontology requires a departure from anthropocentric, hierarchical discourses of nature that prioritize human (economic) development at the expense of other life forms. Many influential feminist ideas addressed these issues by focusing on the body's materiality in its various connections and manifestations to other forms of life, including Donna Haraway's work (2003) or Rosi Braidotti's discussion of how technological societies reshape gender and sexual difference highlighting issues of survival and social justice (Braidotti, 2006). Their post-anthropocentric views put forward new forms of materiality and embodiment as the foundation of ecofeminist and gendered critique of capital and its destructive effects on all life forms. Haraway grounds the feminist project in bodily materiality through the language of science and technology (Haraway, 1991), extending such considerations in her later work to our cohabitation and hybrid merging with other species rejecting the masculine/phallic imaginary (Haraway, 2003, 2008). Braidotti (2013a, 2013b, 2022) highlights the ability of contemporary market economies to profit from the control and commodification of all lives through hybridization, which encompasses other species, putting at risk the sustainability of our planet. The ecofeminist philosopher, Plumwood (1991), focuses on rationalism as the key to understanding the connected oppressions of women and nature in the West, showing how deep ecology criticizing anthropocentric views has failed to provide an adequate historical perspective to challenge the human/nature dualism. She counter-proposes a relational account of the self, linking environmentalist and socialist critiques to reject an instrumental view of nature while presenting the possibilities of relating to nature in other ways. Accordingly, feminist praxis should aim to dislodge an objectified view of nature that sees it as a resource (Klein, 2015).

These critiques help us reconsider the notion of the human subject that we address in the context of its location by stressing the materialist temporal and spatial site of co-production of the subject. Yet, social movements' literature on environmental sustainability is slow to fully capitalize on the spatial embodiment as a source of resistance and anti-capitalist struggle. Activists began to reflect on the concerns and ideas of posthumanist feminists in their calls to overcome the current stalemate and avert multiple crises. For instance, Klein (2015) linked anti-austerity mobilizations with ecological activism after the Paris Climate Summit. Echoing ecofeminists and posthumanists, she suggested that "the fights for economic justice and the fight for climate action [should] become the same," calling for a change in a mindset according to which *nature* is not a resource but a "complex entity with rights to a dignified existence." Such ideas can also help us unearth capitalism's reliance on divisive and destructive imaginaries to function. Without them, there can be no glorification of competition and no relentless pursuits of growth through the subjugation of nature and all other forms of life seen as inferior to hegemonic masculinity. In short, capitalism constructs and thrives on the masculine disorder (Cremin, 2021).

However, when articulating the post-phallic imaginary, we must not forget the historical fact that it is not a universal human that is harming our planet but a very specific one—predominantly white, male, and Western (Mies & Shiva, 1993). Ecofeminist gendered and racial critique of capital (Braidotti, 2022; Mies & Shiva, 1993) that many ecofeminist movements espouse stress that capitalist exploitation of the land and the oppression of women are intertwined and rooted in the patriarchal organization of the world into binaries (man/woman and human/nature) and the unequivocal superiority of the white, male, "human" subject (e.g., Åsberg, 2013; Åsberg, & Braidotti, 2018; Braidotti, 2017, 2022; Gherardi, 2019). Various strands of feminist theory focus on the subject's positionality and how it is reproduced and challenged by her social situatedness (Mohanty, 2003; see also Harding, 1986; Nagar & Geiger, 2007; Smith, 1974). Building upon these debates, we aim to explore the implications of reviving the political potency of nature in "more-than-human" terms (Bell, 2012; Latimer & Miele, 2013; Whatmore, 2013).

The following section discusses further the spatial/territorial dimensions of local struggles and feminist spatial practices of protest. It explores feminist geographies of space before proposing a feminist critical spatial practice framework. This theoretical framing combines the human and nonhuman, material and immaterial while prioritizing affect and body in studying social movement organizing.

2.2 | Toward a feminist critical spatial practice framework: Affect and materiality of the body

Feminist perspectives on women, the environment, and development have explored the interconnections between economic development, environmental change, and gender politics, offering rich narratives of rural and indigenous women's resistance to violent attacks on their body and their land by extractivist industries (Dankelman & Davidson, 2013; Horowitz, 2017; Jenkins, 2014; Moghadam et al., 2011; Resurrección, 2017). In Latin America, women of different origins and through diverse organizational forms have developed strategies of resistance and regional articulations to defend life and their territories (Carvajal et al., 2015): "In this process, they have constructed specific understandings of the extractivist model, which financializes land and natural resources for profit, identifying differentiated impacts according to gender, and denouncing its patriarchal and racist nature" (p. 12). Other such studies include women's anti-mining struggles in Greece (Fotaki & Daskalaki, 2021; Tsavdaroglou et al., 2017), women opposing large-scale mining developments in rural Andean communities (Jenkins, 2014; Jenkins & Rondón, 2015), and women's movements in Asia and the Pacific (Horowitz, 2017; Nabulivou, 2006) and Australia (Ey et al., 2017; Ey & Sherval, 2016) and the mothers of Itzaingó (Leguizamón, 2019). Equally, women play a unique role in India's recent farmer and peasants' strike. This is a continuation of women's struggle for land and inheritance rights that have been very important over the years in India (Prasad, 2021). Therefore, it should not be surprising that they play a pivotal part in this movement, coming every evening after the day of work and their numbers swelling with determination, often unimaginable. As the economist Amit Bhaduri put it: "they had a much greater power of perseverance than the day laborers on farms and in factories, which turned the theory of the proletariat as an avant-garde on its head" (Bhaduri, 2022).

Though these works substantively contributed to unearthing women's leading role in the struggle for land and defense of territory, there are relatively few elaborations on their activities from the spatial feminist perspective. Even fewer academic works focus on embodiment and affect in struggles emerging and located in space. Thus, while there is an extensive analysis of how space/place and social practices intertwine in social movement organizing (Duarte, 2017; Miller & Nicholls, 2016; Routledge & Cumbers, 2013), it is still rarely discussed how affect and materiality are co-implicated in the production of spaces of/for community organizing and resistance (some recent exceptions include Brown & Pickerill, 2009; Fotaki & Daskalaki, 2021; Kaasila-Pakanen, 2021).

Space is constructed through the multiplicity of social relations, everyday life practices, and power relations, including gender relations (Massey, 2004; McDowell & Sharp, 2016). For Judith Butler, the social and the spatial are mutually constitutive and enacted following a citation process (Butler, 1990). However, the idea of fluid spatiality as mutable, continuous, and "active" space that Irigaray qualifies as "feminine" (Irigaray, 1993) is rarely taken up in studies of protest organizing (e.g., see Fotaki et al., 2014). Yet, such a perspective is essential to understand the struggles aimed at environmental colonialism as part of anti-capitalist resistance. Discussing the role of materiality in protests, Routledge (2017) noted that meanings associated with places can be radically appropriated by "feeling out of place," the strategic capacity of protestors to "think, feel, and act differently." Although space is intertwined with the material and the symbolic in this analysis, there are very few elaborations on the co-implication of materiality and affect. Addressing this omission, Fotaki and Daskalaki (2021) recently theorized the role of affective embodiment as a foundation of activist, feminist practices. This work joined others (Bakhmetyeva, 2021; Ducre, 2018) who have contributed an ecofeminist approach to studying environmental activism, through mobilizing spatial imaginaries. Such research demonstrated how the protesting body altered spatial relations to oppose the neoliberal assault on life and the environment and explored their potential to prefigure new politics in the context of social movements. This work has been informed by territorial-community feminism and the indigenous struggles in Guatemala (Hartviksen, 2021) and Colombia (Castro-Rodriguez, 2021) and the resistances of those women who enact "defense of the body-earth territory" (Cabnal, 2010; Carvajal et al., 2015) in the context of extractivism and other forms of violence of women's bodies.

Contributing to this literature, we propose a feminist framing of critical spatial practice (Rendell, 2017) that puts affective flows, alterity, and materiality at the center of the analysis. Such framing, according to Rendell (2017),

is appropriate for tackling “the disasters produced by climate chaos; the resource crises [...] and the unacceptable inequalities created by a capitalist global economy driven by credit and debt” (n.p). Critical spatiality describes the everyday activities and creative practices that seek to resist the dominant social order of global corporate capitalism (Rendell, 2016, 2018). In Rendell's framing, the “critical” describes “self-reflective modes of thought that seek to change the world, or at least the world in which the inequalities of market capitalism, as well as patriarchal and colonial (or post-colonial) interests, continue to dominate” (Rendell, 2008). She draws on Michel de Certeau's “tactics” and Lefebvre's “spaces of representation” to describe acts of friction within existing systems of oppression. Being partly method and partly framework, feminist critical spatial practice mobilizes a transdisciplinarity and invites “active participation in shaping the spaces of everyday life that have been unevenly affected by capitalist development” (Sturlaugson, 2019, p. n.p). The multi-dimensionality of this framework points to an autopoietic way of doing politics that is self-producing and self-organizing and seeks to create decentered autonomous spaces outside the state arena (Escobar, 1992).

We use this framing to examine emerging spatial (re)configurations of protesting subjectivities in neoliberal times (Kurik, 2016), focusing on its five distinct but interrelated components: collectivity, interiority and subjectivity, alterity, performativity, and materiality. First, by building and leading a collectivity, the critical spatial practice offers strength and resilience to spatial oppression. For example, documenting the work of several feminist design studios through the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, Rendell proposes that their organization as collectives enabled critical modes of operation (Sturlaugson, 2019). Several collectives organized based on these principles, such as Matrix (Dwyer & Thorne, 2007) and Muf (2007), offered alternatives to the capitalist architectural/artistic production modes. They challenged the single architectural signature of authorship, also tackling issues of sexual discrimination and gender equity. Such alternatives stressed the socio-political context of architectural production and, drawing on feminist Marxist approaches, recognized domestic work as a form of labor. This was reflected in Muf's manual (2001), outlining the working practices of the all-female art and architecture practice. These initiatives show the possibilities enabled by feminist collective organizing for creative practitioners and their communities.

Second, Rendell (2018) focuses on the role of space—particularly the interior and the domestic—in the production of indeterminate subjectivities. Drawing on the work of feminist theorists in the 1990s, she conceptualizes subjectivity by offering a critique of binary oppositions, particularly that of the “public-private” division of gendered space, paying attention to how through these divisions, specific spatial arrangements contribute to the production of certain subjectivities. In her critique of hierarchical, heteronormative, and anthropocentric orders, she refers to the mainstream, patriarchal, and capitalist architectural discourse to challenge gendered spatial binaries such as the domestic (interior) space. Such (private) spaces, traditionally considered inferior within architectural design practice, are re-examined as part of a feminist critical spatial practice that prioritizes transitional subjectivities and heterotopias (Rendell, 2018).

Continuing her analysis of subjectivities and interiority, Rendell turns to *alterity* to discuss “Other” practices which aim to “change, transform or alter” (n.p). She is interested in new ways of knowing and being and how these can be discussed in spatial terms; developing conceptual and critical tools such as Haraway's (1988) “situated knowledges,” she examines the inter-relations between location, subjectivity, and knowledge. To illustrate her reading of alterity as part of feminist critical spatial practice, Rendell draws on the political and poetic perspective of the Atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa)—a participatory collaborative platform that has been engaging with ecological issues—and the work of Petrescu (2007), *Altering Practices*, on debates around the “poetics and politics of the feminine.” Linking ecological struggles with decolonial ones, Rendell also draws on the work of Lokko's (2000)¹ on Rhodes Must Fall Movement in 2015 in South Africa and intersectional feminist resistance.

Rendell proposes *performativity* as a constitutive of feminist critical spatial practice. Treating the text and its performativity as a spatial practice, she adds another dimension to what might be considered critical geographies in action (Sturlaugson, 2019). As Mazé (2018) explains, Rendell's conceptualization of performativity articulates the exploration of one's relation to another, noting the spatial and material qualities of (textual) encounters. Drawing upon Gibson-Graham's work (2011), Rendell's critical spatial practice requires engaging with feminist, radical projects

as alternative spatial and social possibilities; accordingly, resistance to neoliberal capitalism involves an attempt to alter specific conditions, “through projective acts and fictions, collaborative practices, pedagogies, language and representation” (Schalk, 2013). It also requires the performance of alternative models of the economy that introduce transformative interventions in broader socio-economic settings and a vision for the future.

Finally, *materiality* is vital to conceptualizing feminist critical spatial practice. Such critical inquiries focus on how bodies and images are entangled together as material assemblages. Inspired by the work of feminist material philosophers, such as Karen Barad, Rosi Braidotti, and Donna Haraway, Rendell considers humans (and human-made artifacts) as interconnected with nonhumans (and nonhuman-made material artifacts). Therefore, she de-prioritizes human agency and focuses on how human-nonhuman assemblages tackle various crises with fundamental implications for research, writing, and practice. As Rendell (2007, p. n.p) notes, “the modes of working characteristic to a feminist approach to critical spatial practice are highly appropriate for tackling the three-stranded collapse of ecology, energy, and economy that faces us now.”

Adapting this framework, in this article, we are particularly interested in specific dynamics of critical spatial practice as these become enacted during the feminist movement organizing against extractivism. Doing this, we contribute to prior work on women's activism from a spatial feminist perspective (Bakhmetyeva, 2021; Ducre, 2018), focusing on video installations, documentaries, and dance video performances and exploring the performative dimensions of feminist resistance to extractivism. We show how embodiment, materiality, affectivity, and alterity were mobilized through the embodied geographies of dance, song/singing, and re-territorialization.

3 | CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 | The context

New “cost-effective” methods have assisted the expansion of extractive industries from the global South to the North, particularly to areas inhabited by indigenous populations (Banerjee, 2000; Böhm & Brei, 2008; Sjöstedt-Landén & Fotaki, 2018; Willow, 2016), to poorer ex-communist members of the European Union (e.g., Romania; see Velicu, 2015) and indebted Eurozone countries such as Greece (Tsavdaroglou et al., 2017). In 2012, the Canadian mining company Eldorado Gold arrived in Greece, starting a massive open-pit gold mine in the Skouries-Kakkavos mountains behind the village of Megali Panagia in Northern Greece. In 2013, Niki Ashton Churchill, MP in the Canadian Parliament, inferring the colonial roots of the activity and the gendered effect and dissent against it, stated in her speech to the Canadian Parliament:

Mr. Speaker, women in Canada and around the world are demanding ethical development. From clothing manufacturing in Bangladesh to resource extraction that is devastating the environment, women are calling on government to act. In northern Greece, Greeks are calling on the Canadian mining company, Eldorado, to halt its plan that would damage the environment and is opposed by the public [...]. Women in northern Greece are speaking out against the company's agenda that is hurting their families and communities. People expect far better from Canada. [...]. This company and the government must listen to the women and men in Greece and around the world who are calling on Canada to change course.²

Unfortunately, the Canadian company insisted and went ahead with the support of three consecutive Greek governments since then. The construction and operation of this mine since 2013 have already caused the deforestation of millions of trees and the destruction and pollution of rivers, streams, and aquifers, under the mountains—the primary water source for the surrounding villages. Despite the company's tax dodging (Hartlief et al., 2015), offering to hire a thousand employees from the local area during the economic depression was also mobilized to justify the

“development at any cost” ideology, a characteristic of neo-extractivism (Gudynas, 2010). The Global Financial Crisis and the Greek bailout in 2011 administered by the International Monetary Fund, the European Commission, and the European Central Bank facilitated this development by exposing the country's indebtedness: El Dorado's alleged willingness to invest a billion US dollars in sourcing up to 30 percent of its global gold production in Greece (Tsavdaroglou et al., 2017), the Greek governments accepted both the mining company's requests and the lenders' bailout conditions. With the support of the EU, Greece is becoming an extractivist state, much like many Latin American and African countries. The Greek state is willing to offer the global economy cheap raw materials without considering its people, environment, or land (Kallis, 2017).

Local activists set up the movement initially to oppose the gold mine's impact on the lives of small communities surrounding the mining area (18,000 inhabitants). The citizens of Ierissos, one of the nearby villages with 4000 inhabitants, organized one of the first marches: On March 25, 2012 (a national holiday day commemorating the armed struggle against the Ottoman Empire), around 2000 people joined the protest. Anti-mining campaigners formed committees with an online presence (e.g., SOS Halkidiki), with activists challenging the mine's establishment through protests, publicity events, and online articles. Six months later, on October 12, 2012, about 50 women from a nearby village attempted to enter the Eldorado mining area. Later, women's dissent led to violent clashes with police special units near the Eldorado mining site; for example, 12 women attempted to block the entrance to Skouries by chaining their bodies to the site's entrance gates. In March 2013, armed police units entered Ierissos and arrested local protesters, holding some without a warrant overnight. It took 5 years for their eventual acquittal of all charges.

The female protesters at Skouries engaged in embodied forms of struggle to oppose the guardians of powerful interests and those working in the mines, initiating activities within their communities and garnering support from beyond and outside them. They actively attempted to unite different communities in the fight against the mines. They developed collaborations and organized collectives that transcended capitalocentric and anthropocentric views of resistance, placing their bodies (and the spaces affected by excavations) at the center of their collective actions. Through this, they demonstrated the entanglement of their bodies with the land to protect nature threatened by extractivist mining. Their efforts were widely shared on social media, triggering affective circulations intensified by the performance of their suffering bodies. Women were also actively involved throughout all stages of the protest: meeting with the Greek PM and organizing an evocative demonstration in front of the Canadian embassy in Athens (October 2015). Other Greek women's organizations (such as the online journal, Μωβ, Purple) acted in solidarity with the women of Chalkidiki; their actions also garnered support from audiences outside Greece.

3.2 | Methodology and methods

3.2.1 | Data collection

In this study, we examined visual and textual data to illustrate and substantiate our proposed framework of feminist critical practice. Following Gylfe et al.'s (2016) work on using videos in organizational research, we analyzed eight artistic productions explicitly made for the mining operations in Greece and shared widely during 2013–2020. These included five artifacts (two also became a video installation), a site-specific installation, a song incorporated into a YouTube video created for the Skouries' protests, a dance video/performance, and a video installation presented in *Documenta 14* (see Table 1). We studied these artifacts that narrated Skouries' destruction (the mining site in the former forest) in affected and embodied terms, co-constituting collective interventions that (re)assemble the actual and virtual (digital), nature, and history, and the body-land-territory. We also employed additional secondary resources such as YouTube videos, newsletters, environmental reports on Eldorado's proposed excavations, and articles from three active websites reporting exclusively on the struggle in Chalkidiki: SOS Halkidiki, Save Skouries, and AntiGold Greece.³ We report extensively on the sources' primary analysis elsewhere (see Fotaki & Daskalaki, 2021).

TABLE 1 Sources.

Type	Title & producer/artist & date	Source
Documentary	Forest of Gold (2014) The Caravan Project	http://www.caravanproject.org/en/forest-of-gold/
Documentary	Unearthing Disaster Part 1 (2013) Angela Anderson & Angela Melitopoulos	https://vimeo.com/angelaolga
Documentary	Unearthing Disaster Part (2015) Angela Anderson & Angela Melitopoulos	https://vimeo.com/angelaolga
Video installation	Crossings (2017) Angela Melitopoulos in collaboration with Angela Anderson, Maurizio Lazzarato, Pascale Criton, Oktay Ince, and Paula Cabo Guevara	Documenta 14
Video dance	Skouries (2015) by Vicky Angelidou	https://vimeo.com/119039925?embedded=true&source=vimeo_logo&owner=4411182 .
Song/performance	Song by unknown lady as Introduction to Υπεραστικοί: "Μπήκαν στο χωριό τα MAT" (2013)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjLjtuoSdwU
Site-specific installation (spray paint, stencils)	We Thought It Was Gold (2018) (But It Was Blood) by Anderson, Angela	https://www.angelaolgaanderson.net/we-thought-it-was-gold
Documentary	Cassandra's Treasure (2013) Exadas Documentaries	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAunS9i6w7c
Documentary	ELDORADO—The Struggle for Skouries (2018) Independently produced by Leopold Helbich & Wasil Schauseil	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWkplDQdJpk

3.2.2 | Analytical framework

To achieve this, we draw from (and contribute to) two methodological traditions first, “digital ethnography” (Murthy, 2008, 2013; Pink, 2007) and the “visual turn” in management and organization studies (Bell & Davison, 2013; Bell et al., 2014; Bramming et al., 2012). To analyze the visual narratives, we also drew on Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA), a social semiotics approach “which is aligned with the project of revealing discourses, the kind of social practices that they involve and the ideologies that they serve” (Ledin & Machin, 2018, p. 29). Our data sources (videos) were transcribed, including notes on bodily movements, interaction with the physical environment, and other audio-visual features of the artistic artifacts such as sounds and lights. Following recent work by Pérez-Arredondo and Cárdenas-Neira (2022) and their study on activist, feminist protest, we embrace an “affordance-driven approach” (see also Machin, 2016) to MCDA, “which results in a more dynamic, complex understanding of multimodality by focusing on materiality, consciousness, and the recontextualization of social practices” (Pérez-Arredondo & Cárdenas-Neira (2022, p. 488; see also Van Leeuwen, 2008; Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999)). We explored how bodies transgress and reconstitute space by affecting its materiality during artistic performances to identify each artifact's spatial and affective aspects. Feminist critical spatial practice (Rendell, 2016) provided a theoretical framework for bringing

these different aspects together, explaining how they mutually reinforce one another. Doing this, we also noted how history-culture-nature is re-assembled as part of an activist, feminist praxis and how this omnipresent feature of the artistic artifacts evoked emotions and reflexive insights (see Gray, 2009 on emotion and reflexivity; Ey et al., 2017 on the emotional dimensions of resistance to extractivism).

Discourses, including visual ones, make people experiencing certain affects concerning different social phenomena and political issues (see Ahmed, 2014). We consider affect a multimodal practice (Westberg, 2021) key to understand the dynamics and evolution of new political practices in feminist struggles. Following Westberg (2021, p. 21), “affective meaning-making cannot simply be deduced from semiotic materials such as artifacts or texts.” The analysis of affective subject formation requires the operationalization of “the emotionality of [linguistic and visual] texts” (Ahmed, 2014; cited in Westberg, 2021, p. 21). Therefore, in our analytical approach, we explore how Rendell’s key dimensions of feminist critical spatial practice—collectivity, subjectivity, alterity, performativity, and materiality become enacted through multimodal signs. We also look at how these signs trigger the performance of specific affective subjectivities (Hjemslev, 1969), as they become part of social processes and conflicts (Ledin & Machin, 2018; Pérez-Arredondo & Cárdenas-Neira, 2022).

Our analysis was also guided by how videos circulate and affect various audiences, mobilizing affective connections with the protesting body-land-territory. That is, we stress how visual artifacts become recontextualized every time the forest of Skouries is re-semiotized (Iedema, 2003) across space-time. According to van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999, p. 98), the transformations in recontextualization processes depend upon “the interests, goals and values of the context into which the practice is recontextualized.” Being attentive to such recontextualizations, we identified what is understood as the “doing” of these artifacts and their performative qualities.

4 | FINDINGS

We organized the analysis of our findings into four distinct parts. First, we describe the assemblage of the body-land-territory as performed by the movement’s participants. We show how the struggle against extractivism constitutes opposition to the anthropocentric construction of nature and the environment through the concept of *territorio cuerpo-tierra*, rooted in Indigenous women’s resistance in Latin America. The following three sections discuss how embodiment, materiality, affectivity, and alterity—key components of feminist critical practice—were mobilized through the embodied geographies of dance, song/singing, and re-territorialized protesting bodies. Turning to artistic activist practices in Skouries (video installations, documentaries, dance video performances), we elaborate on how their engagement with the protesting body constitutes feminist critical practice, capturing the performative dimensions of resisting extractivism. In particular, we argue that the protesting (moving and ensounded) body alters spatial relations, enacts affective solidarities, and invites collection action against neoliberal, extractivist regimes.

4.1 | Resisting the dispossession of the body-land territory

This section describes how the residents of the mining region experience the dispossession of the body-land territory (*territorio cuerpo-tierra*, Cabnal, 2010) and how the body is central in their struggles against the Canadian company. In the documentary “*Unearthing Disaster*,” one of the residents describes how interconnected their bodies are with the forest and explains the importance of fighting for their territory: “How can we live without the forest? If you kill one part, the other will slowly die; they will pollute the water; they will steal some of the water and pollute the rest; Megali Panagia has three rivers, and all start from Skouries; how can we live like this? Slowly you stop fighting because it overwhelms you; the dust, the loss of trees; the lost water (we will have to buy water from the supermarkets); we must stop it; it is not too late; time is our enemy (from March 2012), we must act now that the extraction has not started” (*Unearthing Disaster, Part 2*).



FIGURE 1 Looking at the trees, *Unearthing Disaster, Part 1*.

The land for them (local inhabitants)—water, hills, waterfalls, animals, and people—are part of a relational space that simultaneously emplaces them and situates them in history, the economy, and society. This relational space (see the work of Massey, 2005) is not a space to be divided into zones or enclosures guarded with barbed wires and security forces but the consolidation of affective ties between the different beings that make up that environment. Rejecting neoliberal discourses that construct an object-nature to be appropriated and exploited, they conceptualize body-land as a territory of reciprocity and respect; the looming disaster will disrupt this harmonious co-existence and entanglement. Ellie stresses that humans cannot breathe without the forest—the one cannot exist without the other: “This is our future, our ‘gold future’...rubbish, security everywhere which in a few years, will be armed and we won’t be allowed into the forest to harvest herbs...mushrooms—I cannot stand it, I cannot breathe...we have to find a way; otherwise we will be dead....” (Ellie, *Unearthing Disaster Part 2*). As Cabnal (2015) writes: “Defense and recovery of the body-land territory defines a way of positioning and sensing the body as a living and historic territory.”

Ellie continues: “Every tree is important, from an ecological point of view, but here we are talking about the heart of Chalkidiki, the source of water, the heart of clear air and food (mushrooms, herbs, cherries, kiwis, chestnuts); this forest is us, if the forest dies, we will have a terrible ending [...]” As the car drives closer to the excavation site, she looks outside of the window again reluctantly: “Where are we? I cannot recognize it (they curse) [...]. It has only been a few weeks, and this part of the mountain has already been ruined.” “The dust has already started covering the trees which used to be green; now they are green-gray; these trees cannot breathe, so in 5–10 years these trees are going to die” (Ellie, *Unearthing Disaster, Part 1*; see Figure 1). The images of the healthy forest that the viewer enjoys in the documentary’s opening scenes are now changing—we are taken to a destroyed land, excavators and lorries digging the heart of the mountain out. Ellie is breathing heavily, with despair; she is angry; she looks at the camera and then turns her eyes to the mountain again, to these trees that will all be gradually lost (*Unearthing Disaster Part 1*; see Figure 1).

This body-land territory is already disrupted and wounded by the interventions of the extractivist company, supported by the Greek state: Private security controls access across the region, trying to exclude the residents from public land, disconnecting them from “all things living.” In “Cassandra’s Treasure” (2013), a participant of the movement explains that the violent police repression of community activism to oppose the mining project is a form of violence against the co-evolving landscape that goes back centuries: The serene landscape of the forest has now transformed into a high-security enclosure. Barbed wires and surveillance equipment replace of the ruined beehives, resin cans, and clear water streams (see Figure 2). “We must stop it...who else can stop it; only us, not the political parties or the courts; only the people who live here, the people who are close to us and others who have also experienced destruction” (Ellie, *Unearthing Disaster Part 2*). Ellie describes the need to develop solidarity networks and movements and create new relationalities and socio-spatialities by assembling different bodies (Butler, 2015; Sjöstedt-Landén & Fotaki, 2018) and nonhuman forms of life. Such connectivity must extend to all sentient and non-sentient matter, including the environment. For example, Oslender (2004, p. 977) draws upon black communities

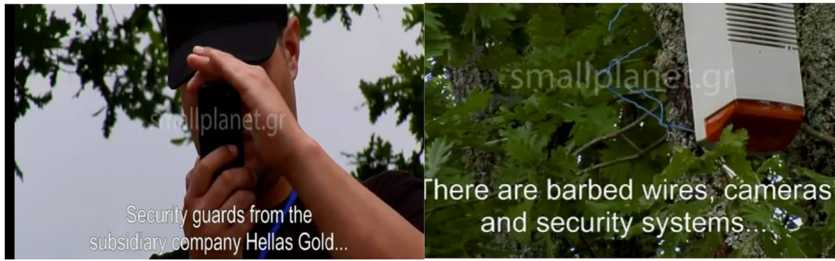


FIGURE 2 Surveillance technologies; *Cassandra's Treasure*, 2013.



FIGURE 3 "Forest of Gold," Caravan project, 2014.

on Colombia's Pacific Coast and their use of streams and rivers (an "aquatic street network") to explain how spatially dispersed movements organize. For Cabnal (2015), resistance in defense of the territory-land is an embodied and political act of hope that invites other generations of women and peoples to contribute to the construction of a new world, moving us from oppressions to emancipations' (Cabnal, 2015, p. 55).

Being able to resist such destruction requires new ways of being in the world—one that does not prioritize anthropocentric objectives informed by capitalist greed and obsession with growth and excess. For example, Giorgos Kalyvas, a resident of the forest, in the documentary "Forest of Gold" (*Caravan Project*, see Figure 3) explains that for him losing the forest is the same as losing a family: "I didn't grow a family but trees." This defies the anthropocentric order and the division between private and public affective space; the trees become the family. For Rendell, the refusal of private-public divisions encourages creative engagements that challenge established categories, expectations, and assumptions: Such conceptualization of the forest as family also challenges the gendered norms regarding caring values: "In its [forest's] heart, however, one now finds a gold mining operation by Eldorado Gold" (*Cassandra's Treasure*, 2013; emphasis added).

Akin to Rendell's feminist framing of spatiality and materiality, the body-land connection activists of Skouries experience demonstrates the blurred human-nonhuman boundaries; an entanglement of a variety of elements and agencies that is "not fully or exclusively human"—but instead, it is constituted through "not-fully-predictable encounters between multiple kinds of actants" (Bennett, 2010, p. 97). "Dead bodies! Dead bodies everywhere, look (pointing to the tree trunks piling up at the side of the street), dead trunks, look, they are 200 years old" (*The struggle for Skouries*, see Figure 4). The body here is not just the human body (an anthropocentric view); instead, it exists together as "human-other-human" or "more than human" (see, e.g., Greenhough, 2014) through the disruption of both hierarchies of importance and centrality of the human (Küpers, 2020, p. 8).



FIGURE 4 Dead bodies; “The struggle for Skouries,” 2018.



FIGURE 5 “Skouries”, a performance piece (2015).

Braidotti reiterates the importance of a similar conceptualization of the body by offering her notion of nomadic subjectivities that are spatial phenomena: “in nomadic thought radically immanent intensive body is an assemblage of forces or flows, intensities, and passions that solidify in space, and consolidate in time, within the singular configuration commonly known as an ‘individual’ self” (Braidotti, 2006, p. 201). Bodies “with rhythms and pulsations that affectively engage with, withdraw from and reconnect again with the world and its phenomenal fields.” The images of the dying trees demonstrate how the land is stripped of such intensities and flows, denoting that the land’s spatial entanglement with the human body is violently disrupted. The trees will die, along with the communities that have become so closely entangled.

4.2 | The moving body (dance): Embodiment and materiality

In “Skouries,” a performance piece (2015) by dancer Vicky Angelidou (see Figure 5), talks about the need for forming these collectivities, people united in body and soul: The artist here invites us to share the joy but also the despair that follows when serenity and beauty are abruptly interrupted by concrete structures and mining tractors. The video dance starts with the dancer immersing her body in the beauty of the forest, becoming one with the water, the tree leaves, and the earth. The voiceover invites us to join them on a journey: “I will take you with me 1 day to show you around my land...” to “secret places that the locals only know,” an exploration of how the land and the body have always been one: “days of endless bliss, such we will never know...” (see Figure 5). The joy of a body immersed in the water, the feeling of the moist soil on the skin, the sound of the leaves and waterfalls; her body covered with leaves, a passionate, rhythmic process of becoming one with the land (a body-land), and the “creatures of the woods hiding in the shadows.” The moving dancer’s body is vital in this journey as it guides us through what the forest has to offer, and the viewer experiences the body-land territory as having agency; it affects the dancers’ (and the audiences’) emotions. The body as territory, anchored in the concrete experiences and struggles of Latin American women’s movements, is an increasingly

common concept drawn in the scholarship theorizing Latin American social movements against mining and food sovereignty (Cabnal, 2010; Catacora-Vargas et al., 2017). For Cabnal (2019), “the body as territory is to awaken women’s consciousness to the historical experiences and structural oppressions of the body, including patriarchy and coloniality” (Rodríguez Castro, 2021, p. 341). Through this, the body becomes a site of resistance and creation. The sequence is interrupted by the roughness of the excavated landscape—“A bleeding mountain. Ravaged by mining day by day... until a mighty hand stops them cold... The hand of the people, united, in body and soul...” (Video Dance *Skouries*, 2015). Following this abrupt interruption, the mountain is bare and soulless, the land turning black; a feeling of loss, deceit, and pain, a torturous existence, expressed through the dancer’s body in the excavation site. The dancer struggles to release the body, which becomes distorted by her efforts to navigate the hostile landscape that mining leaves behind.

Here the audience is invited to view bodies as territories maintaining “a vital relationship of being and living within the Network of Life” while, at the same time, sustaining multiple oppressions and suffering the historical-structural consequences of neoliberal capitalism: “To feel the body as territory, implies recognition of a conscious dimension of life with which we are born and on which the entire cosmic relation is woven. It is a place of location, it is a place where our word, our senses, our desires, and our history are located” (Cabnal, 2015, p. 54). In line with Rendell’s call for performative, artistic interventions that destabilize disembodied social relations, the video dance *Skouries* captures the destruction inflicted on the body and the suffering experienced through the body. The body is central in this performance as it cannot be “dissociated from the infrastructural and environmental conditions of its living” (Butler, 2016, p. 19). The dancers, seen first in the trees of the serene forest and then in the dusty, excavated, and lunar mountain, embody the estrangement of the people from the land, the violent departure of all living things from the territory that is now undersized—the separation of human life from the multitude of (other-than-human) connections and crossings. Also drawing on dance as performative practice, Haraway (2008) argues that this process of co-constitution is never fully stabilized or accomplished and that each intervention, each movement, generates a new state of becoming: “All the dancers are redone through the patterns they enact” (Haraway, 2008, p. 25).

The choreography in *Skouries* portrays a dancer’s suffering body, inviting the audience to re-imagine what one can do with their bodies, how bodies are transformed, and how they transform spaces to better understand the potential political impact our bodies can make. Turning to the materiality of artifacts in protests, Smolovic-Jones et al. (2021, p. 920) note that sound and visual artifacts deployed in protest are also material, “relying on the body for communicative effect.” They remind us that resisting subjects draw on shared affects such as “pleasure” and “rage” (Hemmings, 2012, p. 150; Vachhani & Pullen, 2019) to craft relational subjectivities and affective solidarity. The dance becomes a call to collective action and affective solidarity—the audience is not meant to view the dancer’s/residents’ bodies under attack and their struggle as individualized or separate one but to see how we are all implicated in systems of domination, oppression, and violence, simply by having a body.

Butler (2015) draws on examples of street protest to construct her notion of a performative role of assembly. Demands for equality are thereby linked with the appearance of plural bodies in the same space: “If we appear, we must be seen, which means that our bodies must be viewed, and their vocalized sounds must be heard: the body must enter the visual and audible field” (Butler, 2015, p. 86). However, mining activities are usually conducted in rural areas (Sjöstedt-Landén & Fotaki, 2018), and building solidarity requires mobilizing affect to build translocal and transnational solidarities. Bodies, through their presence, enact a particular meaning and thus are always performative (Butler, 2015; see also Fotaki & Pullen, 2019). Such approaches stress that spatial relations are enacted through relational flows of affect when bodies are brought together in space to resist. In the following section, we expand our discussion of how the movement’s women mobilized signing to trigger affective connections and collective action.

4.3 | The “ensounded” body (singing): Affective intensities and collective action

Drawing on another affective tactic namely, singing, we discuss the importance of songs and singing in *Skouries* mobilizations. We discuss singing as an embodied and affective practice of protest, traditionally supportive of

political mobilizations (Bensimon, 2012; Guerra et al., 2020). Geographers have extensively considered the affective, embodied, and performative dimensions of music and sound in the study of what has been termed soundscapes. The dynamic interaction of the body in sound is conceptualized as being “ensounded,” and as Ingold writes: “Sound, like breath is experienced as a movement of coming and going, inspiration and expiration. If that is so, then we should say of the body, as it sings, hums, whistles, or speaks that it is *ensounded*” (Ingold, 2007, p. 12, original emphasis).

Singing in protests becomes part of a site-writing practice (Rendell, 2006),⁴ a critical and ethical spatial practice that mobilizes the singer (“writer”) and its audience (readers): By drawing on the emotional, as well as the political qualities of what Rendell describes as “sonic interactions between subjects and sites,” site-writings, for Rendell, can potentially reconfigure the relations in ways that are ethical and esthetic (Rendell, 2010, 2020).⁵ Music and singing have always been bound up in power struggles—as Saldanha (2005) states: “it is precisely its rather mysterious effect on the body that makes music political [...] music has the capacity to arrange and politicize social formations, just like money or disease does” (p. 707). Jolaosho (2019) also argues that movement songs constitute a distinctive esthetic terrain whose political salience lies in singing’s embodied and emotive effects on performers and listeners. This was also the case in our study, where singing has been consistently deployed to leverage cultural forms, memories, and shared histories. Evoking historical experiences, Skouries women drew on shared and reciprocal, though gendered, emotions (Jasper, 1998). Valassopoulos and Mostafa (2014), referring to Tunisian rappers and the Arab Spring tell us about the role of intervention music and protest in the Egyptian Revolution of 2011. Tapping into past heroic resistance, to which many Greeks could relate, these songs triggered collective memories of previous struggles in which Greek women of all classes played an active part (Vervenioti, 2000). Through this, women attempt to trigger forms of affective solidarity rooted in the past and branching into the future. A song was sung by an elderly woman when police special forces entered the village, referring to Nazi occupation: “Oh mother, we are not afraid of the bullets and the canons, oh mother, we are only scared of the cold snow up in the mountains... (stops singing and turns to police forces; saying) come on, cowards, I am from the 1940s generation, come on” (introduction to the song, YouTube video, 2013; see Figure 6).

The same historical reference appears in the documentary “Forest of Gold” (Caravan Project, 2014), when a local woman says in the opening scenes: “To keep our place clean, I am ready to be poor, to have nothing to eat, to look for food in the mountains, like in 1941” (referring to the Nazi occupation). The movement garnered support within Greek society and beyond, using historical references and shared emotive memories. Another example comes from women demonstrating against their fellow protestors’ imprisonment. We can see them standing in solidarity outside the prison, singing, and chanting: “We want our children back; they are innocent, shame on you” (*The Struggle for Skouries*, documentary). Expressing their solidarity in a song, they demonstrate how singing becomes a unifying force that bonds them together, despite their differences, to a common cause and a common set of values. Their collective singing “affects people deeply by enhancing self-expression and evoking profound emotion” (Silber, 2005, p. 251).

Further, during protests led by women, the space is temporarily reclaimed as they attempt to enter the excavation sites: talking loudly, marching together with men, they sing and chant various slogans: “we want our forests, our soil and water, not a grave made of gold”: What begins as a flow of raw vibration may produce sensations, emotions or



FIGURE 6 Song by a local woman (in YouTube soundtrack).

moods, or push through into the realm of significance to be heard as anything from slight hints of something, evoked memories, associations or senses of space (Gallagher, 2016, p. 44).

Women took it upon themselves to articulate shared concerns through their own affective responses, but deploying affectivity helped mobilize support in the community and build alliances. Waitt et al. (2017) highlight the importance of context specificity and how music/songs become integral to enacting space and spatial relations in the flows and encounters of bodies. Music is a multiplicity, and songs travel in time and space, changing the people and the spaces in which they are situated. Singing, therefore, becomes a material and expressive force for the protesting body that may modifies the flow of connections between (other) bodies, spaces, and affects/emotions (see also Boyd, 2021).

By sharing and re-territorializing songs across various platforms, emotions become not “an object inside the self” (Wetherell, 2012, p. 24) but, as Westberg (2021, p. 24) notes, are performed through “affective-discursive practice and always emerge in relation to other subjects, to events in the world and as responses to situations and situated meaning-making.” Over time, Skouries' struggles became connected with the more widespread fight against the disastrous neoliberal policies implemented in Greece during the financial crisis, more generally affecting the enactment of relational solidarities as a means of political struggle (Vachhani & Pullen, 2019). Singing becomes a powerful tool that connects generations across time and space and mobilizes affect, memory, and symbolism. Women's songs and the songs' affective circulation “establish the boundaries of collectivity at the location of external opposition and observation” (Jolaosho, 2019, p. 20). This shows how embodied affectivity is an integral and indispensable part of their resistance. Singing becomes a powerful tool that connects generations across time and space and mobilizes affect, memory, and symbolism. Through this, women attempt to trigger forms of affective solidarity rooted in the past and branching into the future. Next, we return to this process of re-territorialization.

4.4 | Tracing trajectories of meaning: Alterity and re-territorialization

In *Alterity Politics*, Nealon (1998) argued for a concrete and ethical understanding of community, “one that requires response, action, and performance instead of passive resentment and unproductive mourning for a whole that cannot be attained.” Taking this work further, Janssens and Steyaert (2003), drawing on Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and Serres (1995) and their concepts of multiplicity and becoming, noted that the condition of alterity represents the marginal or peripheral. Similarly, for Rendell interiority, alterity and difference transcend binary constructions of space (domestic-public, e.g.,) and focus on the Other (other spaces) and Othering, a mode of critical feminist spatial practice that aims to transform—subjects that refuse fixities and “nomadic identities” (here Rendell, cites Braidotti, Diprose, and Spivak among others) that are contingent and, what she calls, “otherwise” or “otherhow” (Rendell, 2016, p. 30, 31). This section draws on this work to discuss the performative role of the artistic/esthetic interventions organized to support Skouries' struggle by tracing the trajectories of meaning from place to place and how they alter the places in which they become embedded.

We start with Angela Anderson's art installation (see Figure 7), “We thought it was gold, but it was blood.” We can find this on the road to the mine, where the company buses transporting workers from the village pass by daily (Figure 7). The artist was reminded of the phrase when in discussion with Silvia Federici, who brought up the poem, “We thought it was oil, but it was blood” by the Nigerian poet and environmental activist Nnimmo Bassey:

‘... We thought it was oil
But it was blood
We thought it was oil
But this was blood
Dried tear bags
Polluted streams

Things are real
When found in dreams
We see their Shells
Behind military shields:
Evil, horrible, gallows called oil rigs
Drilling our souls...'

Here we see that the artist re-circulates and re-signifies previously used semiotic material through re-semiotization (ledema, 2003). Thus, we observe how “meaning-making shifts from context to context, from practice to practice, or from one stage of a practice to the next” (ledema, 2003, p. 41; see also Tan et al., 2018). Re-semiotization enables the emergence of new meanings, feelings, and engagements as they unfold across space, time, and media, a process of historicizing meaning. With this installation, the socially, culturally, and historically situated pieces of discourse (the poem) moves from the Nigerian context and the struggle against oil rigs to the village of Megali Panagia (Halkidiki, Greece), becoming embedded and rearticulated as part of the local struggles against mining. Thus, we observe how “meaning-making shifts from context to context, from practice to practice, or from one stage of a practice to the next” (ledema, 2003, p. 41; see also Tan et al., 2018). Tracing the trajectories of meaning and how they alter the places in which they become embedded allows us to capture the global dimensions of colonial expansionism and the potentialities of enacting translocal socio-spatial solidarities against the destruction of life. Thus, Anderson's work elucidates what Brown and Rendell (2018) call critical spatial tactics organized in “the margin, the between, the everyday, the heterotopic and the abject.”

The video installation, “Crossings” by Angela Melitopoulos and her collaborators at *documenta 14*, presents the entanglement of people, matter, finance, and agency that defines a globalized political ecology of inequality and dispossession (see Figure 8). The project continues the artist's established research into European political geographies and her longstanding collaboration with Maurizio Lazzarato. According to Braidotti (2013a, 2013b), the major challenge is ‘how to de-territorialize, or nomadize, the human-animal interaction [...], shifting away from the hierarchical relations, paving the way for “creative alternatives”’ (p. 89) and “active deterritorializations which mirror poliocentric (sic) alterities” (Soeiro, 2020, p. 197). She writes: “Intensive spaces of becoming have to be opened and, more importantly, to be kept open” (p. 80). These activist-esthetic entanglements with the Skouries struggle become creative ways to disrupt neoliberal hegemonies and anthropocentric colonial dominance by de-territorializing the body-land and related resistance assemblages. In the voiceover of the piece, the artist deploys Guattari's (1995) term “chaosmosis” to describe the transversal nexus of subjective, social, and environmental intersections.

Hence, we argue that the artists' activism re-territorializes the Skouries' protest: From the streets and the mountains, the protesting body-land-territory now moves to the cinema theaters, the galleries, the Universities,



FIGURE 7 “We thought it was gold....”



FIGURE 8 *Crossings*, 2017. Photograph Nils Klinger.

and the art magazines pages. For example, Melitopoulos' earlier work with Anderson, *Unearthing Disaster I & II*, was presented (2017) at a conference on "Extraction: Decolonial Visual Cultures in the Age of the Capitalocene"⁶: The extractivist site of Skouries, during the conference, is re-territorialized, connecting local anti-extractivist struggles around the world through comparative visual cultures and critical academic practice. The performative dimensions of *Unearthing Disaster I & II* become apparent as meanings, multiplicities, and intensities are "unfolding" across a different space-time. Seemingly unconnected events from Greece and beyond reveal points of conflict, contention, and exploitation. Space and spatial practices play a vital role as a point of departure and the basis for building interconnections between peoples and cultures (audiences, viewers, and artists). Artists and academics established common or intermediary places during the event, allowing new connections and coexistence that could lead to new spatial resistance practices. As a result, the two documentaries become part of a re/deterritorialization process during which new spatialities and temporalities can keep multiplying and mutating. Thus, we stress that visual artifacts can be performative: Images of protest, destruction, and ethico-ecological mobilization evoked during the screenings contributed to esthetics of resistance based on the connection between alterity, entanglement, and polycentricity.

According to Shilton (2014), postcolonial artwork alludes to alternative spaces in past and present moments. "It also points to the future, inventing new practices as it imagines alternative ways for diverse voices and visions to coexist [...]. Rather it calls for a critical approach that is itself transnational, transhistorical, and multidirectional" (Shilton, 2014, p. 369). In his review, "Learning from *documenta 14*, Athens, Post-Democracy, and Decolonization," Demos (2017) writes: "In placing viewers uncomfortably in the crossfire of its four large screens, the installation forces an experiential confrontation with this war zone, as if demanding of the viewer to choose whose side they are on. When faced with the evidence of imposed financial and resource exploitation, brutal police assaults, massive environmental destruction, and democratic collapse, the answer is not very difficult." In all three video installations, the images have a performative effect on both the events they reveal and the audience they address. Chaudhuri (2018) calls this unfolding the "performance of alterity." The techniques of repetition, silences, and split camera shots support this process by disrupting the singularity of meaning in favor of embracing multiplicity and alterity.

5 | DISCUSSION

In this study, we turn to the entanglement of materialities of place with protest (Fotaki & Daskalaki, 2021; Routledge, 2017) and the feminist spatial practices that bring together the human and nonhuman, material and immaterial as "articulations within the wider power-geometries of space" (Massey, 2005, p. 130). As Larrington-Spencer et al. (2021) recently reminded us, such work includes how space-specific conditions shape contestations and how they utilize the materiality of the place within protest movements (see also Endres & Senda-Cook, 2011;

Salmenkari, 2009). We specifically employed a feminist approach to spatiality proposed by a theorist and architectural historian, Rendell (2007, 2008, 2017), stressing the entanglement of the land and body in women's struggles for land, territory, and life (Cabnal, 2015; Carvajal et al., 2015; Jiménez Thomas Rodriguez et al., 2021), as we examined various forms of resistance to extractivist mining in Northern Greece, in Skouries between 2013 and 2020. In our exploration of the collective actions of women resisting mining operations, we considered this as part of an active engagement with global struggles against gendered violence (nurturing relations of solidarity and care with others: humans and other-than-humans—see Haraway, 2003 for conceptual developments and empirical examples in the context of anti-extractivist struggle Fotaki & Daskalaki, 2021; Horowitz, 2017; Jenkins & Rondón, 2015; Jenkins, 2014). Bringing these two feminist frameworks to the center of our analysis, we theorized the critical spatial practices in the protest movements against mining operations in Northern Greece through a critical feminist geography and ecofeminist lens concerned with redefining relationships with nature. The study made the following contributions.

Firstly, we contribute to the social movement literature by stressing how embodiment and affect shape spatiality to become important resources for organizing protest actions, focusing on the role of women in opposing anti-extractivist mining. We draw on feminist geographers' conception of territory (encompassing all aspects of life)-body-land as intertwined (Carvajal et al., 2015), and on Rendell's conceptualization of collectivity and subjectivity, we theorize spaces of protest as material and affective territories loaded with their own political agency and entwined with memories of past protests (e.g., Greek resistance to Nazi occupation) as discussed in the analysis of our documents in the previous sections. By showing how previous protests shaped the current one, we stress the role of "affectivity" in mobilizing support in the community. We emphasize the deployment of the past-present-future in resisting the appropriation of land and lives, stressing the constitutive entanglement of the human and nonhuman:

Not only are nature and history inseparable, but they coalesce in a unified, interactive process. Inexorably we dwell in nature-culture-history, and we function as subjects and objects simultaneously.
(Harrison, 1983, p. 102).

Specifically, we demonstrate how blurring the traditional distinction between the human and its others (Braidotti, 2013a, 2013b), the anti-extractivist movement draws on ecofeminist discourses to offer an alternative imaginary that enables the embodied understanding of nature-society/culture with collective and affective dimensions of being in the world. Whether articulated or enacted, the denial of androcentric/anthropocentric/capitalist separation of the body and the land presented in this study reminds us of similar struggles about body-land-territory and territorial-community in anti-extractivist actions in Guatemala (Hartviksen, 2021) and Colombia's (Castro-Rodriguez, 2021) and women's struggles enacting "defense of the body-earth territory" (Carvajal et al., 2015). Such questioning of humanist hierarchical conceptualizations of the "human," also present in posthuman feminist thinking, stresses the materiality and vulnerability of human existence. It also stresses the role of emotions as channels for the subversion of hegemonic power. Thus, we have shown how activists reproduce practices that fostered their being-in-common (while sharing emotional engagements toward the commons in the land occupations, political rituals, and demonstrations—González-Hidalgo, 2021; Fotaki & Daskalaki, 2021; Ey et al., 2017). However, they could also experience frustration, disappointment, helplessness, violence, and oppression resulting from environmental dispossession and communitarian and family conflicts (González-Hidalgo, 2021; Jenkins & Rondón, 2015).

Our second related contribution is demonstrating how performativity brings together affect and materiality in social movements. We have shown how and why artistic activist tactics are performative: Having as a starting point of Rendell's argument that feminist critical spatial practice is performative, we analyzed the artistic artifacts related to the anti-extractivism movement in Skouries in terms of tactics of disruption and how through this they transform our understanding of politics and subjectivities. We showed that esthetic praxis and cultural activism enable diverse, embodied, and affective connections that visibilize the complex relationship between society and nature. Cultural agency, framed through feminist critical spatial practices, can generate grounds for resistance formations of

dispersed yet value-aligned (marginalized) actors to emerge. Art activism or critical esthetic praxis has a significant role to play due to its “disposition to draw together multifarious elements into atypical alignments, compositions, and assemblages that have the capacity to de-limit habituated thought and action in relation to our changing milieu” (Cook, 2014, p. 28). Thus, we encourage further work on how similar interventions that mobilize processes of visualization can unsettle and disrupt dominant spatial, discursive, and material relationships formed with nature, the body and the other and incite new affective connections, solidarities, and imaginaries.

The proposed theorizing on mobilizing embodied affect as an indispensable resource for resisting destruction also allows for envisioning inclusive alternative forms of organizing based on living/ness—as a holistic concept of nature with humans occupying a non-hegemonic role in it because it “is a mistake to posit humanity (culture) as somehow existing apart from the world of things (nature); rather, the human comes into being with this world” (Whatmore, 2013, p. 6). We also reflected on alterity, drawing on critical spatial engagement with self-managed rural places (forests and mountains in our case) devoured by globalized capitalism (in the form of violence against the land/mining). In contrast to previous studies that have investigated the most visible aspects of differences, we looked at practices of resistance where alterity was not obvious. These practices, “are equally or even more constitutive of social life” (Caballero & Acevedo-Rodrigo, 2018), including the visual artifacts that comprise the empirical material of this study—a site-specific installation, a dance video/performance, and a video installation presented in *documenta* 14. We considered them co-constitutive of the protest movements' efforts to (re)assemble the actual and virtual (digital), nature and history, and the body-land-territory.

Finally, the anti-extractivist movements demonstrate that women's activism is about situated struggle against sovereign power and authority and as a transformative force that enacts different local and translocal bodily capacities. Such struggles could defy capitalist (binary) enclosures and create new socio-spatial arrangements for organizing resistance (Fotaki & Daskalaki, 2021, p. 20). The proposed theorizing enables us to think of the emergence of assemblages that engendered “everyday spatiotemporal configuration of events,” political practices, where the concrete meets the elusive (Kallianos & Fumanti, 2021, p. 1106; see also Highmore, 2002, p. 5). On the other hand, it offers the ethical and political possibility to highlight social organizing processes whereby communities strive to reproduce their commons and resource systems by recognizing their actual embodied connection to one another, to all forms of life and the environment (Mandalaki & Fotaki, 2020). The recent surge in environmental movement mobilizations, often led by the dispossessed such as indigenous women (Carvajal et al., 2015; Castro-Rodriguez, 2021; Hartviksen, 2021), and increasingly by disenfranchised young people in developed countries (Elsen & Ord, 2021; Fotaki & Foroughi, 2021; Henn & Pickard, 2022; Herbert, 2021), aims to respond to the escalating ecological breakdown. These mobilizations often form a part of a global countermovement, querying excessive commodification of the commons under neoliberal capitalism.

Overall, the article calls for transforming relationships between human society and the rest of the planetary environment (Herbert, 2021). It invites us to develop alternative imaginaries and practices (namely artistic ones) of protest, resistance, and activism (for an organizational context see Mandalaki et al., 2022). We thus join colleagues (Alaimo, 2010; Bennett, 2010; Chakrabarty, 2017) who urge us to think how “we” (i.e., all the human/nonhuman participants in the becoming world) organize life (or how life organizes us) to thrive in porously bounded spaces in which there is some degree of inter-connection (Gibson-Graham, 2011, p. 10). This article offers a step in this direction by acknowledging gendered spatialities in our pursuit of social change and alternative ecological imaginaries (Acosta, 2013; Eisenstein, 2011; Gibson-Graham & Miller, 2015; Gudynas, 2010; Latouche, 2009).

6 | CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this article, we offered a feminist critical practice framing of women organizing against neoliberal destruction; we turned to the role of collective (human/nonhuman) subjectivities, embodied and affective socio-spatialities, and engaged with debates in postcolonial esthetics (Ashcroft, 2015; Boehmer, 2009; Noske, 2014) to explore the

enactment of radical political action. Drawing upon artistic activist interventions in the form of video dance, installations, songs, and documentaries, we showed how the opposition to the destruction of *territorio cuerpo-tierra* is experienced by the residents of the area and the movements that support them, including the artists who dedicated their work to the anti-extractivism cause. The article also employed the concepts of embodiment, materiality, affect, collective action, and alterity (as articulated in Rendell's feminist critical spatial practice framework)—to discuss how socio-spatial solidarities are built through the moving and ensounded body (dance and singing) and de/territorialization of the spatially situated struggles. We also stressed the need to develop decolonial esthetics of resistance further by expanding our understanding of the performative qualities of the protesting body. We argued that the protesting (moving and ensounded) body alters spatial relations, enacts affective solidarities, and invites collective action against neoliberal, extractivist regimes. We thus invite future work on employing feminist critical spatial practices to study resistance to neoliberal oppression, particularly concerning land dispossession and violence against the body. Such performative frameworks have great potential to contribute to theorizing social movements concerned with environmental issues and life protection via a feminist lens.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in ONLINE RESOURCES VIDEOS at <https://www.angelaolgaanderson.net/unearthing-disaster>.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 She has recently received the RIBA Annie Spink Award for outstanding contributions to architectural education and is due to curate Venice Architecture Biennale 2023.
- 2 <https://soshalkidiki.wordpress.com/2013/05/03/statement-by-niki-ashton-churchill-mb-parliament-of-canada-ethical-development-%ce%b4%ce%ae%ce%bb%cf%89%cf%83%ce%b7-%cf%84%ce%b7%cf%82-niki-ashton-churchill-mb-%ce%b2%ce%bf%cf%85%ce%bb%ce%b5/>.
- 3 <https://soshalkidiki.wordpress.com/category/in-english/>; <http://saveskouries.blogspot.co.uk/>; <http://antigoldgr.org/en/>.
- 4 Although Rendell does not directly refer to songs/singing as a site-writing practice, we are discussing these here as part of her call for a “whole variety of ways for doing art, architectural and urban history, theory and criticism” (Rendell, 2020). The songs mobilized in protest are part of such practice as they draw upon the emotional and political crossings or encounters both subjects and sites.
- 5 See also “Refracted Sites, a site-writing online exhibition” (2020), <https://refractedsites2020.cargo.site/>.
- 6 https://arts.ucsc.edu/news_events/extraction-decolonial-visual-cultures-age-capitalocene https://arts.ucsc.edu/news_events/extraction-decolonial-visual-cultures-age-capitalocene.

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