Social Movements and Solidarity Structures in Crisis-Ridden Greece

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3 The Social Movement Scene of Food

Abstract
This chapter analyses the social movement scene of food and the main alternative repertoires observed: the markets without middlemen, the social and collective kitchens, and the collection and distribution of food parcels. Along with the repertoires, plurality also refers to the organizers. These range from grassroots initiatives and neighbourhood assemblies, to traditional social centres. In this regard, this chapter explores the mechanisms that form the boundary enlargement process in the social movement scene of food. It does so, by analyzing the rise of the markets without middlemen and their transition to consumer cooperatives; it also addresses the development of the other two repertoires and the way their subsequent coordination assisted the formation of solidarity networks.

Keywords: Solidarity structures; Markets without middlemen; Consumer cooperatives; Social kitchens; Collective kitchens; Food distribution

Compared to the social movement scenes of health and labour, the social movement scene of food presents a greater degree of complexity, since it deals with three different repertoires: the organization of markets without middlemen, the facilitation of collective and social kitchens and the collection and distribution of food parcels. Along with the repertoires, plurality also refers to the organizers. These range from grassroots initiatives and neighbourhood assemblies to traditional social centres. In order to explore the mechanisms that form the boundary enlargement process, we analyse the rise of the markets without middlemen and their transition to consumer cooperatives; we address the development of collective and social kitchens and the collection and distribution of food parcels, as well as their subsequent coordination that assisted the formation of solidarity networks. We analyse each of the three repertoires in respect to the factors of organizational structure, resources and identity.

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3.1 Organizational Structure

3.1.1 Markets without Middlemen

Chapter 2 informs the reader that markets without middlemen find their roots in the so-called “potato movement,” born in 2012 out of the cooperation between producers and consumers. Back then, the low market prices of Egyptian potatoes provided brokers with the leverage to charge Greek potato producers lower prices. Unlike producers’ traditional protest repertoires, such as street blockades with products being dumped in front of public institutions, potato producers from Northern Greece decided to meet in squares and sell their potatoes en-masse, at lower prices. The decision to overcome brokers, as these constitute central actors in the capitalistic market (Benmecheddal et al., 2017, p. 2), attracted more organized collectives, with the local Voluntary Action Group of Pieria Region in Northern Greece being the first to organize collective distributions.

The sharp falls in the population’s purchasing power and the lower prices in markets without middlemen compared to the retail standard prices (Calvário et al., 2017, p. 6; Rakopoulos, 2015, p. 90), were factors that increased the markets’ popularity. Various neighbourhood assemblies that were active in the mobilizations against the “haratsi” ad-hoc taxation imposed on electricity bills in 2011, were the cornerstone of the markets’ diffusion. Although some organizers communicated with collectives working on products’ distribution to get information regarding the relevant international social movement experience, most of organizers ‘re-evented the wheel’ (Int.29) in a traditional and old-fashioned way. Either by travelling directly to Pieria (Int.43) or by communicating with other neighbourhood assemblies already active in organizing respective markets without middlemen (Int.7), many organizers set in motion the sub-mechanism of brokerage in “know-how” transmission; meaning ‘the linking of two or more previously unconnected social sites by a unit that mediates their relations with one another and/or with yet other sites’ (McAdam et al., 2001, p. 26). Mobilizations against “haratsi” taxes were also important in fostering the markets' successful operation, since many organizers used the contact information of participants and beneficiaries in order to diffuse information about the upcoming markets. As an interviewee notes, ‘due to haratsi mobilizations and following the markets’ organization, we develop a contact list with more

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1 Haratsi has strong connotations on the Greeks’ economic suffering when under Ottoman rule, implying a similar narrative for troika.
than 3500 people’ (Int.7). Although not all these contacts corresponded to activists, their interest in participating in local actions in the past have created pools of potential markets’ users.

The markets’ operation was accustomed in the local context, with markets in Athens usually using massive pre-order forms, while those in Thessaloniki mostly referring to the ‘immediate distribution or “direct provision” of foodstuff’ (Rakopoulos, 2015, p. 86). A further differentiation deals with the importance of the role the markets assumed in the organizers’ repertoires. In particular, some assemblies have been preoccupied solely with the markets’ organization, while others introduced them only as part of their broader activities. Although the immediate product distribution in Thessaloniki, where producers directly provided their goods to consumers, seems quite simple, the pre-order model of the Athenian markets presents a more complex trajectory.

Quite common was the establishment of working groups responsible for collecting consumers’ pre-orders, in a way of achieving lower prices and convincing the producers to bring massive quantities of their products. Once the first attempts were deemed successful, diffusion was on with producers joining the markets without being previously contacted by the organizers (Int.7). Quite striking here is the procedure used for receiving these pre-orders. Apart from using the contact lists of sympathizers we referred to earlier, the organizers used public and private spaces, such as municipal buildings, central neighbourhood districts, cafeterias and institutional Centres for the Open Care of Elderly to distribute and collect pre-order sheets (Int.29). This transformation of public and private spaces reminds us of how black churches were actively appropriated as sites for mobilization by the U.S. civil rights movement in McAdam et al. (2001, p. 44) study. Although comparisons between the two movements are difficult to be drawn, the active transformation of public spaces into movement sites reveals the deployment of a spatial appropriation sub-mechanism. In this respect, the sub-mechanism of appropriation fueled the mechanism of diffusion, since ‘it started with a specific audience, which was sympathetic to the movement, and [...] it was gradually extended to others’ (Int.29).

Organizing the markets did not run smoothly during the early days, since they seemed as open bazaars with producers applying a first-come-first-served logic, leaving unsatisfied those who pre-ordered their goods (Int.29). Once markets were standardized and became a Sunday tradition, these problems gradually disappeared. Coordination mechanisms were very important here. With regards to the markets’ internal coordination, the organizers set reception desks, accustomed their members to check
consumers’ orders and provide assistance in the parking lots. Coordination took place also among the different organizing groups, since their desire to diffuse the “anti-middlemen” framework led to a series of national conferences, resulting in their better coordination and diffusion at national level (Voluntary Action Group of Pieria Region 2012a; 2012b; 2013a; 2014; 2016; 2017). Difficulties had already risen from the first national conference held in Katerini in September 2012, when potato producers requested an increase in their product’s price. This was not appreciated by the participants, who decided to turn their attention to other products (Kotoulas, 2012). Subsequently, coordination further boosted the markets’ political element by prioritizing suppliers from cooperatives, small groups of producers and individual producers. The markets’ approach to fair prices for producers and consumers was combined with the workers’ decent labour conditions, local quality products as well as the rejection of fascist and racist elements in times when Golden Dawn was rising in popularity (Kotoulas, 2012). In sum, the mechanism of coordinated action set the basis for turning an action of civil disobedience into an organized movement.

Almost a year after the first distribution of goods, the organizational procedures were finalized. First, the organizers moved from hand-written to electronic orders. Sociality digital cooperative developed the online tool Agrotopia, which allowed producers, consumers and the organizing groups to register their stock, place their orders and announce where the next market will take place (Int.28). Second, the failed attempts to hold large open-air assemblies in an effort to imitate the square movement, led coordination to take place within the thematic assemblies of the organizing groups, often involving the common participation of activists, consumers and producers (Int.29). Nevertheless, markets developed a different method of politicization. In particular, their great popularity attracted a number of political organizations and social movement organizations (SMOs) to propagate their actions, organize various events during the markets’ operation and collect medicine to donate to social clinics. The simultaneous organization of collective kitchens was not uncommon either. In this way, typical farmers’ markets transformed into weekly feasts (Int.29), introducing a different, on-site politicization, which allowed the organizers to approach an audience that was otherwise unreachable.

SYRIZA (Synaspismos Rizospastikis Aristeras; Coalition of Radical Left)-funded Solidarity for All (S4A) tried to play the role of a network facilitator
among the different markets. The organization helped many producers to acquire licenses for selling their products and provided equipment to many markets (Int.39), while it also funded the Agrotopia platform discussed earlier (Int.28). However, S4A also received great criticism for abolishing the markets’ spontaneous characteristics, while many activists were hostile to its non-self-organized nature. Most importantly, S4A was accused by a number of solidarity structures for co-optation and paternalism, especially during the markets’ national conferences (Kalodoukas, 2014; Int.43). As a result, those organizers sympathetic to SYRIZA continued their collaboration with S4A, while others joined forces with the rival camp, expressed mostly by the organizers in Pieria.

Brokerage and spatial appropriation sub-mechanisms were quite important for the markets’ diffusion, while coordinated action was vital for collectively overcoming the policies of poverty. Nevertheless, in an intense political period, when every act of civil disobedience was more important compared to those that took place during periods of silence, certification mechanisms, meaning ‘the validation of actors, their performances, and their claims by external authorities’ (McAdam et al., 2001, p. 121), backed up the markets’ diffusion. Initially, political institutions were unprepared to express either their sympathy to or disagreement with the markets’ novelty, but after a while, all the political parties but the communist one3 (Newsbomb 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2012d) welcomed the “potato movement” as a grassroots action that can facilitate the citizens’ well-being in hard times. In a similar vein, many municipal authorities remained sympathetic towards the markets and assisted their operation (Rakopoulos, 2015, p. 95). However, as soon as the potato movement acquired an anti-austerity character and combined its criticism for the high prices with its distaste against brokers, the governing parties under the pressure of brokers’ associations shifted their approach by raising skepticism about the quality control of products and tax evasion. This sparked the mechanism of decertification, implying the ‘withdrawal of such validation by certifying agents’ (McAdam et al., 2001, p. 121). Similar to the procedures followed by solidarity purchasing groups in Italy (Grasseni, 2014b), the organizers’ response included intense controls to producers for providing receipts, as

3 Quite interesting are some anecdotes heard during our field research that positioned members of the communist party to use the markets’ services by sending their familiaris to shop on behalf of them in order not to run the risk of being “caught” by their comrades (Int.29). Although amusing, these incidents underline the importance of markets in serving people’s everyday needs.
well as sending product samples to the General Chemical State's Laboratory and paying unexpected visits to the respective farms. Those producers who did not fit the markets' requirements were excluded. This served as the markets' self-preservation mechanism, since it triggered a domino effect, with information about their bad reputation rapidly moving from the one market to another, to finally achieve the producer's complete removal from the network. Nevertheless, the years to come found the markets to be greatly suppressed, this time by introducing the 4264/2014 bill (FEK, 2016, October 31) that prevented farmers from selling their products in open-air markets.

3.1.1.1 The evolution of open-air markets to consumer cooperatives

The aforementioned developments led some markets to cease operation, like the one in Thermi (Int.7); others to continue their operation but with a limited audience, like the self-organized market in Exarcheia square, which currently takes place twice a month, the market in Katerini where the organizers focused on contractual agriculture (Voluntary Action Group of Pieria Region, 2013b), as well as the farmers' bazaar in Sholio squat that takes place every Wednesday and concludes with a common assembly of producers and squatters (Int.51); or others, to form small grocery stores, either within the premises of unofficial collectives or through the formation of cooperatives. We now turn our attention there.

Starting with the former case, the example of the neighbourhood assembly of Vironas, Kesariani, Pagkrati (VKP) in Athens is rather interesting. Born through anarchist and left-wing activists' efforts to coordinate local protests in December 2008, VKP's actions ranged from movie screenings to self-reduction activities in supermarkets. The issue of food became quite central after the assembly inaugurated its premises in 2011, triggering the operation of "kalathi", a practice which finds its roots in the Sporos collective and received great attention after the markets' diffusion. Specifically, by distributing the usual order sheets, VKP used to order massive amounts of agricultural products to then distribute to consumers from its premises. As one member comments, 'in the beginning it was a close procedure aiming to serve the members' needs, while later it became also open to outsiders' (Int.54). However, kalathi did not manage to engage many outsiders and turned once again into a members' service. Nevertheless, kalathi's shift from an internal to external service revealed some dilemmas that organizers started to deal with. As one interviewee states, 'you cannot transform a

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4 Kalathis stands for Basket.
political space into a grocery store; it would be problematic. After all, there are plenty of greengrocers in the neighbourhood and in a way, they should make a living’ (Int.54). Discussions regarding the competitive role of kalathi with the local private grocery stores was not only an issue of capability but also an aspect of political strategy. Taking into consideration that kalathi lacked legal status, the same interviewee warned that it was not clever ‘to turn the greengrocer into your enemy’ (Int.54).

Equally interesting are the Doulapi and Sidrofia endeavours in Autonomo and Mikropolis social centres. Autonomo’s participation in an activist network against biotechnology and genetically modified organisms (GMOs), inspired some of its members to establish Doulapi grocery store within its premises. Born in the late 1990s by a group of anti-capitalist left-wing and anarchist activists that aimed to create an open, horizontal and direct-democratic social space in Exarcheia, Autonomo has a long tradition in grassroots and urban struggles. Shortly after the 2008 riots, Autonomo incorporated groups and solidarity structures, such as Doulapi grocery. In contrast to VKP, these structures enjoyed full autonomy and held their own individual assemblies. In a similar vein, Sidrofia grocery store operates on a daily basis within Mikropolis social centre in Thessaloniki, with its products being supplied by local cooperatives and groups of small producers. Although the grocery store has its own assembly, Sidrofia is not considered an autonomous structure; rather it is subject to the decisions of the Mikropolis general assembly.

Although it became popular after December 2008 and even more during the crisis period, the idea of forming collectives for product distribution is not new in Greece; rather, its roots can be found in the self-organized collective of Sporos in Athens. Formed in the early 2000s as the first attempt in Greece to distribute Zapatistas coffee in support of their struggle, Sporos used to distribute fair trade and cooperative products mainly from abroad, while its members did not receive compensation. Respectively, an example of a self-organized cooperative without paid labour took place in Thessaloniki in 2009, under the name of Spame. Spame prototyped its structure on Sporos and distributed the products of domestic cooperatives (Int.26). What is interesting, though, both for Doulapi and Sidrofia is their shift from voluntary structures to unofficial cooperatives. This change is attributed to the social centres’ interest in engaging with the approach of

5 Doulapi stands for Cupboard.
6 Sidrofia stands for Fellowship, Company.
7 Autonomo stands for Autonomous.
solidarity economy, with the members of Sidrofia and Doulapi receiving compensation for their services (Int.34; Int.33).

Moving now to the official cooperatives, these were strongly affected by the markets’ character. In particular, following the markets’ diffusion, most of the organizers came from the consumers’ sites and rarely from producers (Int.34; Int.29). Due to this, it is no surprise that many internal discussions among the organizers dealt with the development of the open-air markets into consumer cooperatives (Rakopoulos, 2015, p. 99). Consumer cooperatives present many characteristics in common with the markets’ operation. The 600 monthly users of Galatsi consumers’ cooperative departed from the 4500 contact list the organizers had from their earlier days of activity. The cooperative continues to distribute pre-order sheets, its members participate voluntarily, while the cooperative shares information for the establishment of similar initiatives, as it had happened earlier in the case of markets. This point reveals the interplay of an emulation sub-mechanism, which refers to ‘the deliberate repetition within a given setting of a performance observed in another setting’ (Alimi et al., 2015, p. 87; Tilly and Tarrow, 2007, p. 215); and the bricolage sub-mechanism, which points to the synthesis of symbolic and technical elements (Campbell, 2005, pp. 53-54). In this respect, a number of consumer cooperatives either operate under the exact same procedure through which markets used to function, with the only major change being the adoption of a legal status; or they collect information from different initiatives and blend them into a unique organizational model. As one interviewee notes:

we have been contacted by Piraeus Solidarity, which is also active in products’ (without middlemen) distribution, because they want to form a cooperative. We have been also contacted by a cooperative in Ioannina and we sent them our accounting system. It [the organizational model] cannot work the same for everyone. Every district and city have their own peculiar characteristics. We were in contact with the cooperative in the city of Ioannina, but they are employing a different model. (Int.43)

In this context lies also the effort of Bios coop supermarket, a consumer cooperative formed in Thessaloniki in 2013. Established by Proskalo\(^8\) collective, Bios aimed to establish a large, economically successful cooperative, that could bypass the intervention of brokers and have a measurable social

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\(^8\) Proskalo stands for Cooperation Initiative for the Social and Solidarity Economy and its acronym means Invite.
impact. In these terms, Bios participated in a coordination committee among different grassroots initiatives that used to organize open-air markets, while Spame and Sidrofia helped by sharing lists of producers and organizational techniques (Int.27). Compared to other cooperatives, Bios follows a relatively strict structure. The general assembly elects a board of directors every two years, with the latter being controlled by a supervisory council with the same time of service. Small working groups and task forces are in charge of providing suggestions and feedback. Despite the fact that most of the consumers’ cooperatives under study do not practically apply the organizational structure directed by their legal format, Bios does so. As an interviewee from Bios notes, ‘we conceive (the different layers) as unpaid tasks and not as positions of authority’ (Int.27). For this reason, the different assemblies are open to all their 400 members, a fact which, according to the same interviewee, is the essence of direct democracy.

Despite the growth of cooperative grocery stores, like Eklektik in Thessaloniki and Lacandona9 in Athens, the cooperatives’ other main concerns did not prevent the diffusion of products’ direct distribution. In this context, the cooperative of Allos Tropos10 in Thessaloniki is quite representative. Established in 2012, the cooperative’s main activity is dealing with chess books and board games. However, being in close collaboration with Spame (Int.24), Allos Tropos has also included the distribution of agricultural and sanitary products directly from the producers as its social action.

3.1.2 Collective and Social Kitchens

Collective and social kitchens are the second form of food-related repertoires that became popular during the era of austerity. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and church organizations have a long tradition of providing meals to people in need, while municipalities and other institutional actors have engaged in similar actions since the onset of the economic crisis. However, in contrast to the rest of the institutional providers, collective kitchens follow a self-organized structure; as opposed to the logic of beneficiaries’ queuing to receive meals, organizers and beneficiaries enjoy the same meal, while there are no restricting criteria for the users. In this sense, collective kitchens constitute a direct expression of political solidarity, which contradicts the apolitical and superior tone often met in philanthropic soup kitchens (Int.35).

9 Lacandona is also the rainforest area in Chiapas, Mexico.
10 Allos Tropos stands for Another Way.
Field research shows plurality in terms of the kitchens’ organizers, with neighbourhood assemblies being among them. Following its housing in 2011, the organization of a collective kitchen was among VKP’s first activities. The kitchen used to take place once a week, with the members spending at least six hours for its overall operation (Int.54). Quite similar is the case of the “Open Assembly for the Struggle of Toumba Citizens” in Thessaloniki, which also takes place on a weekly basis. Being one out of the three groups managing the occupied “Social Centre for the Struggle”, the members’ kitchen soon transformed into an open collective kitchen, aiming to serve the local population. Despite their desire, both kitchens failed to attract people outside the social movement community. The strong bonds of Toumba citizens’ committee with the neighbourhood was mostly due to the former’s active role in the re-connection of the households’ electricity supply. This decreased following the repertoire’s decline in 2014 (Int.52). Additionally, the members of VKP were not able to operate the kitchen in the afternoons of the weekdays, the hours that ‘the worker, the employee or the student actually have to eat’ (Int.54), something that restricted its popularity.

Along with the neighbourhood assemblies, grassroots initiatives constitute the second actor responsible for the operation of kitchens. Although collective kitchens take into consideration the political objectives of the organizers, these ones aim to fill the need for food by targeting social sensitization; for this, they are referred as social kitchens. Of course, the dividing lines between the social and political aspects of solidarity are quite blurred and intertwined, and this distinction does not affect the overall narrative. However, it helps to understand the presence of the same contentious mechanisms in kitchens with different starting points.

The social kitchen in Chania, Crete, started its operation during the local square movement, when some participants urged for direct action against poverty. The kitchen continued operating on the basis of self-organization and direct democracy even after the movement’s dissolution. Nevertheless, fatigue of the everyday services was among the main factors that caused decrease in membership. In this respect, the passionate 30-members’ assemblies belong to the past, moving the burden of cooking and coordination to a small number of committed activists (Int.36).

Born solely out of the hardships of austerity, social kitchens are rather distinct entities. In this respect, legitimation from the movement community and certification from external authorities acquire a pivotal role for their development, as well as for the diffusion of cooking as part of the alternative repertoires (Alimi et al., 2015, p. 288). Their origin from the square movement and the implementation of an anti-discriminatory approach were factors
that increased sympathy from local social movements (Int.36). However, the movements’ legitimation has caused the opposite results in the institutional sphere, with the kitchen receiving tremendous criticism by the surrounding businesses because it attracted migrants, the homeless and other marginalized populations in the city centre. This provoked a chain reaction with the local teachers’ association offering to host the kitchen on its premises, and many left-wing parties declaring their support. Local elections brought left-wing sympathizers in the city’s administration, something that granted the kitchen’s institutional approval. As an interviewee notes, ‘we do not receive any direct help from the municipality, but there are some people from the municipal authorities that support our actions and sometimes they cook’ (Int.36).

Although the social kitchen in Chania started as one repertoire of a mass movement and ended up being coordinated by a small group of devoted participants, other social kitchens present a reverse narrative. The social kitchen of Allos Anthropos11 started when an unemployed middle-aged man organized an outdoor kitchen in Athens in 2011. The kitchen grew in popularity and quickly expanded to new locations. As an interviewee explains, the core idea for its establishment was to put an end to apathy, ‘bring people in touch, learn their needs and smash racism against the strange “other”’ (Int.59). Currently, Allos Anthropos employs 30 people who voluntarily offer their services on a daily basis, counts 20 similar endeavours all around the country, and has served a total of 5 million meals until 2016 (Int.59). What distinguishes Allos Anthropos from many other kitchens is not only its daily and outdoors operation; rather, it is its disapproval of any kind of discrimination, including class and political inclinations. The kitchen openly calls rich and poor, left-wing and right-wing, upper-middle class and homeless people to join its meals. Nevertheless, this anti-discriminatory policy sets fascists aside, and there is a clear criticism against the troika (Int.59). In 2014, Allos Anthropos launched the “Allos Anthropos home”, an apartment, which serves the storage of the kitchen’s equipment and provides breakfast, coffee, clothes’ washing, bathing, leisure and Internet use to everyone in need, while it also offers high school and theatre courses.

In relation to the social kitchen in Chania, Allos Anthropos is probably the most representative example of the legitimation and certification mechanisms. Offering collective meals in working-class, downgraded and migrant areas, as well as participating in numerous activist events (Allos Anthropos, n.d.), the kitchen was acknowledged by the broader social

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11 Allos Anthropos stands for Another Human.
movement community and in many cases by citizens and shop owners in the
neighbourhoods in which the meals were taking place (Int.35). Appreciation
has also been granted by a number of institutional actors, despite the fact
that it rejected donations by political parties, big firms and large supermarket
chains. It is worth mentioning here that, together with the Metropolitan
Community Clinic at Helliniko (MKIE), it won the prize of the European
Citizen by the European Parliament, but went on to reject it (TVXS, 2015,
September 13). Legitimacy and certification encouraged Allos Anthropos’
diffusion. But Allos Anthropos is a notable example in which diffusion is
affected by the sub-mechanism of emulation. As an interviewee from Allos
Anthropos branch in Thessaloniki explains, the very idea lies in its ability
to be duplicated by everyone interested in doing so (Int.35). However, this
identical operation does not prevent the reproduction of vulnerabilities,
since the operation of the kitchens in Megara and Thessaloniki again by
small groups of committed individuals caused much fatigue which led to
their dissolution (Int.36).

Together with neighbourhood assemblies and grassroots initiatives,
collective kitchens find large application in traditional SMOs. As our field
research reveals, during the years of crisis, many SMOs decided to set up col-
clective kitchens in their own premises, but also open the existing members’
kitchens for external use. Here, we should clarify that collective kitchens
do not refer to the provision of food during the organization of specific
events, something which is a long-standing international tradition of social
movements; rather, they refer to the consistent provision of communal
meals on specific days, usually based on a pre-defined schedule, which
require the collectives’ full attention.

Returning to the collective kitchens in SMOs, it is important to understand
their relationship with the overall process of boundary enlargement. To this
extent, collective kitchens present quite different starting points. Being
among the first ones, the collective kitchen of Autonomo social centre was
established in 2008. Autonomo’s kitchen was the direct outcome of Creative
Resistances festival as an action that ‘has the potential to politicize everyday
life and a practice which shows an alternative against the capitalistic model
of social organization’ (Int.33). Although it takes place on the collective’s
premises, the kitchen was not only for its members; from its early days it
was open to everyone (Int.33). As an interviewee notes, the social explosion
during the December 2008 riots fertilized this attempt and standardized its
operation on a weekly basis, while the economic crisis further emphasized

12 Consider for instance the cene popolari (people’s dinners) of Italian SMOs.
its role in covering the needs created due to austerity. Similar is the case of the collective kitchen in Nosotros social centre, Athens. Although it was strongly influenced by the austerity environment, the kitchen complements a series of services, such as a radio station, language courses, theatre and dance groups, which take place in the centre’s premises. In this respect, the kitchen aims to respond to the centre’s core values of moving against the purity and sectarization of anarchist groups in Exarcheia (Int.57).

Although the enlargement of Autonomo and Nosotros social centres’ activities lies in their efforts to create an alternative narrative to the typical libertarian repertoire, the trajectories of the collective kitchens of Steki Metanaston13 in Athens and Thessaloniki have different roots. Established as an attempt of the “Network for the Social Support of Migrants and Refugees” to create an open space for the encounters of local and foreign population in Athens in 1997 (Steki Metanaston, n.d.), the advent of the Global Justice Movement (GJM) helped the establishment of similar Steki in many major Greek cities (Int.61). Although a mechanism of emulation allowed the reproduction of the organizational structure of Steki Metanaston in Athens, this indirect centralized diffusion was not able to damage their autonomy (Int.32). Being the most prominent ones, Steki in Athens and Thessaloniki host different political groups and activities that form the centres’ coordinating assemblies, with the organization of the annual anti-racist festivals, advocacy in support to migrants and refugees, as well as the provision of language courses to migrants taking place from their early establishment. The advent of the economic crisis fostered the two social centres to also hold weekly collective kitchens, but with notable differences.

The collective kitchen in Thessaloniki’s Steki Metanaston started around 2011. The participation of its members in similar repertoires of the Argentinean movement between 2002 and 2008, as well as the assembly’s desire to provide an alternative to the collective meals organized by Golden Dawn, were the two main reasons for the kitchen’s establishment (Int.37). In contrast, the Athenian case presents a clear story of transformation. Established in 2008 in order to cover the members’ needs for quality food, the members’ kitchen started to attract outsiders after the December 2008 riots and the anti-austerity mobilizations. This change urged its members to squat a nearby building and transfer the kitchen’s operations there (Int.60).

In the cases of Toumba and VKP neighbourhood assemblies, the kitchens’ audiences were mainly composed of activists. What distinguishes the collective kitchen of Thessaloniki’s Steki from the rest though, is that its audience

13 Steki Metanaston stands for Migrants’ Centre.
was particularly targeting marginalized groups, such as drug addicts, the homeless, migrants, the unemployed and the elderly (Int.37). The kitchen tried to approach its audience by distributing brochures to municipality and churches’ soup kitchens, parks, bridges and related hangouts, with the news widely diffused by word of mouth shortly after (Int.37). However, El Chef collective kitchen of Steki Metanaston in Athens expresses a different approach in terms of “opening”, since the members were not in favour of targeting marginalized groups. As stated by an interviewee,

we did not follow the logic of feeding some people just for the sake of it. I don’t think it is possible for the movement to be in charge of the destitute and homeless’ nutrition. These are things that we should claim from the state [...]. What we did was try to highlight the crisis, the (increase of) the homeless, and the (needs of) refugees through food. We are not the good Samaritans that will distribute food; rather, through our action we try to emphasize the existing problem. (Int.60)

Apart from the audience, collective kitchens vary in their operation, since this is subject to the organizational model each assembly follows. For instance, the kitchen’s organizers in Autonomo are not required to be members of the centre’s political group (Int.33), while the respective ones in Nosotros and the two Steki are required to attend the main assemblies. With regards to the kitchens’ assemblies of the two Steki, despite some mild variations in their decision-making models, both participate and are in line with the respective general assemblies. Similar is the case for Nosotros social centre. According to an interviewee from Nosotros (Int.57), the fact that every activity that takes place in Nosotros can be organized both by its members and by outsiders that want to use the space, is indicative of its open character, while the kitchen is not an exception here: it was initially organized by Nosotros members but at some point a group of outsiders took charge. Regardless of whether they have their own assemblies, every group is required to attend the centre’s weekly general assembly; while, like the vast majority of the SMOs studied here, Nosotros requires the groups’ minimum participation in the maintenance of the building. In cases where collective kitchens are recognized as direct parts of the assemblies’ repertoire, the cycle of rotation is less rigid, with the weekly assemblies deciding the members in charge of the next kitchen (Int.54).

Earlier, we pointed out that the division of labour in the case of markets without middlemen was of utmost importance (Int.29). Although less clearly, the collective kitchens follow a similar approach to the division of labour,
with some members being responsible for cooking, others for cleaning or serving, and others for sourcing the products. With the exception of Chania social kitchen, where members cook the meals in their homes before distributing them from the kitchen's premises, all the collective and social kitchens under study prepare the meals directly on the spot, while in a few cases, take-away packages are also available (Int.33). This on-spot cooking reveals the deployment of a social appropriation mechanism that deserves our attention.

Tilly and Tarrow argue that social appropriation signifies a mechanism where ‘non-political groups transform into political actors by using their organizational and institutional bases to launch movement campaigns’ (2015, p. 36). We argue that the same mechanism took place regarding social and collective kitchens. On the basis of self-organization, many collective kitchens require the beneficiaries to serve themselves and clean afterwards. As many interviewees have stressed (Int.54; Int.52; Int.36; Int.33; Int.60), this regulation finds widespread application, preserves the kitchen's solidarity character (Int.32) and distinguishes itself from institutional soup kitchens, where beneficiaries are expected to assume a passive role. Additionally, it is not rare for beneficiaries to participate actively also in cooking, without it being a requirement though (Int.33; Int.52; Int.54; Int.59). In this respect, the organization of collective and social kitchens implies a different approach to service provision, in which the beneficiary is not a mere receiver, but actively participates in the provided services.

Social appropriation also reveals a different aspect of the organizational factor. By assigning the aspect of self-organization to these precise services, actors interact with each other and enlarge the dividing line between organizers and beneficiaries. Although the members of each kitchen have the ultimate responsibility for their operation, in many cases the users took an active role in the overall organization (Int.57; Int.60). Two years after the establishment of Steki's kitchen in Thessaloniki, the regular beneficiaries began to actively participate both in the co-organization of the kitchen and in its assembly. According to an interviewee:

usually we are a group of five members who cook and are in charge. During the supply procedure, we are much more. Together with the beneficiaries, we are around fifteen. The ones who systematically cook are people who used to come here to eat and then joined in. One of them is a chef who lost everything, became homeless and lived in the municipal shelter. Once this person found us, we developed a very good and trustworthy relationship, and now cooks for the rest. (Int.37)
Together with social appropriation, coordinated action is another mechanism that joins forces for the boundary enlargement process. Unlike markets where coordination reached the national level, in the case of kitchens this refers to the local level. First of all, coordinated action refers to the collective customization of the kitchens’ timetable, which has been developed due to two contrasting trends. On the one hand, in cases where the kitchens’ audience was mainly outsiders (non-activists), different organizers from nearby areas tried to set their operation on different days so as to establish an informal weekly nourishment system (Int.37). On the other hand, in cases where the kitchens’ beneficiaries were mostly activists, these have been set on different days in order to avoid sharing the same audience (Int.54). One way or another, the same mechanism facilitates the kitchens’ smooth operation. As we see further on, this mechanism was essential during the long summer of migration in 2015, when many self-organized social and collective kitchens provided their services in support of the refugee squats.

Finally, field research shows that SMOs have launched collective kitchens under a cooperative form. Similar to Sholio squat, each sub-group and structure of the Mikropolis social centre has its own assembly, but all are subject to the general coordination assembly. As discussed in detail later, the members of Mikropolis kitchen are obliged to also participate in the centre’s general assemblies. Despite the fact that Sholio and Mikropolis’ kitchens are not organized on a voluntary basis, still their members are required to participate in the premises’ maintenance, whether this is cleaning or holding shifts in the centres’ bars (Int.34).

3.1.3 Collection and Distribution of Food Parcels

The last form of action related to the social movement scene of food deals with the collection and distribution of food parcels. Initiatives preoccupied with the collection and distribution of food are either autonomous entities (Int.33) or part of social centres’ repertoires (Int.56; Int.38). The rationale behind this action is to collect food parcels and distribute them to individuals and families in need. Although this is an international practice, carried out by humanitarian NGOs, church organizations and municipal authorities, it is purely a “child” of austerity in the context of the social movement community in Greece. SMOs present different narratives about beneficiaries’ organization from below, which contradict both the top-down provision of help from institutional actors, (Int.40; Int.41) and the neoliberal context of civil society organizations (Rozakou, 2008; Serdedakis, 2008). Emphasizing the role of trust once again, beneficiaries are
not required to have any official documents to certify their poor economic conditions. In this respect, the approach of SMOs fosters the empowerment of underprivileged groups through solidarity. In order to better grasp how this procedure takes place, we explore the roots and operation of such initiatives.

Established in 2012 from the collaboration among ecological organizations, Oikopolis\textsuperscript{14} social centre is a representative case of repertoires’ shift caused by the economic crisis. As an interviewee admits,

\begin{quote}
we set aside the ecological, animal and human rights issues we were preoccupied with and we focused on aspects of practical solidarity by starting the kitchen and the food distribution to the local population. With the advent of the refugee crisis [...] we were forced to devote all our attention there. (Int.38)
\end{quote}

In this respect, Oikopolis introduced a number of service-oriented activities, varying from language courses to refugees to distribution of food, clothes and furniture. Trofosyllektes\textsuperscript{15} in Autonomo social centre is another group which collects and distributes food parcels. The idea started after Autonomo’s participation in the electricity re-connection activities of Exarcheia’s Network of Social Solidarity (Dikaex) brought its members in contact with impoverished Greek and migrant families in Exarcheia (Int.33). Imitating a respective action which took place in the popular district of Perama in Piraeus, Autonomo formed the group of Trofosyllektes in close cooperation with Dikaex (Dikaex, 2014).

Although the introduction of food distribution repertoire in Oikopolis and Autonomo was forced by the centres’ interaction with people in need, the respective action in Nea Smirni Workers’ Club had clear theoretical origins. Arguing that neoliberalism and austerity have radically changed workers’ everyday life and fragmented their identity even more, a group of radical left-wing and anti-authoritarian activists with a long tradition in local struggles concluded that neighbourhood associations are called to play a role that so far was assigned to traditional trade unions (Int.56). The decay of the traditional social movement tools and the ready-made solutions prepare the ground for a more pre-figurative approach able to construct a solid, antagonistic subject. In this respect, the repertoires employed by Nea Smirni Workers’ Club, such as protests, advocacy for labour issues,

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{14} Oikopolis stands for Ecological City. \\
\textsuperscript{15} Trofosyllektes stands for Food Collectors.
\end{flushleft}
establishment of solidarity structures and the collection and distribution of food parcels included, are inherent to a holistic approach to connect everyday life with everyday resistance.

As it happened in the case of the markets, SMOs used the contact information from previous activities to communicate with potential beneficiaries about the forthcoming food distribution (Int.56; Int.33). Once individuals and families are subscribed as beneficiaries, the SMOs set a timetable and together with the beneficiaries visit the local supermarkets and collect food donations from customers. Donations are also collected in the SMOs’ headquarters. Once donations are collected and food parcels are prepared, SMOs are in charge of their distribution. Together with markets and kitchens, this practice is also subject to internal variation. Distribution of cooked food in Oikopolis, which attracts mostly homeless people, takes place once or twice per week. The rest of the services, including also the distribution of food parcels, take place once per month and deal mostly with families and individuals in need. Respectively, the 30 families subscribed in Trofosylektes, receive their goods once per week from the centre’s headquarters (Int.33). However, Nea Smirni Workers’ Club has implemented a different approach. Since many beneficiaries felt uncomfortable with publicly receiving food donation, the centre has accustomed some activists to individually contact the respective families and arrange the monthly distribution (Int.56).

The participation of beneficiaries in the service provision is another aspect that highlights the bottom-up characteristics of this alternative repertoire. Although participation is not always successful, this approach reveals that SMOs combine empowerment with self-organization. Apart from its theoretical value, this combination has practical implications for keeping the action alive: ‘If someone finds a job and won’t use the service for this month, (our model enables them) to come to the supermarket and collect donations for the others’ (Int.56). The Workers Club’s success in combining emancipatory strategies with self-organization led the extra-parliamentary party of Anticapitalistic Left Cooperation for the Overthrow (ANTARSYA) to publicly welcome this action and call its members to replicate it. Playing the role of sub-mechanism once again, emulation encouraged the diffusion of similar Workers’ Clubs across the country, prototyping their operation on the Club of Nea Smirni (Int.56).

While beneficiaries’ participation is optional in Nea Smirni, it was mandatory in Trofosylektes. Trofosylektes’ beneficiaries participated both in the collection of food donations outside supermarkets and in their subsequent distribution in Autonomo’s premises. Despite Autonomo’s interest in engaging the beneficiaries to self-preserve the operation of
the structure, its internal problems resulted in Trofosylektes’ malfunction (Int.33). Although Oikopolis engaged its beneficiaries in cooking and distributing food parcels, as an interviewee admits, it is often refugees who distribute meals to impoverished Greeks since the former tend to participate much more than the latter (Int.38).

3.2 Resources

3.2.1 Markets without Middlemen

Resources are quite central in social movement activities and play a vital role in the expression of solidarity. In the case of markets without middlemen, resources are an essential aspect of the brokerage mechanism, not only for the transmission and distribution of “know-how” techniques, but also for bringing closer the markets’ organizers with other social initiatives.

Following the operation of the first markets, the organizers set a “solidarity percentage” on producers’ profits. After the weekly operation of the markets, the organizers calculated the quantity of products sold, and usually kept around 3% of it to fund social welfare endeavours, such as municipal social groceries, church soup kitchens, municipal kindergartens as well as individuals and families in need (Int.7; Int.29; Int.43). After the long summer of migration, receivers of the solidarity percentage changed from domestic social welfare initiatives to the refugee camps (Int.7). This percentage, which referred to producers’ profit without affecting the consumers’ final cost, was also appreciated by the producers. Together with the political character assigned to overcome brokers, the solidarity percentage underlined the markets’ social role. Calvário et al. note that the solidarity percentage was ‘an effort to “educate” farmers to move beyond narrow profit-making interests and engage in solidarity-making relationships with consumers and the population in general’ (2017, p. 77). Additionally, the solidarity percentage managed to connect the markets with other fractions of the social movement community and gain their certification by the local institutional environment.

The operation of markets without middlemen was exclusively based on goods produced in Greece. However, a great variety of the everyday required products were not produced in the country, while those agricultural products produced in Greece were rather costly. As an interviewee informs us:

we faced problems with the producers because we were calling them to buy Greek sesame to produce tahini. Yes, but it does not exist! The Greek
sesame is of very high quality and is mainly sold abroad, while the Greek tahini producers use sesame supplies from Ethiopia! [...] There are some products, which the only domestic characteristic they have is that they are produced in the grinding machines of Greek farmers. [...] So, there were dilemmas whether we want such products or not. (Int.29)

As the same interviewee states, in these terms, markets failed to cover the lower economic strata and ended up serving the needs of the impoverished low-middle strata (Int.29).

When contacting producers, the organizers prioritized agricultural cooperatives and small groups of producers, while they paid attention to securing decent labour conditions for producers and employees, as was also the case with Italian food solidarity groups (Forno and Graziano, 2016; Grasseni, 2014a). According to our field notes, these criteria became stricter in the aftermath of the human trafficking scandal of Bangladesh workers in Manolada’s strawberry fields in 2012 (ECHR, 2017, March 30). To this end, many markets urged consumers to participate in the production process. Although this strategy aimed to engage the unemployed, and thus to create trustworthy relationships between the markets and the rest of the social movement community, it was limited to occasional assistance during the markets’ operation (Int.29).

Lack of time and fatigue were common problems for organizers when moving from open-air markets to consumer cooperatives, while the absence of a respective tradition made this transition harder (Skordili, 2013). This change of organizational formats had strongly affected SMOs internal procedures, since the organizers had to deal with new bureaucratic requirements, that were earlier attributed only to producers.

We don’t like it, but it is true that once it turned into a cooperative it feels like an ordinary shop; you should take care of many things. We receive the products, we send orders, there are always updates, the place should always be clean… (Int.43)

claims an interviewee from Galatsi cooperative without middlemen. However, the rise of workload set in motion the mechanism of social appropriation, since in many cases it urged those beneficiaries receiving the solidarity percentage to assist with the cooperatives’ operation. In this context, social appropriation depicts how beneficiaries have been transformed into active participants who take shifts in the cooperative (Int.43).
Quite important here is the issue of the members' compensation. The members of Galatsi cooperative provide their services on a voluntary basis. Although similar examples can be found in other cooperatives, we can observe a variety of approaches. Being among the ancestors of these new forms, Spame used the model of unpaid labour for its members. Evaluating Spame's trajectory after it ceased operation in 2014, one of its former members argues that 'in exchange for the shifts, we intended to grand some products for the members. But we failed to do it. [...] From the beginning, we didn't believe in voluntarism; rather we were arguing that it should be a compensation in kind' (Int.26). This failure was mostly due to the low profit share over the products' prices, since it did not allow the collective to be economically sustainable. Nevertheless, the supermarket of Bios consumer cooperative managed to accomplish what Spame failed to do. Bios adds 10%-15% onto the product value, with 7 of its members receiving monetary compensation for their undertaken tasks. Although its shares do not provide profit for its members, by distinguishing its profits (money coming from customers that are non-members) from its surpluses (money coming from customers that are members), the cooperative provides discounts to its members, and socializes its profits in support of movements and solidarity actions (Int.27).

With regards to grocery stores operating within neighbourhood assemblies and traditional SMOs, the case becomes a bit more complicated. On the one hand, some assemblies consider their grocery stores as an additional repertoire to their overall action, which promotes a grassroots way of providing good quality food. VKP neighbourhood assembly is an illustrative example, since it distributes goods on producers' price (Int.54). On the other hand, grocery stores like Sydrofia in Mikropolis social centre or Sholio squat, operate on the basis of solidarity economy, and therefore set an additional 10% over the producers' prices. The remaining amount serves to cover running costs and provide small compensation for their members (Int.51). Taking these examples as two extreme cases, one can find various trajectories in between. Doulapi is indicative here, since it moved from the free contributions model, where consumers contributed as much they want for products, to the establishment of a solidarity, mutual help fund in 2015 to support its members financially.

Apart from the members' compensation, official consumer cooperatives and unofficial cooperative efforts introduced in SMOs are also connected through the factor of resources. Together with the transmission of organizational “know-how”, consumers' cooperatives often assist unofficial grocery stores to order vast amounts of agricultural products due to the latter's lack
of legal status (Int.34). This procedure is vital for the survival of the unofficial grocery stores and it also promotes a logic of collaboration, antagonistic to the competitive environment of the neoliberal market. In this respect, resources activate the mechanism of brokerage that boosts the connection between traditional SMOs and cooperatives.

3.2.2 Collective and Social Kitchens

Field research on collective and social kitchens underlines three areas of concern: the issue of fees for the provided services, the members’ compensation and the way that products and equipment are acquired. Our analysis shows that all three issues are inter-connected, with great impact on each other.

Starting with the fee for using the kitchens’ services, field research reveals three main approaches which are strongly related to the overall approach of the organizations which host them. Dealing with the first approach, the cases of Toumba citizens’ assembly and Autonomo social centre are indicative here, with the kitchens’ beneficiaries being free to choose the amount of money they want to contribute.

Our starting point was to hold a weekly kitchen for those people who have money and the ones who don’t. I eat here and also take food for the day after with 4-5 euros, which is extremely convenient for me. There are others that do not pay anything, while some employees from the nearby shops come and take away their meal (Int.33), argues an interviewee from Autonomo. Nevertheless, Olson’s free rider effect, which supports that people choose not to participate in collective action due to the costs this bears despite the fact that they enjoy its potential achievements (Staggenborg, 2011, pp. 31-34), could not be avoided. As a member of Toumba’s initiative informs us, the problem of free riders triggered internal debates, with its members expressing their discontent towards beneficiaries who had the economic ability to contribute but did not (Int.52).

The second option deals with the absence of any kind of fee. Although this recalls the strict anti-commercial tradition of the libertarian space in Greece, which has fueled debates in the 1990s and caused many internal disputes and divisions, the absence of a fee for using the collective kitchens’ services is quite rare in the studied SMOs, while it finds broad application in social kitchens. The third approach points to the determination of specific prices adjusted to the meals. As the case of El Chef attests, this serves the
funding of the kitchen’s activities and the acquisition of products for the next cooking process (Int.60), while fees in Sholio and Mikropolis kitchens are also linked to the members’ compensation.

Although helpful, these three basic approaches to fees cannot really underline the dynamic character that lies behind the decisions to adopt them. To do so, we focus on the trajectories of Nosotros social centre in Athens and Steki Metanaston in Thessaloniki.

With the kitchen’s exception, Nosotros’ provided services are not dependent on fees. Nevertheless, the economic difficulties caused by austerity have largely affected the activists’ livelihood and lack of time in volunteering. This condition forced the Nosotros assembly to develop a more tolerant position towards fees. More precisely, in cases like the provision of language courses, Nosotros has allowed the teachers to implement a free contribution policy, where students are able to choose whether to economically contribute or not (Int.57). This tolerance ‘has changed Nosotros perspective from a purely communist into a more collectivist perception’ (Int.57), something which was also encouraged by the centre’s participation in the square movement. In order to clarify this, we turn to the kitchen’s model of compensation. As an interviewee informs us, during the period of austerity, the voluntary operation of the kitchen changed, with its members receiving compensation for their services. Nevertheless, internal problems led to reject the model and temporary halt the kitchen’s services (Int.57).

The topics of services’ fees and members’ compensation remain debatable within the Nosotros assembly, with some members arguing that ‘we are an open endeavour and thus we have the ability to change perspective when the facts are changing, and others arguing that we are an anarchist-communist organization, and this does not feel right’ (Int.57). Nosotros experienced changes from no fees to free contributions, with variation also taking place with regards to members’ compensation. Nevertheless, dynamic trajectories also move in reverse. This was the case in Thessaloniki Steki’s collective kitchen. Since more activists were present during the kitchen’s first steps, the organizers implemented a free contribution policy. Gradually though, as it started to attract more marginalized groups and Steki’s members decreased, the policy of free contributions changed, and the kitchens’ services were provided free of charge (Int.37).

Together with fees and members’ compensation, another important issue for collective and social kitchens concerns equipment and raw materials. In social kitchens these are acquired with monetary and in-kind donations. With regards to the social kitchen in Chania, donations are mostly provided by individuals and local enterprises in solidarity. In the words
of an interviewee, ‘bakeries support us by donating their extra bread. […] Butcher shops donate the extra meat that is not sold’ (Int.36), while the same goes for vegetables. Although the kitchen funds its activities also by organizing fund-raising events, its non-advertisement policy has costed it donations. According to a member:

we have been contacted by some supermarkets, but they wanted to be advertised. We conceive this (the kitchen) as a matter of solidarity; we are not going to advertise anyone. Once a supermarket brought one tone of fish and asked us to issue a letter of acknowledgement in order to bring more. Since we didn’t do it, it didn’t contact us again. (Int.36)

Monetary and in-kind donations are also the main sources of donations for Allos Anthropos social kitchens (Int.35). Regarding the branch in Athens, donations also concern the maintenance of the Allos Anthropos home, as well as transportation costs and the personal expenses of the founder due to his constant preoccupation; information which is known to the donors (Int.59).

Collective kitchens reject any type of donation from non-governmental or church organizations. In some cases, they have turned down donations issued by municipal authorities (Int.37). Donations to collective kitchens come mostly from its members, other activists and people in solidarity (Int.52; Int.37; Int.60). On some occasions, in-kind donations in the form of olive oil and vegetables are provided by self-organized cooperatives (Int.52; Int.37; Int.60), while many kitchens receive donations from producers who participate in markets without middlemen (Int.51). In this respect, donations demonstrate the pre-figurative approach of alternative repertoires. As an interviewee argued, ‘self-managing a kitchen, which serves 200 meals during its shift, without any type of institutional funding for five years, is a successful example that shows the efficiency of bottom-up solidarity’ (Int.37).

While the more disobedient characteristics of mass expropriation actions are missing from the Greek context, some kitchens try to produce their own ingredients by cultivating vegetables in occupied gardens (Int.54). More importantly though, the increased flows of refugees in the summer of 2015 had direct impact on the kitchens’ operation. Together with the reduction of pork from kitchens’ menus (Int.60), the massive donations of products in support of the refugees created surpluses in some kitchens, facilitating a re-distributive procedure from one kitchen to another (Int.60). This gives us the opportunity to unravel the mechanism of brokerage.

As we see in all three social movement scenes, resources facilitate the connection of different fractions of the social movement community. In
this respect, it is not rare that kitchens’ revenues are used to economically support specific grassroots endeavours. That was the case of Autonomo collective kitchen (Int.33) in support of Vio.Me factory, Sholio’s establishment of a separate solidarity fund to support similar endeavours (Int.51), the connection of Chania social kitchen with the local Steki Metanaston and the Rosa Nera squat in Crete (Int.36), as well as the connection of Allos Anthropos with a number of SMOs in Athens. In the same vein, Steki’s collective kitchen in Thessaloniki offers its services during the annual anti-racist festivals, it was in charge of cooking during the NoBorder international camp in Thessaloniki in 2016, and it constantly participates in events organized by social clinics and political collectives (Int.37). Cooking in support of labour struggles was important for the collective kitchen of Athens Steki El Chef, with its actions ranging from on-the-spot cooking during the nine-months strike of the steel workers in 2012, the media strikes in Eleftherotipia newspaper, Alter and the Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation (ERT) television channels, the strike of the ministry of finance cleaning staff and the hunger strike of the 300 migrant workers in 2011 (Int.60; El Chef, 2011a; 2011b; 2012). Similar examples can be found in a number of cases, such as the cooperative kitchen of Sholio squat providing food to the squatters of the occupied labour centre in Thessaloniki during important protest events (Int.27).

Although these are important signifiers of the brokerage mechanism, the so-called refugee “crisis” signaled its full deployment and the subsequent activation of coordinated action. Among others, the cooperative kitchen of Sholio squat proved to be a great supplier of food and equipment to the Orfanotrofio refugee squat, before the latter’s eviction and demolishment by the SYRIZA-led governing coalition in 2016. Respectively, the kitchen of Nosotros coordinated its actions with collective and social kitchens like El Chef, Allos Anthropos and others by taking charge of the daily nutrition of the refugee squats in Exarcheia for almost a year (Int.57; Int.60). Taking into consideration the different characteristics and political approaches of the three aforementioned kitchens, the combination of brokerage with coordinated action mechanisms seems extremely vital to the development of the boundary enlargement process.

3.2.3 Collection and Distribution of Food Parcels

Markets without middlemen, as well as collective and social kitchens present important internal variations concerning resources. This does not seem to be the case with regards to the collection and distribution of food parcels. Starting with the issue of fees, all the organizers provide food parcels free
of charge. This seems inevitable if we consider that these services target mostly impoverished groups with low purchase power. The same applies to compensation, with all the participants offering their services voluntarily. Nevertheless, this is a rather debatable topic, since many SMOs are in favour of voluntary participation as the proxy for their anti-commercial character, while others oppose mere voluntarism and (try to) employ a cooperative logic by introducing small compensation (Int.38).

Apart from the collection of food donations outside of supermarkets, donations are also provided within the organizers’ premises as well as during fund-raising events (Int.38). Here, again, shop owners and farmers in solidarity offer donations, with Oikopolis social centre receiving vegetables free of charge from Thessaloniki’s central vegetable market (Int.38). In-kind donations are preferred for transparency reasons (Int.38), but this does not prevent the organizers from collecting monetary donations. According to an interviewee, monetary donations are used in order to produce the informative material distributed during their sorties in supermarkets (Int.33), as well as to purchase more expensive goods and fresh food that cannot be stored (Int.56).

Having donations as the main source of funding demonstrates the bottom-up approaches of the food parcel repertoire and challenges the monopoly of institutional and NGO actors in caregiving. Nevertheless, this becomes more complicated when it comes to the donors’ profile. Although many organizers reject any collaboration with the state, church and non-governmental organizations, these relations acquire a more dynamic character when it comes to the provision of the service at stake. This was for instance the case with Trofósyllektes group in Autonomo social centre, which has received donations from the SYRIZA-funded organization S4A. As a member explains, this decision was not easy and created strong internal debates. In particular, some beneficiaries were in favour of receiving donations from S4A. In their view, ‘this was their money (as taxpayers) and they should take it’ (Int.33), since S4A funding comes from SYRIZA’s MPs compensation. On the other hand, the members of Autonomo ‘insisted on standing on their own feet and keep an independent approach from the state and its organizations’ (Int.33). The outcome of this contradiction resulted in Trofósyllektes receiving S4A’s donations, with Autonomo’s members ‘putting aside our political will in favour of the beneficiaries’ (Int.33).

The refugee “crisis” was also crucial for the collection and distribution of food parcels. Following the same practice of donations, the monumental arrival of refugees in Piraeus port in 2015 led the Workers’ Club to provide migrants and refugees with food parcels. According to an interviewee
(Int.56), in many cases, the members invited groups of refugees to the Club’s headquarters, where they exchanged experiences, practical information and held joint collective kitchens. Following this action, the refugees’ removal from Piraeus port forced the Club to supply a number of refugee squats, such as the occupied hotel “City Plaza”, with food parcels (Int.56). Similar narratives signify once again that resources become the connecting glue between the SMOs and other parts of the social movement community.

From the perspective of Jasper and Poulsen (1995), the 2015 long summer of migration was a moral shock that mobilized activists and people in solidarity and increased cooperation among SMOs. This was also the case for Oikopolis social centre and the development of brokerage mechanism. Although Oikopolis does not represent an ideologically homogenous group, but rather the amalgamation of different groups on a minimum political agreement, its active participation in Idomeni unofficial refugee camp in the northern borders of Greece expanded the centre’s criteria for collaborating with other groups. As stated by an interviewee,

we don’t have taboos regarding our collaboration. Idomeni was a place that allowed us to meet many people and groups in response to the refugee issue. There, it was quite pleasant that the different political and social approaches of each group as well as the different perspectives regarding the refugee issue were not in any case strong enough to divide us. We collaborated with many groups as there was nothing to differentiate us. (Int.38)

Similar to the eventful protests and the effects that these might have on the participants (Della Porta, 2008; Della Porta et al., 2018, pp. 1-24), the unofficial refugee camp of Idomeni acted as a unifying event that brought to collaboration diverse groups in response to a crisis situation (Zamponi, 2017, 2018). However, collaboration did not stop in Idomeni. Oikopolis kept receiving donations from foreign collectives and civil society organizations with whom they collaborated in Idomeni in order to fund the distribution of food parcels (Int.38). This narrative reveals another point which connects the two “crises”. As Rozakou’s ethnographic research informs us, ‘donations were so many, that in autumn 2015 collectivities in Lesvos had to ask publicly for a halt until they sorted and distributed the items they had accumulated’ (2016, p. 196). On this ground, one interviewee notes that when there was an over-accumulation of donated material in support of the refugees, this was subsequently distributed to beneficiaries who suffered from the economic crisis (Int.38).
Earlier, we mentioned the relation of S4A with Autonomo social centre. The same also goes for Oikopolis, which keeps receiving donations to support its actions for refugees, while it collaborated with the local municipal authorities in order to have a place to store the in-kind donations (Int.38). In this respect, the deployment of the brokerage mechanism in the factor of resources is not pictured only by the SMOs’ connection with other organizations, but it is also acknowledged from their relationship with institutional actors.

3.3 Identity

3.3.1 Markets without Middlemen

The last section of this chapter deals with the factor of identity, a rather important ground in order to unpack the trajectories as they evolved from the dynamic interaction of the austerity environment (macro-level) with the organizations (meso-level) and the activists (micro-level). Starting with the markets without middlemen, discussion on identity unravels the instrumental relations that boost their development, in organizational and political terms. Earlier we saw how the mechanism of coordinated action transformed the markets into a political act. However, this would not be the case without a change in the markets’ discourse during the first national conferences. Finding its roots in the potato movement, the first open-air distributions of products were unorganized and dealt only with the potatoes’ low prices. However, the transformation of the potato movement into the politically oriented set of markets without middlemen was the outcome of activists’ efforts to change the movement’s symbolic frame. As one interviewee recalls:

we wanted to get rid of the “potato” stigma and be called the movement without middlemen. Otherwise, if the potato movement had prevailed, we would have stuck with potatoes, and it would not have led anywhere. That’s why we wanted to call it without middlemen. There are still people who think that all these have been organized by the municipal authorities. But there was constantly this need, and we were discussing this during the first national conference in Katerini, to discard this label of the potato movement. (Int.29)

The aforementioned change of the markets’ frame also impacted their anti-fascist approach. Although the anti-fascist element tends to be overshadowed by the anti-neoliberal narrative of the anti-austerity mobilizations, we
should always bear in mind its essential role during the period of Golden Dawn’s growth. The focus of organizers on promoting domestic products in a way of supporting local farmers, ran the risk of markets’ cooptation by a nationalistic narrative. Additional recent examples of cooptation can be found in the square movement, with Syntagma’s division to upper and lower assemblies which were also characterized by the presence of national symbols (Hadjimichalis, 2017, p. 154; Kaika and Karaliotas, 2016). A similar example is the transformation of neighbourhood assemblies’ framework into “disobedient citizens” by fascist groups in order to acquire spatial certification for their attacks on migrants in the Athenian city centre (Kandylis, 2013). Due to this, the markets’ national conferences were also important for collectively rejecting any connection with Golden Dawn and changing their frame from “Greek products”, which might be also connected with the preference of Greek producers as opposed to foreigners (Int.29), to “products produced in Greece” (Kotoulas, 2012). These national meetings managed to lay the foundations for the markets’ progressive character. Once these features were stabilized and the mechanism of diffusion started to take place, the markets faced a number of new dilemmas in respect to their identity.

The disapproval towards the high prices of the large supermarket chains had already been made clear. However, in many occasions participants and organizers started to debate whether markets were antagonistic to the traditional farmers’ markets or the local grocery stores (Int.29). These dilemmas shaped the markets’ identity formation and correspond to what Rakopoulos (2014, p. 104) describes as “political sensitization”. Subsequently, this political sensitization was decisive for the markets’ diffusion.

Many activists and SMOs conceived markets as an access point for approaching and bringing new constituents close to the social movement community. As field research shows, the markets attracted quite heterogeneous audiences in terms of age and social background, which moved far beyond the activist community, and volunteered for the first time (Int.29). Indicative is the personal story of an interviewee, whose everyday life ‘does not have any similarity with what I was doing before the markets. First and foremost, our everyday life is currently based on voluntarism’ (Int.43).16 As

16 Although the interviewee uses the term “voluntarism” to describe the change in their everyday life, we should note that this is contextualized in the participation in a social space with clear left-wing characteristics. This is rather important, since in many parts of this study, interviewees have underlined the left-wing or libertarian character of their participation as it contradicts with the neoliberal connotations of voluntarism that are usually assigned in a modernizing, top-down narrative developed in the 1990s and 2000s (Rozakou, 2008, pp. 105, 112).
the interviewee argues, her engagement with the markets was decisive for changing her personal time-schedule and becoming actively involved in political issues on a daily basis. Many participants have expressed similar stories during our field research and by respective studies in other countries (Zamponi and Bosi, 2018). In this respect, markets managed to break the border that usually divides activists from the general public, by creating a common space and assigning roles regardless of the participants’ previous political activity. As an activist commented, solidarity structures ‘managed to connect the central political struggle with the particular problem of each individual’ (Int.39). To this extent, our attention to the markets without middlemen, as well as other solidarity structures, highlights the deployment of the social appropriation sub-mechanism, which fosters the mechanism of diffusion.

In our quest to unravel the sub-mechanism of social appropriation, field research informs us that alternative repertoires have managed to channel emancipation via sociality. According to Rakopoulos, sociality is understood ‘as the social life revolving around people’s propensity to associate with other people and form social groups’ (2015, p. 87). Sociality contrasts the Durkheian socialization, which approached society as something external to individuals; and instead, suggests a model of association which produces political meanings (Rozakou, 2008, pp. 98-101). Markets do not strongly oppose to the assigned roles of consumers and producers or the money-based transactions. Therefore, they cannot be explained by the divisions of interest-altruism or market-reciprocity. However, if we analyse them under the frame of sociality, we can grasp the attempts of organizers to displace the users’ personal blame for their economic difficulties and the rapid decrease of their well-being (Hadjimichalis, 2017, pp. 79-107), as well as to capture the direct way of getting politicized through the exercise of the alternative repertoires (Cabot, 2016, p. 158; Rozakou, 2016, p. 188). In contrast to the old-fashioned type of political activism that required the individuals’ sophisticated political theorization (Flesher-Fominaya, 2007), politicization in the markets, as well as in other alternative repertoires, call for immediate action projected in the local settings of daily life. Politicization did not come through profound political analysis; participation in the organization of markets was considered a political action in itself. Speaking of the participants in a local market without middlemen, one interviewee comments that, ‘those who take care of the telephone orders are ladies that went out of their apartments, because they understood what they do. And what they do is really important’ (Int.43) both for the organization of the markets but also for their individual emancipation. Rakopoulos’ research
presents similar accounts, which pictures ‘the anti-middleman network as “the only thing that takes people out of their homes and into the streets in our area” or as “the only initiative that mobilizes people in the neighborhood today”’ (2015, p. 93); while additional inquiries show how the alternative repertoires assisted individuals’ politicization by shifting the quest for solutions to personal problems from the individual private sphere to the collective public one (Benmecheddal et al., 2017; Zamponi and Bosi, 2018).

Sociality should not be conceived only as a procedure that brings together different individuals. Rather, it contradicts the personal crisis and social isolation that were quite widespread in the first years of austerity. Sociality complements solidarity, as this ‘could be part of the process of politicization and alternative political emancipation’ (Hadjimichalis, 2017, p. 160). The popular slogan “no one alone in the crisis” targets precisely the logic of the individuals’ loneliness in experiencing their personal dramas, which were combined with sentiments of uselessness, depression and 33% increase in suicide rates (Vaiou and Kalandides, 2016, p. 461). The content of the first assemblies during the square movement reminds the reader that quite often these were paralleled with collective sessions of psychotherapy. Solidarity initiatives promote a collective solution to tackle these issues (Hadjimichalis, 2017, pp. 138-177; Vaiou and Kalandides, 2016, p. 459) and play the role of local communities, which allow individuals to communicate their individual economic difficulties, receive consultation from activists, advocates and experts and increase the sense of belonging. As highlighted by a member of Galatsi market, ‘it is the sense of community that I found here’ (Int.43). In this sense, sociality is an important feature of what Melucci (1996, p. 80) calls collective experience for the development of collective identity.

This psychological boost does not only refer to the micro-level of individuals but also to the meso-level of organizations. The markets’ weekly operation involved tasks to be completed within a specified time frame. In contrast to the broad political agendas opting for social transformation, the markets’ operation on Sunday afternoons signaled the accomplishment of the weekly goal. As an interviewee emphatically notes, the markets’ operation was translated into ‘the movements’ small victories’ (Int.29), of which the importance could be grasped only when it is contextualized in the environment of the streets’ defeat after the decrease of protests in 2012.

Returning to the diffusion mechanism, this was strongly supported by the sub-mechanism of social appropriation. At the same time, it played an important role in facilitating the legitimization of the local groups of organizers, since the markets’ diffusion signaled the parallel diffusion of their “trademark”. This diffusion was accompanied by a widespread appreciation
of the markets’ operation as well as the people in charge of it. As many interviewees note, wearing a specific jacket that signifies participation in the markets was quite essential for the members, in order to be acknowledged by the local neighbourhoods and communities (Int.29). In this respect, participating in the markets attributed a specific identity to the volunteers, and simplified the indirect legitimation of the SMOs and local political initiatives that they were also members of. As an interviewee informs us, about the first coordinating meeting of the markets:

there was a discussion on how we can anchor in the local societies. And everyone was saying the same thing; that in due time, it was easier to speak as a representative of the local market without middlemen. You were wearing your vest and once you spoke in public by saying that you participate in the market, it directly changed the others’ mood; it changed the identities, like SYRIZA supporter, anarchist, etc. that they had assigned to you earlier. [...] Everyone was reading the brochures you distributed. Even elder people were reading them. And they commented that we are good guys despite the fact that we also go to the squats! What was derived from the other areas is that markets legitimized the local assemblies that came out especially after December (2008 riots). (Int.29)

The mechanism of legitimation and the sub-mechanism of social appropriation reveal the markets’ spatial dimension. In this respect, markets acted as hubs, where different groups met to disseminate their material, inform about their actions and reproduce every movement-oriented conjuncture, such as the collection of medicine for social clinics or food for refugees (Int.29). This type of interaction reminds us also of the square movement, when public squares transformed into open spaces for ongoing political debates. According to Flesher Fominaya, ‘through their inclusive and elastic entry requirements (anyone can be in the square), camps enabled people without an overarching interpretive framework of the crisis, austerity or democracy to be integrated into a collective process of re-imagining and critique’ (2017, p. 9). The occupied squares ‘brought people who would not ordinarily engage with each other in urban settings, across age, class and ethnic divides’ (Ibid, p. 10). By offering their services in central parks and squares on Sunday afternoons, markets were neither the usual farmers’ bazaars nor strictly political meetings; rather, by obtaining a joyful atmosphere in times of decreased mobilization and general emotional downgrade, the markets shaped the outburst of affective emotions (Jasper, 1998), and embodied something more than the expression of a consumerist movement.
Nevertheless, we should be cautious of not conceiving markets as homogenized entities. Producers, consumers and organizers were often driven by their own motives (Int.29), something which underlines their blurred identity and the different forms markets received after their suppression. On the one hand, they ended up being mostly a consumers’ movement rather than an agricultural producers’ movement, resulting in the introduction of cooperatives. On the other hand, some groups conceived the organization of markets as the establishment of movement structures, which should have taken place independently from the crisis context. The latter can be found in the clear political approach of Exarcheia’s open-air market (Initiative of residents and collectives in Exarcheia, n.d.). As the initiative claims, ‘this is part of a broader collective struggle for the emancipation and autonomy from the mechanisms of power and the state’ (Initiative of residents and collectives in Exarcheia, 2013).

Taking into consideration that ‘until quite recently, anti-supermarket campaigns and alternative food initiatives were rather marginal if non-existent in Greece’ (Skordili, 2013, p. 133), the markets’ novelty bore a radical element: that access to quality food should be open to everyone. As an interviewee from Allos Tropos cooperative emphasizes:

Food is not luxury. The non-poisoned food should be accessible to middle and lower strata. Thus, it should have a price that can be reached by everyone. People who belong to the middle and upper class have access to quality food, while the middle and lower ones, ourselves included, do not have this possibility. We are not brokers and we don’t consider our action as philanthropic. We profit from this as consumers. (Int.24)

Quality food is also connected to the development of trust relationships with producers (Int.24; Int.33), while the decrease in prices is also connected to the decrease in the ecological footprint (Int.27). Such approaches find application in respective solidarity formations worldwide (Forno and Graziano, 2016; Gibson-Graham et al., 2018; Gibson-Graham and Miller, 2015; Grasseni, 2014b; Miller, 2005). Nevertheless, despite the political features that cooperatives introduce with regards to the direct distribution of products, many of them avoid following a clear political line (Int.27).

Field research reveals two main trends of thought regarding markets and the rest of the alternative repertoires. The first approach perceives markets as additional instruments to the usual social movement tools, and therefore, their operation as an instrument that fits in the crisis context and assists the promotion of more traditional struggles. From this
perspective, activists advocate that the inclination towards more social forms of struggle serves an instrumental purpose for achieving the SMOs' goals, without implying any additional qualitative transformation in terms of movements' identity (Int.55). The second trend conceives them as an alternative, autonomous repertoire, with its own unique characteristics, which leads the Greek movement community towards new paths and acknowledges different ways for the expression of the political struggle. This approach distinguishes the ‘close ideological and political projects, such as the members’ kitchens from the respective forms of social solidarity economy’ (Int. 39). The latter ones do not include any ideological purity, are open and create the resources and the preconditions for equal participation, collaboration and co-operation in the decision-making procedures, while they have greater transformative power for the participants. This last one contradicts with the former’s pre-requisite of a ready-made revolutionary. (Int.39)

As we argue throughout this study, the process of boundary enlargement bears instrumental characteristics and incorporates aspects of the social and solidarity economy. Due to this, the aforementioned approaches are not strictly unrelated with each other and therefore, our mechanism-process analytical framework applies, irrespective of the dominant narrative. Nevertheless, we should note that our explanatory approach signals an additional cognitive enlargement of SMOs, aside to the dominant transformation of repertoire change. This cognitive enlargement responds to a social opening of traditional SMOs due to the application of alternative repertoires. In the case of Ampariza social space, this took place due to the organization of the open-air markets and subsequently the cooperative in Galatsi. In the words of an interviewee,

we became more open; Ampariza became more open. It was not that open; it was more closed. And this is quite natural since its members grew up with specific (political) approaches and they used to belong (in a political space). Nevertheless, all of a sudden, Ampariza started to attract an audience that ranged from politically independent, right-wing, PASOK, Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima (Panhellenic Socialist Movement), supporters to KKE, Kommounistiko Komma Elladas (Communist Party of Greece) but also many people that are here do not have any relation with all these. This is very good, because we should be open and not be limited only to our familiar ways. (Int.43)
3.3.2 Collective and Social Kitchens

The feature of “openness” attributed earlier to the social space of Ampariza can be also found in other cases. Together with other alternative repertoires undertaken by Mikropolis, its kitchen has contributed to the social centre’s openness. Similar to the grocery store operating within the social centre, the Mikropolis cooperative kitchen has attracted a non-activist audience, composed of local residents and shopkeepers. As an interviewee states, ‘I have an impression that this (social opening) has been assisted a lot by the provision of the services; Mikropolis has opened a lot due to these structures’ (Int.34). Sholio squat presents a similar story. The attempts of its members to attribute an open character to the squat has been also reinforced by Sholio’s kitchen, of which the daily services are not used only by activists but also by workers and neighbours (Int.51).

Of course, this openness has not only affected the audience who come in touch with movement activities, but also the movement itself. Although the incorporation of monetary transactions within the movement community took place in Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands and other North European countries long before the economic crisis (Int.34), we should bear in mind that this was a taboo issue for the social movement community in Greece. As a matter of fact, once monetary transactions started to take place in SMOs in Greece, many activists rejected this development and withdrew membership from many SMOs. However, this change has also affected a number of individuals who, despite their opposition, remained involved. Referring to the difficulties these activists faced, an interviewee from Mikropolis social centre adds,

just think that Mikropolis was a child of the anti-authoritarian space. Some of the older members, who were very active in the anarchist space, they finally remained. This was quite strange, if we think of what they have been used to do all these years. But it was an evolution! Of course, it (the logic of unofficial cooperativism) has its vulnerable points; I mean that these activists have a point. But we should also live! In my view, it is not possible that our political, even revolutionary, practice may concern only actions of propaganda. We should turn this into a way of living. In this respect, similar to someone who chooses to expropriate as a way of living, it (the logic of unofficial cooperativism) is a suggestion for creating a community of equality. Of course, as equal as someone can be in capitalism! (Int.34)
Very much alike is the case of VKP neighbourhood assembly, which comes also from a libertarian background. Although monetary transactions were not the issue at stake there, the assembly’s enlargement in terms of audience and activities has also affected its identity. Quite indicatively, an interviewee claims that

it is this issue of (ideological) purity…and this has sparked internal conflicts. [...] When seeking for addressing (wider audiences), you should become more social and lower down your imaginary, your standards. You should play with less imagination and utopianism in your mind. And by this inevitably…We have taken some steps ahead. At some point, we stopped arguing publicly against elections, since there were people who vote. Some people left due to this, claiming that we are not revolutionary enough. But there were others who joined because they felt that there was also space for them. (Int.54)

The downplaying of ideological identities was quite an important aspect for engaging new activists in the GJM (Flesher Fominaya, 2007). According to Flesher Fominaya (2007, p. 339), left-wing activists, often affiliated with hierarchical and bureaucratic structures, engaged in assembly-based politics since the GJM’s discourse of openness reduced the anarchist and autonomous connotations of these horizontal practices. Although the VKP assembly follows a similar root, Toumba’s anarchist-autonomist character does not seem adjustable. Being involved into civil disobedience actions, such as the reconnection of electricity supply in indebted households, the assembly preferred not to sacrifice its ideological stands in favour of attracting more beneficiaries in its assembly. As a member comments, ‘For us it is fine if they (beneficiaries) learn to re-connect the electricity supply and instead of coming here in the assembly, they go and do it in their buildings and apartments’ (Int.52).

Regardless of whether the assemblies adjust their views and operation to the various dynamics that accompany the incorporation of the alternative repertoires, most of them emphasize the importance of beneficiaries being aware of the collectives’ political background (Int.57; Int.51). This awareness aims to preserve the political character and solidarity perspective of the SMOs’ services. Taking into consideration that the provision of services lacks any official requirements and thus, has attracted large audiences of non-activists, as well as that many beneficiaries have misinterpreted the SMOs’ service provision with respective activities undertaken by municipal
authorities, church and NGOs (Int.43), the emphasis on the political character of the organizers becomes quite important.

The debate between ideological purity and “social opening” reveals an interesting aspect regarding identity. According to an interviewee (Int.57), many traditional SMOs, especially those rooted in the anarchist space, consider the persuasion and the coverage of the needs of their sympathizers as “social opening”. Nevertheless, critical voices note that,

the ones who had learned to think with an “Exarcheian” scale, they were gradually excluded, felt left out and found themselves uncoordinated. The scale and the potential of the things that were taking place were exceeding them. Exarcheia started to understand what was happening with three years of delay. (Int.39)

Although field research shows that the process of boundary enlargement finds a quite wide application, the aforementioned criticism invites us to distinguish between different levels of “social opening”. Indicative here is the different trajectory of Steki Metanaston in Athens with the respective one in Thessaloniki. Although El Chef kitchen of Steki in Athens aimed to extend its services to external users, one member admits that this targeted a specific audience. The members of El Chef kitchen wanted to stress the political character of their service and to be on the same page with the users (Int.60). When the kitchen service ran the risk of becoming fully open, as it happened with the long queues of beneficiaries outside the kitchen’s premises, the members tried to discourage the audience and prevent transforming the collective kitchen into a soup kitchen (Int.60). On the contrary, the audience of the Thessaloniki Steki dealt mostly with marginalized groups. Nevertheless, as an interviewee comments, its social opening to broader and more deprived audiences has affected its identity, since it created a new, internal contradiction between the popular and the wider audience of the kitchen’s beneficiaries with the more intellectual one of Steki (Int.32).

Social opening uncovers new challenges and dilemmas. The engagement of beneficiaries with the kitchens’ management in Thessaloniki’s Steki acknowledges the deployment of the social appropriation mechanism. However, an issue rose when the beneficiaries’ former professional experience in cooking triggered some of them to develop hierarchical attitudes over the rest of the participants. An interviewee informs us that, ‘once they (beneficiaries) held the pan, they had the impression that they also got the power of the kitchen and issued orders to the rest on who is going to eat
and who is not’ (Int.37). Problems did not concern only the development of informal hierarchies. For fear of missing their turn, and thus, their meal, some beneficiaries expressed violent behaviours against others. As an interviewee explains (Int.37), these incidents sparked serious discussions with the beneficiaries about Steki’s role, what it represents and what are the acceptable limits. The most challenging incident took place when the kitchen's members discovered that some of its beneficiaries also attended the soup kitchens organized by Golden Dawn. As an interviewee recalls,

it was shocking for us because we couldn't know whether they supported Golden Dawn, or they went because of their need for food. We couldn't accuse them of being fascists and forcing them immediately out; but in any case, we couldn't accept them using both kitchens. Therefore, we tried to explain to them what it meant for us to attend Golden Dawn's soup kitchens, what it means to come to our place, that they are two opposite things and that they should choose. (Int.37)

These examples demonstrate that SMOs’ social opening call activists to cope with issues that so far had not been part of the social movement agenda and respond to the blurred context of everyday needs. At the same time though, it triggers a large debate regarding the role of the solidarity structures, what their limits are, when the political transforms into humanitarian, and whether these efforts are substitutes to the state’s welfare provision (Int.37). Although it is not possible to provide direct answers, these questions touch upon the distinctive characteristics ascribed to solidarity structures. Thessaloniki Steki’s social opening to marginalized groups did not only affect its members, but it signaled a different perspective of welfare provision. Quite important here are the beneficiaries’ emotions of disgrace that organizers are called to tackle with.

The absence of requirements regarding the documentation of the beneficiaries’ economic condition encourages people in need to contact the kitchen without being involved with bureaucratic paperwork. Moreover, it decreases the feeling of humiliation found in institutional soup kitchens, when beneficiaries are required to document their inability to meet their basic nutrition needs (Int.37). A member of a social kitchen argues that ‘those who are truly in need won’t show it. They will hesitate to go to the soup kitchens’ (Int.35), because they feel ashamed to be treated with pity. In order to deal with this issue, social kitchens try to enforce a sense of feast and celebration to make the users feel comfortable. As the same interviewee
continues, in this way social kitchens try to take away the beneficiaries’ ‘fear and disgrace’ (Int.35).

The sense of disgrace is not just a structural characteristic of institutional soup kitchens, but it is heavily linked with the sudden impoverishment of large parts of the Greek population and the lack of a respective activist tradition in these alternative repertoires. Interviewees from different solidarity structures claim that Greeks are quite reluctant to use the provided services, for fear of publicly exposing their desperation. Despite the kitchens’ efforts to frame their services as distinct from charity organizations, in many cases these have not been perceived as such. Commenting on that, an interviewee from Chania social kitchen observes that, ‘Greeks do not attend the services usually used by migrants because they feel ashamed’ (Int.36), despite the kitchen’s efforts to demonstrate that its services are neither for migrants, nor for Greeks but for everyone.

The kitchens’ role of covering the need for food was their basic characteristic, but it was not the only one. According to our field research, the need to socialize proved to be equally important. The words of an interviewee are quite telling:

if you speak with the beneficiaries they will tell you that they look forward for the weekend to come to Steki not only for the food but because this space (Steki’s premises) fits us all; it is a space that they can sit, relax, socialize and speak with their friends, while they are waiting for the food to be prepared. (Int.37)

Similar narratives are presented by Allos Anthropos and particularly the project of Allos Anthropos home (Int.59). Nevertheless, by comparing collective with social kitchens, we confront some important differences with regards to the degree of openness. By providing their services to the poor and the rich, social kitchens present an inter-class approach concerning their audiences. This social opening is not limited to the social kitchens’ audiences, but also characterizes their potential partners and collaborations. Framing its action as ‘awake-up call’ (Int.35) aiming to reduce indifference and discrimination, Allos Anthropos aims to demonstrate that the absence of legal status and institutional support cannot prevent the expansion of solidarity structures. As one member emphatically stresses, ‘we can make it without you, and you should be afraid of this’ (Int.59). Apart from the denouncement of fascists, this disapproval does not deal that much with the political and class backgrounds, but it marks a dualistic distinction between the people and the elites. Therefore, it is no surprise that the
practical expression of solidarity ‘on five basic needs that everyone has in common, such as health, education, labour, justice and food’ (Int.59) enables the kitchen to cooperate and coordinate actions with many SMOs, grassroots initiatives, social clinics and cooperatives, participate in left-wing and libertarian events, festivals and campaigns, but also join forces with NGOs (Int.59). Similar partnerships can be found in the case of Oikopolis social centre.

3.3.3 Collection and Distribution of Food Parcels

The last section deals with the dynamics of identity as these unfold in the SMOs preoccupied with the collection and distribution of food parcels. The dynamics developed in the distribution of food parcels by the Workers’ Club in Nea Smirni are inextricably linked with the Club’s overall approach. As mentioned earlier, the Club aims to connect different parts of people’s everyday reality with labour and social struggles. From this perspective, the Club does not address individuals strictly as political comrades, but as members of the urban community, subject to multiple social settings. This approach fosters the members’ understanding towards a holistic perspective of reality, where protests and solidarity actions are complementary parts that support the broader social transformation. Despite its maximalist orientation, the Clubs’ approach offers quite important short-term outcomes. According to an interviewee, these lie in the development of strong bonds among its members, due to the diffusion of a “thick” understanding of solidarity. Speaking of the Club’s audience that use the alternative repertoires, one member comments that:

they enter a discussion suggesting they should confront the everyday life in a collective and activist way. And this is because it starts in an exemplary way, meaning the solidarity that have developed among these people. They know each other. The people who blockade a shop (in response to workers’ struggle) and risk being prosecuted, are people who attend the same dance classes in the Club twice per week. In this way, relations and bonds among the participants do not correspond to general, unfamiliar movements’ calls for mobilization. Here, we are all together; we are the same people who participate in discussions, in dance classes and together we participate in shop blockades. This approach has increased the sense of what we call “people of the struggle”. (Int.56)
The aforementioned insight shows the ability of alternative repertoires to enhance social bonding among the users. This indirectly results in strengthening the solidarity bonds of participants with strong effects on their mobilizations. However, the provision of the alternative repertoire also has direct effects on the participants regarding the SMOs’ goals. This is illustrated by the provision of solidarity courses in developing anti-fascist dynamics. As the same interviewee goes on to say, ‘high school courses are provided to Greek, Albanian and refugee students in joint classrooms. This automatically leaves out any racist features that might be cultivated in a school environment’ (Int.56). According to the interviewee’s view, this approach contradicts the traditional SMOs’ actions of distributing anti-fascist brochures outside schools. In that way, ‘students perceive you as an external, while this way (common attendance of courses) they experience anti-fascism in an experiential way with their classmates’ (Int.56).

This inherent way of developing anti-fascist and anti-racist attitudes is not accustomed only to the provision of high school courses, but finds application in the collection and distribution of food parcels. This is the case in Trofosyllektes group of Autonomo social centre. As one interviewee comments on Trofosyllektes action,

they have actually unified the most impoverished parts of Greeks and foreigners in one common collective. And it is interesting because you see people that might start to participate by having a racist prejudice or language, and it works due to the common need to collaborate with those people, without having to defeat prejudice as such. (Int.33)

As the same interviewee adds, ‘to me, this is much more important than producing 500,000 posters against racism and cursing fascists, racists and middleclass Greeks’ (Int.33).

Closer attention to the collection and distribution of food parcels, nevertheless, reveals that the concept of “thick solidarity” described earlier contrasts the thin line between solidarity and charity (Theodossopoulos, 2016). Similar to the sense of disgrace discussed in the repertoire of collective and social kitchens, a member of the Workers’ Club argues that beneficiaries are rather skeptical of deliberately speaking about poverty. Fighting to overthrow the individual responsibility assigned to the economic difficulties caused by austerity seems to be a never-ending task, as well as the reason the Club assigned one member responsible for each benefited family. Commenting on the thin line between charity and solidarity, an interviewee from Autonomo claimed that ‘this becomes more difficult to
control in the Trofosylektes group than in the collective kitchen’ (Int.33). As the interviewee supports, in some cases beneficiaries have confused Trofosylektes service with municipal and church organizations, while others developed offensive attitudes towards Trofosylektes members, accusing them of stealing from the donated parcels. The unsuccessful efforts of Trofosylektes members to defend their voluntary character led to the dissociation of those beneficiaries from Trofosylektes services.

The process of boundary enlargement touches upon issues that traditional movement actors seemed to have overlooked. Therefore, this new reality has raised challenges and dilemmas for which the social movement community does not have ready-made answers. Autonomo argues that direct measures are not the solution for dealing with these problems. In this way, the members discuss every incident of bad attitude in the collective’s assembly and try to build a common culture on how to address similar cases (Int.33). However, the construction of a common culture under austerity conditions presents a number of challenging questions with the potential to affect the stable identity that SMOs maintained before the advent of the economic crisis.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter sheds light to the development of the boundary enlargement process with regards to the social movement scene of food. Table 3.1 summarizes the basic mechanisms and sub-mechanisms discussed here.

The social movement scene of food reveals three different repertoires applied by different actors. The repertoires deal with the organization of markets without middlemen and their evolution to consumer cooperatives, collective and social kitchens and the collection and distribution of food parcels. These repertoires are employed by neighbourhood assemblies, grassroots initiatives and traditional SMOs. Despite the variety of actions and actors, our study reveals a number of common mechanisms that shape the dynamic character of the context.

Starting with organizational structure, the use of contact lists and the direct communication between different organizers contributed to the markets’ development and their subsequent diffusion across the country. The appropriation of public spaces and popular hubs by volunteers in collecting the consumers’ orders was rather important. Initially, markets without middlemen gained certification by the majority of the political parties. However, once organizers started to better coordinate among themselves, obtaining an anti-austerity perspective and presenting a
distinct aspect of on-site politicization, the welcoming environment was replaced by police repression. The change from certification to decertification mechanisms due to the activation of the coordinated action mechanism played a crucial role for the markets’ course of life, with many of them turning into consumer cooperatives. This passage to becoming cooperatives signaled a new path but with the same mechanisms at play.

Table 3.1 Mechanisms and sub-mechanisms in the social movement scene of Food

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<th>Operation of Markets without Middlemen</th>
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<td>Certification + Legitimation</td>
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| Identity | Operation of Markets without Middlemen | Diffusion | Social Appropriation |
|----------|----------------------------------------|-----------|
|          | Certification + Legitimation | |
|          | Social Appropriation | |
|          | Facilitation of Collective and Social Kitchens | Social Appropriation |
|          | Collection and Distribution of Food Parcels | Social Appropriation |
In particular, as the emulation and bricolage sub-mechanisms witness, the cooperatives either reproduced the markets organizational structure or they combined characteristics from different markets and adjusted them in their respective contexts.

Moving to the second repertoire of the food scene, certification and legitimation mechanisms were central to the kitchens’ diffusion, since they mirrored the appreciation the kitchens received by institutional actors, local communities and SMOs. At the same time, however, the beneficiaries’ active participation in the provision of collective meals underlines the practical approach to solidarity, empowerment and the overall process of boundary enlargement. Lastly, collection and distribution of food parcels was the third repertoire of the social movement scene of food. Similar to the markets without middlemen, beneficiaries of food packages have been approached due to the existing contact lists from SMOs’ earlier actions. In some cases, this has been coupled with the mere replication of the organizational practices of specific SMOs in different contexts and places, while in other cases the distribution of food parcels was appreciated by institutional actors. Both ways resulted in the diffusion of the repertoire.

Our analysis suggests that in times of austerity, resources incarnate the basic form of expression of solidarity for all three repertoires. Although monetary support is a traditional form of solidarity in the international social movements’ milieu, in the context of markets it took the form of a solidarity percentage. By retaining a percentage from producers’ profits to fund a number of official and unofficial social welfare structures, the markets managed to connect with and receive recognition from a number of grassroots solidarity structures, municipal authorities and individuals in need. This development is illustrated by the activation of brokerage and certification. The brokerage and certification mechanisms contributed to the markets’ development, facilitated their bonding with the social movement community and increased their popularity on a local level. Of course, the course of markets was not always successful, since they failed to connect consumers with the level of production or to fully cover the needs of the lower economic strata. Nevertheless, their transition to cooperatives revealed important aspects of an emancipatory system, which provides beneficiaries with an active role in cooperatives’ operation. This can be composed in the mechanism of social appropriation.

The same logic also takes place in the case of collective and social kitchens. By referring to a number of social and collective kitchens, we analyse the different models introduced in terms of fees and members’ compensation, as well as the dynamic aspect of their trajectories. Our
close attention to the acquisition of products and equipment demonstrates
the use of donations and the criteria the kitchens set, while it helps us to
unravel the mechanism of brokerage that administers their connection both
with the local society and the social movement community. At the same
time though, it exposes how the SMOs’ attention to the service provision
affects, and in some cases limits, the adoption of more militant actions.
Once again, the kitchens’ repertoires underline the development of the
brokerage mechanism. However, apart from the usual paths of participating
in local struggles, the kitchens’ on-the-spot cooking recognizes the practical
application of solidarity and triggers their coordination in facilitating the
nutrition of refugee squats.

Things change when it comes to the collection and distribution of food
parcels. Despite the different views of the organizers, this service is provided
free of charge by all the studied SMOs which operate on a voluntary basis.
The provision of this service is exclusively based on monetary and in-kind
donations. Although the collection and distribution of food parcels is a
rather sensitive issue, which challenges the monopoly of institutional actors
and NGOs in caregiving, it is relatively “closed”, since it is concentrated on
a specific number of people. Nevertheless, our analysis manages to explain
the development of the brokerage mechanism, which also exposes the
connection of organizers with institutional actors. In these regards, the
three repertoires highlight the importance of the brokerage mechanism in
the factor of resources, and at the same time indicate that the provision of
services challenges a number of characteristics that have been considered
stable in the traditional trajectory of the social movement community. This
is better articulated in the factor of identity.

Our attention to the factor of identity aims to provide the reader with a
comprehensive understanding of the development of the social movement
scene of food. Starting with the markets without middlemen, our analysis
suggests that the organizers’ coordination played a vital role in changing
the markets’ frame from a civil disobedient action to a broader disapproval
of mediation, dressed in anti-fascist characteristics. Markets without mid-
dlemen were formed as a reaction to the brokers’ unaffordable prices of
basic goods. Once this reactionary approach was legitimizied by the social
movement community, the formation of the markets’ identity began to
take shape through their discussions on how they should address other
retailers. These debates underline the dynamic role of identity and show
how the markets’ operation sparked a procedure of political sensitization.
Together with this, our analysis shows the ability of markets to boost the
further engagement of participants. By uncovering the development of
social appropriation mechanisms, we emphasize that sociality was essential both for boosting the sense of belonging on the micro-level, but also for encouraging the organizers on the meso-level, due to the achievement of their weekly goals. The festive atmosphere of markets highlighted the blend of political and social characteristics even more. In turn, the active socialization of the volunteers, the sense of belonging and their engagement with collective action as opposed to the widespread sentiments of misery, frustration and loneliness, fostered the markets’ diffusion and triggered their legitimation by the social movement community. Although certification by institutional actors was crucial for the markets’ diffusion regarding the factor of organizational structure, the legitimation by the movement community in the factor of identity shows how markets have functioned as shields for protecting also the identity of the organizers.

Discussion on the collective and social kitchens’ identity focuses on social opening and how this has affected the internal dynamics of SMOs. Although the studied organizations emphasize the political and solidarity nature of their service provision, the process of boundary enlargement has reserved minor and major adjustments in their conceptualization. Quite important here is the incorporation of unofficial cooperativism within SMOs. As our analysis shows, the moneyless tradition of the social movement community hindered the more experienced activists from digesting this change, while the enlargement in terms of audience enforced some organizations to become less radical in terms of their declarations. Depending on the background of each organization, our research shows that through the provision of kitchen services, some SMOs aimed to engage mostly with their sympathizers, while others intended to attract non-activist audiences. Although the former option was developed in safe waters, the latter reveals the challenges of pre-figurative approaches, since SMOs should confront issues that are usually not part of their agendas. Collective and social kitchens acquire some complementary characteristics. They are called to tackle the widespread concept of disgrace for people using the solidarity services and meanwhile appear to respond to the beneficiaries’ need for socialization. These two features confirm that the social movement community in Greece does not restrict itself in political mediation and claim-making against authorities, but it incarnates the provision of unofficial welfare in filling materialist and post-materialist needs.

Our last repertoire concerns the collection and distribution of food parcels. Here, the dynamics in terms of identity seem rather fragmented, since in some cases the application of the repertoire is subject to the organizers’ approach, while in others it enjoys relative autonomy. The development of strong bonds
due to the application of the alternative repertoires seems quite central in the
creation of activist and anti-discriminatory characteristics. The same goes for
the collection and distribution of food parcels, an action which depicts a direct
anti-discriminatory exercise. Our exploration shows that the issue of disgrace
seems to affect the operation of this repertoire: the beneficiaries’ mistaking of
SMOs for institutional actors have led to the development of unfair attitudes.
Since different problems require different solutions, organizers make efforts
to create a common culture for addressing these issues. Unfortunately, the
development of a common culture is promising, but it also runs the risk of
affecting the stability that SMOs’ identity used to enjoy prior to the crisis.

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**SMOs Material**


List of Interviewees

Interviewee 7 – Male, 51-55 years old, Freelancer, Founding Member of the social clinic in Thermi, Thessaloniki (1.7.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 24 – Female, 41-45 years old, Founding Member of the Cooperative Allos Tropos, Thessaloniki (29.6.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek
Interviewee 26 – Male, 36-40 years old, Founding Member of the Cooperative Eklektik and member of Spame, Thessaloniki (2.11.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 27 – Male, 61-65 years old, Founding Member of the Cooperative BiosCoop and of People’s University of Social Solidarity Economy, Thessaloniki (25.7.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 28 – Male, 26-30 years old, Founding Member of the Cooperative Sociality, Athens (9.12.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 29 – Male, 36-40 years old, Member of the Petroupoli Markets Without Middlemen, Athens (10.12.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 32 – Male, 36-40 years old, Member of Odysseas Migrants’ School and Steki Metanaston, Thessaloniki (28.7.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 33 – Male, 41-45 years old, Member of Autonomo Social Centre, Athens (28.9.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 34 – Male, 31-35 years old, Member of Mikropolis Social Centre, Thessaloniki (27.7.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 35 – Female, 41-45 years old, Member of Allos Anthropos Social Kitchen, Thessaloniki (27.10.17) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 36 – Male, 51-55 years old, Member of Chania Social Kitchen, Crete (4.6.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 37 – Female, 46-50 years old, Member of Collective Kitchen in Steki Metanaston, Thessaloniki (7.7.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 38 – Male, 51-55 years old, Member of Oikopolis Social Centre, Thessaloniki (28.7.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 39 – Male, 51-55 years old, Ex-member of Solidarity for All, Athens (26.9.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 40 – Female, 46-50 years old, Employee in the Thermi Municipal Grocery, Thessaloniki (24.5.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 41 – Male, 51-55 years old, Employee in Thermi Municipal Grocery, Thessaloniki (24.5.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 42 – Male, 31-35 years old, Member of the Water Warriors collective, Thessaloniki (26.7.17) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 43 – Female, 46-50 years old, Member of Ampariza Social Centre and Galatsi Without-Middlemen Cooperative, Athens (22.9.17) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 51 – Male, 26-30 years old, Member of Sholio Squat, Thessaloniki (27.10.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 52 – Male, 56-60 years old, Member of Open Assembly for the Struggle of Toumba Citizens, Thessaloniki (12.10.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek
Interviewee 54 – Male, 31-35 years old, Member of VKP neighbourhood assembly, Athens (27.9.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 55 – Male, 36-40 years old, Member of Vox Squat in Exarcheia, Athens (7.11.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 56 – Male, 46-50 years old, Member of Workers’ Club in Nea Smirni, Athens (14.11.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 57 – Male, 46-50 years old, Nosotros Social Centre in Exarcheia, Athens, (8.12.16) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 59 – Male, 51-55 years old, Founder of Allos Anthrropos Social Kitchen, Athens (26.10.17) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 60 – Male, 36-40 years old, Member of El Chef Collective Kitchen in Steki Metanastion, Athens (3.11.17) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek

Interviewee 61 – Female 36-40 years old, Member of Steki Metanastion, Athens (15.10.17) – Audio recorded – Transcribed in Greek