Social Movements and Solidarity Structures in Crisis-Ridden Greece

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6 Different Scenes, Different Trajectories but the Same Process: A Within-Case Comparison

Abstract
This chapter offers a comparative perspective by discussing two necessary comparisons. Following a within-case comparative approach, this chapter first analyses the different development of the social movement scenes of food, health and labour, and marks the most significant similarities and differences in their course. Moreover, the second comparison deals with the different trajectories observed in the social movement scenes of food, health and labour, with regards to the factors of organizational structure, resources and identity. By doing so, it places in the epicentre the mechanisms and sub-mechanisms analysed in the empirical chapters and relates them to the literature of contentious politics. In this respect, the chapter provides an overview of the different scenes and the contentious mechanisms that contributed to their development.

Keywords: Social movement scenes; Social movement trajectories; Comparative perspective; Contentious mechanisms

The advent of the economic crisis transformed the social movement community in Greece, as attention shifted from claim-based protest repertoires towards service-oriented forms of action. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 provide primary empirical insight to the repertoires developed in the food, health, and labour social movement scenes; the contentious politics framework claims that similar sets of mechanisms are identified in different contexts, while different sets of mechanisms lead to similar processes. This inquiry conceives the change in repertoires as a reflection of a boundary enlargement process, where previously defined boundaries of collective action are extended both practically and conceptually. In order to understand the different paths
leading to the development of the boundary enlargement process, this chapter, first, marks some important similarities and differences among the social movement scenes of food, health, and labour; and second, compares the distinct development of the three scenes by focusing on the trajectories’ evolution in terms of organizational structure, resources, and identity.

6.1 Comparing the Scenes

Austerity measures have severely affected the sectors of food, health, and labour. Perceived as social movement scenes, the social movement community presents increased activity with the provision of bottom-up services. Our aim is to demonstrate the way in which social movement initiatives become unofficial welfare providers in covering basic needs. The three aforementioned scenes are closely related; some organizations are involved in multiple scenes, while those operating in one scene exclusively, tend to have links with organizations from other scenes as well. The three social movement scenes present similarities and differences in terms of their organizational structure, resources, and identity. Starting with the organizational structure, we turn our attention to the origins of these repertoires, the lack of initial coordination, the issue of expertise, the different degrees of commitment, as well as recruitment criteria for the members of the alternative repertoires. Furthermore, we underline the common role of resources in facilitating connections between new and traditional actors of the social movement community, as well as the role of the former in allocating new resources within the latter. We single out the anti-fascist feature, which is shared among the service-oriented organizations – albeit with varying degrees of political engagement – and finally, we underline the construction of their collective identities based on debates, conflicts, and collaborations.

6.1.1 Comparing the Organization of the Scenes

The most common feature of all the social movement scenes relates to the origins of their organizations. Field research shows that they have all been set up by bottom-up initiatives. However, these initiatives are not identical. With respect to the social movement scene of food, we can observe some internal differentiations. The first attempts to organize the markets without middlemen was initiated by a group of volunteers in a small municipality in Northern Greece. Although more traditional social movement actors
followed, the initial efforts were employed by groups of citizens without any precise ideological position. On the same ground, we can see a number of social kitchens established by grassroots collectives, which were previously engaged in ad-hoc civil disobedient actions. Nevertheless, the organization of collective meals originates in more traditional social movement organizations (SMOs), by incorporating the operation of kitchens into their activities; we refer to these as collective kitchens. Similarly, the collection and distribution of food parcels is attributed to traditional political organizations responsible for their operation. Moving on to the social movement scene of health, the establishment of the social clinics appears to be the result of healthcare activism. This is the case of the first clinic founded in the early 1990s and those that were established shortly after 2008. Our last concern deals with the labour social movement scene and the establishment of self-managed cooperatives. The investigation of the past reveals that political aspirations, stemming from international practices of solidarity trade, interwoven with the activists’ interest in promoting egalitarian views in their workplace, were among the most important determinants for bringing the cooperatives to life.

Although it is hard to deny the grassroots’ character of these endeavours, the founders’ internal differentiation is important, in order to understand how boundary enlargement applies in different settings. This is the case concerning the diverse social backgrounds of the founders of social kitchens and those of social clinics: the former were among the most deprived parts of the population and the latter were healthcare professionals with upper social statuses. Similar variations were observed in terms of politicization. The markets have been established by active volunteer groups, while the self-managed cooperatives came from the international solidarity to the Zapatistas experience and discussions on self-management among squatters.

Social movement theorists distinguish between official and unofficial SMOs (Staggenborg, 2011, pp. 34-35). The former are subject to bureaucratic procedures, specific decision-making processes, division of labour, precise criteria for membership and rules that govern the SMOs’ subunits. On the contrary, unofficial SMOs take on a looser approach when it comes to each of the aforementioned features. It is stressed in Chapter 1 that this rigid distinction is not useful anymore, since the boundaries responsible for their division seem to have been enlarged. However, this enlargement was not the same for each of the organizations under study. Although relations and tasks are subject to informal rules, the clinics have a relatively clear division of labour according to the members’ skills and professional expertise. This does not apply to the labour scene. Cooperatives implement rotation strategies,
thus having all their members receive comprehensive training. Division of labour in the scene of food according to the members’ skills is obvious in the collective and social kitchens, but much less so in the open-air markets and the collection of food parcels.

The lack of coordination among these endeavours is striking. Although the establishment of the first self-managed cooperatives took place in Athens and Thessaloniki around the same period, they were not aware of each other’s existence. The same goes for social clinics. The establishment of the social clinic in Thessaloniki coincided with the foundation of the Metropolitan Community Clinic at Helliniko (MKIE) in Athens, without any communication between the two taking place. The social movement scene of food differs slightly. The establishment of the first market received enormous attention from the national media, urging other initiatives to familiarize themselves with its operation. Despite cases where communication among different initiatives gave rise to new markets without middlemen, the emerging alternative repertoires initially lacked coordination.

Markets, clinics, and cooperatives grew in different cities during the same period without being subject to strong coordination. This is reflective of a broader and increasing social trend towards service-oriented practices. Most importantly, though, these cases show the complexity of networks within social movements.

In contrast to the classic agenda of social movement studies, Diani (2015, p. 198) argues that networks should not be conceived as preconditions that lead to sustained interactions with the opponents, but, rather, the outcome of these interactions. These approaches employ qualitative differences which set the foundations for introducing divergent definitions of what is considered a social movement. Without underestimating their contributions, this research claims that networks are mainly the outcome of collective action, and, to a lesser degree, the prerequisite for its development. Of course, we do not intend to disregard the existence of unofficial networks, assisting the expansion of these repertoires. Networks that were already established before the square movement, were important to the development of many service-oriented organizations. The ties between activists and traditional SMOs were also important in spreading these practices across the social movement community. However, the networks of the alternative repertoires came in play once the organizations under study stabilized their actions.

Coming back to the social movement scenes, we cannot discuss the provision of welfare services, without first addressing the topic of expertise. Social clinics require a certain level of professional expertise or connection with the related networks in healthcare. The same also goes for the labour
scene. However, expertise was not at all relevant in the food scene. Members and beneficiaries in the markets without middlemen were assigned manual labour, which did not require any relevant experience. This is also illustrated in the markets’ passage towards consumers’ cooperatives, when the respective organizations seek personnel from the reservoir of their beneficiaries. The same also goes for the repertoires of collection and distribution of food parcels and the collective and social kitchens. Despite the fact that some members were professional chefs or used to work in the catering industry, empirical evidence shows that the organization of collective meals does not require any previous experience.

Diversity is also present in the issue of commitment. The rise of the protest cycles is characterized by intense action, creativity and enthusiasm. However, the decline of mobilization tends to have negative impact on the aforementioned features. Research on social movements shows that lifetime activism regarding people enrolled in specific official SMOs, who develop their lives on the basis of their activism, becomes less common over time (Walgrave, 2013, p. 206). This does not mean that people engage less in social movements; rather ‘many potential participants do not commit themselves to one cause but act as wavering protest consumers jumping from one cause to another, temporarily picking a SMO or protest event as they see fit’ (Ibid, p. 207). This becomes quite interesting since the culture of the left-wing and libertarian political space in Greece imposes a sense of “duty to participate” and a feeling of guilt on activists who refrain from participation. Devotion and consistency are crucial for boosting participation in SMOs, but it varies when it comes to the alternative repertoires of action. Commitment to the new service-oriented organizations is marked with differences. This becomes clear when comparing the social clinics to the social and collective kitchens. Social clinics present great flexibility in the commitment of their members. In particular, the clinics’ operation is based on a defined time-schedule, while the external networks of healthcare professionals supporting their operation, enables the participants to engage with different degrees of intensity. On the contrary, the operation of the social kitchens, and to a lesser extent, the collective kitchens, requires the greatest commitment possible from a few individuals responsible for the smooth operation of the collective meals. Moreover, group commitment is also required for the collection and distribution of food parcels.

Nevertheless, we should be cautious not to confuse commitment with engagement. Volunteers in the clinics may work shifts for two hours a week, but this does not imply they feel less engaged than others. This approach contradicts the sense of guilt and the arteriosclerotic “activist purity” often
met in the social movement community in Greece. It marks the necessity for less demanding structures, that will not exhaust activists, in order to incorporate politics in the settings of everyday life, as well as it underlines the need to create “spaces for rest” to decrease the fatigue of activists burned out from the continuous and demanding engagement in collective action. The mechanism of partial commitment, as described in the case of social clinics, represents one step towards this goal.

Organizations operating in each of the three scenes are based on direct-democratic, self-organized and horizontal procedures. However, they seem to have different philosophies for recruiting new members. The relatively strict criteria direct cooperatives to seek for personnel through the members’ personal networks. This contradicts the repertoires introduced in the food and health social movement scenes, which are characterized by their open-minded attitude. Social clinics and markets without middlemen have few entry requirements, allowing people without previous involvement in collective political settings to find a role, feel useful, and participate in the organization of the respective repertoires.

6.1.2 Comparing the Resources of the Scenes

Having sketched out the most important similarities and differences in the organizational structure, we now turn our attention to resources. Markets without middlemen, social clinics, and self-managed cooperatives have commonly treated resources as the means of connecting with other organizations, with resource-exchange incarnating the practical expression of solidarity. Markets without middlemen introduced the practice of “solidarity percentage” by distributing some of the producers’ goods to other social solidarity structures, individuals, and families in need. Similar actions have been undertaken by self-managed cooperatives. These dealt with donations of a percentage of their surpluses to other cooperatives, political groups, and grassroots initiatives. Resources show a welcoming environment for the development of contacts between the service-oriented organizations and more traditional SMOs. Most importantly however, the markets and self-managed cooperatives act as entry points for new resources, since they receive monetary resources from wider audiences to then fund similar endeavours and social struggles.

However, new resources have also been provided by organizations without the use of monetary transactions. The health scene shows that social clinics are funded through donations and provide medication free of charge to beneficiaries, while many of them found themselves supplying the local
hospitals with drugs and other pharmaceutical products. Fundraising through donations also takes place in many collective and social kitchens, as well as in organizations collecting and distributing food parcels. These organizations provide their services free of charge, and often operate to support other local struggles. In this respect, resources enhance the development of solidarity ties among different organizations, and often engage donors in collective action. Overall, organizations in all the scenes act as mediators which receive resources from wider audiences and allocate them to the social movement community. In this respect, resources set the basis for the construction of an unofficial network of solidarity economy.

6.1.3 Comparing the Identity of the Scenes

The process of boundary enlargement in the Greek context marks the shift from protest to service-oriented repertoires of action. Equally important, it signifies the conceptual and cognitive enlargement of the actors’ limits, which are extended beyond the previously rigid and well-defined political and social understandings. Therefore, it is important to underscore the similarities and differences in the three scenes with regards to identity.

A strict anti-fascist stance is shared by each respective scene. When the neo-Nazi party of Golden Dawn started to gain popularity in the public sphere, the service-oriented repertoires were dressed in clear anti-fascist elements. Anti-fascist and anti-racist fields are interrelated, and unite different sectors of the social movement community in Greece. The organization of annual anti-racist festivals in many Greek cities since the early 1990s, have managed to create a common space where different political collectives and heterogeneous social groups meet each other, interact, and engage in debate. This common space has preserved the anti-fascist identity deeply embodied in the activists’ political course throughout the years. Similar to the anti-austerity claims, anti-fascism acts as an umbrella identity, connecting various social struggles.

The new service-oriented organizations did not limit their anti-fascist character in claim-making, but rather, through the provision of bottom-up welfare services, they implemented an inclusionary approach in practice. Markets without middlemen excluded producers supporting Golden Dawn, as well as those who imposed poor working conditions to Greek and migrant fieldworkers. Collective and social kitchens served marginalized social groups and cooked in support of the refugee squats, while a set of collectives collected and distributed food parcels to deprived groups of Greeks and migrants. The provision of primary healthcare services was also inclusive,
with social clinics collectively declaring that medicine should by default adopt an indiscriminate perspective. As a matter of fact, the food and health social movement scenes strongly contradict with the exclusive food and blood donations from Greeks to Greeks organized by Golden Dawn. In the same vein, the self-managed cooperatives participated in many pro-migrant solidarity actions and served as anti-fascist territorial hubs.

Each of the three scenes is characterized by progressive understandings based on left-wing and libertarian ideologies. In this respect, anti-fascism played a strong role in shaping their cultural development. Although this progressive view is shared by each of the three scenes, its application varies among repertoires. In this respect, markets without middlemen, social kitchens, and social clinics seem to promote broader and all-encompassing perspectives, while the collective kitchens and cooperatives adopt more explicit viewpoints.

In response to the unaffordable prices of agricultural products and the exclusion of citizens from the public healthcare system, markets and clinics quickly adopted an anti-austerity rhetoric. The gradual development of the two networks on a national level further enabled them to promote their anti-austerity claims. This development also coincides with the unifying environment against the troika, during the first years of the protest cycle, which brought together politically diverse organizations. However, changes in the external political environment with the rise of SYRIZA, Synaspismos Rizospastikis Aristeras (Coalition of Radical Left), paved the way for the fragmentation of this unity. Social clinics are representative cases here. The restoration of the unemployed's access to the public health system affected the clinics' internal operation, caused internal fights, ceased some of their services and welcomed the development of new alliances based on specific political orientations.

Although markets and clinics gradually adopted specific political positions, cooperatives and collective kitchens were already politicized from their inception. The rise of unemployment, and the decrease of the citizens' ability to meet their nutrition needs, increased the establishment of cooperatives and collective kitchens. However, these repertoires were already employed by relatively closed groups of people with increased ideological homogeneity. This does not imply the absence of internal disputes, nor does it mean that these organizations followed identical paths. But this relative homogeneity enabled the organizations to focus on and challenge specific political issues, as well as to discuss how the “new” reality interacts with their theoretical backgrounds. Self-management is a central aspect brought up from these debates. In the context of austerity, self-management was not just another
theoretical issue; rather, it mirrored the practical tool for experiencing the activists' norms and values. This becomes clear with regards the social movement scene of labour. Cooperatives employ different approaches in terms of aggressive and defensive self-management. Nevertheless, attention to identity reveals a growing trend of forming cooperatives in different sectors of the social movement community, with squats, social centres, and SMOs incorporating forms of unofficial cooperativism and solidarity economy. This is quite fascinating, if we take into consideration that around 25 years ago the social movement community in Greece emphatically favoured the absence of economic transactions.

Regardless of whether or not the alternative repertoires obtained a generic or a more precise political perspective, they managed to engage a number of individuals without any prior participation in collective action. This engagement is twofold. On the one hand, it refers to the movements' sympathizers, individuals donating drugs to social clinics, shopkeepers offering their goods to collective and social kitchens and customers donating food outside supermarkets. On the other hand, it points to the active involvement of the producers, customers, patients, and hungry and poor people in the operation of the respective organizations. This entails a common process of politicization and active involvement of outsiders in social movement activities, which took place during the period of austerity. At the same time, it marks crucial differences between the scenes.

The social movement scenes of food and health managed to engage their beneficiaries in the provision of services and to distinguish their actions from similar efforts of welfare provision held by institutional actors. What is important here, was the development of a sense of community between organizers and the audience. This was not an easy process, as collective identities were constructed on the basis of continuous debates. By recruiting and interacting with volunteers and beneficiaries from diverse political and social backgrounds, these organizations came across numerous dilemmas. Due to the absence of fees for the provision of services, dilemmas in the food and health scene mostly centred on the issues of charity, philanthropy, and social solidarity. Additionally, their role towards the state (health system, institutional soup kitchens) and the market (small grocery stores, farmer markets) was also under negotiation. Nevertheless, the continuous debates set the basis for the construction of collective identities and the enhancement of a sense of community. Similar problems arose in the labour scene, despite the fact that cooperatives typically attract a more homogenized population. The debates in the labour scene are positioned prior to the establishment of the first cooperatives, with criticism first targeting the commercialization of
movement ethics for economic profit, and second, for securing the egalitarian labour conditions for a small number of workers, while leaving the capitalist system untouched. As the time passed, self-managed practices gained legitimation within the social movement community and reached wider audiences that had a relatively loose relationship with collective action. In this respect, the different starting points of the three social movement scenes concluded in a similar fashion, with a common outcome.

Our analysis suffers, to a certain extent, from the overlapping between cases. Alternative repertoires from different scenes have been employed by the same organizations, impeding the categorization and systematic analysis. However, this difficulty also shows how these movement scenes are interconnected and interact with each other. This does not only affect the individual organizations but also discloses the dynamic relationships developed between the mechanisms in the three scenes of food, health, and labour.

6.2 Comparing the Trajectories

The previous section outlined the basic similarities and differences of the three scenes. This section continues this discussion and compares the trajectories of the basic mechanisms, as these were developed regarding the factors of organizational structure, resources and identity.

6.2.1 Trajectories in Organizational Structure

McAdam et al. argue that processes involve ‘recurrent combinations and sequences of mechanisms that operate identically or with great similarity across a variety of situations’ (2001, p. 27). Our study shows that similar sets of recurrent mechanisms, namely, coordinated action, certification, emulation, and brokerage, have been developed in the organizational structure of all three scenes. However, these sets of mechanisms are subject to important differences that influence the variety of the scenes in terms of their trajectories. Following the Alimi et al. (2015) suggestion to further regress the mechanisms composing one process, specific mechanisms in one repertoire may appear as sub-mechanisms in others. This depends on the significance the mechanisms acquire in the given contexts, and whether they are the final outcome, or constitute crucial components of it. This occurs in the case of brokerage and appropriation mechanisms.

Brokerage is probably the purest example of relational mechanisms, which in periods of increased contention enhances the connection among
groups and individuals, as well as new and traditional groups (McAdam et al., 2001, p. 26. 85). In the case of markets without middlemen, the different organizers interacted by sharing information on the procedures required to set up the different markets, as well as by using the contact details from earlier struggles to advertise their action. McAdam et al. support that, ‘social appropriation and brokerage involves foregone framings and linkages as much as strategies and lines of action actually adopted’ (2001, p. 117). In our case, appropriation involves a spatial dimension. The appropriation of squares, parks, and community care centres served the distribution of order sheets, diffused information for the markets’ operation in broader audiences and transformed the urban space into everyday resistance (Harvey, 2012). Brokerage and spatial appropriation were significant components (sub-mechanisms) which facilitated the diffusion of markets without middlemen. However, brokerage and social appropriation were much more decisive for the overall process of boundary enlargement, with regards to the operation of collective and social kitchens and the collection and distribution of food parcels.

Scholars of contentious politics argue that social appropriation mechanisms turn non-political groups into political actors (Tilly and Tarrow, 2015, p. 36). Although the process of politicization is too complicated and time-consuming to be described under the name of a single mechanism, social appropriation provides the basis for this procedure to take place. In the case of kitchens, social appropriation mechanisms triggered the active engagement of beneficiaries in the provision of services, marking the self-organized and solidarity character of their operation. In the collection and distribution of food parcels, brokerage mechanisms pointed to the use of pre-existing contact information by SMOs, which activated their connection with the beneficiaries. The mechanism of brokerage helped advertise the markets’ operation in the movement community, but these have reached much wider audiences. However, brokerage was the cornerstone for the organization and distribution of food parcels, since this repertoire was exclusively based on a specific group of beneficiaries. The same also stands for appropriation mechanisms. In other words, although the same mechanisms can be found in all three cases, their role is more significant for the repertoires’ overall operation in some cases and less in others.

Specific mechanisms seem to be more important in activating particular repertoires and less in others, defining in this way the different sequences of trajectories that the scenes follow. In order to understand the reasons behind this differentiation leading to different trajectories, we focus on the
mechanisms of coordinated action, certification, emulation, and brokerage, and the way these are formed in the three social movement scenes.

Starting with the food scene, the markets without middlemen have been organized on a national level. This is mirrored by the centrality of the coordinated action mechanism, which turned the scattered markets around the country into an organized network. However, the same does not apply to the case of kitchens. Although the mechanism of coordinated action was triggered in the markets' initial stage, it took place quite late with regards to the collective and social kitchens. This diversity reflects the different degrees of popularity the two repertoires attracted, while it also emphasizes the different size of the respective audiences they served. Coordinated action was necessary for the markets' diffusion. Once it was activated, it also affected the root of other mechanisms, by triggering a shift from the certification to the de-certification mechanism. This observation calls for greater attention to the certification mechanisms.

Certification by external authorities acted as a catalyst for the development of some initiatives, while it had relatively low influence on others. The markets without middlemen, the social clinics, and the cooperatives are striking examples of how the approval granted by institutional actors and the legislature have also positively affected their popularity. Certification by institutional authorities smoothed the flow of new activists into collective action and, initially, reduced the possibility of confrontation with the authorities. Additionally, it provided the activists with the legal means of establishing cooperatives. However, certification mechanisms were less influential in the collection and distribution of food parcels. We stressed earlier that the markets' open character addressed the local community settings and invited volunteers to assist their operation. Nevertheless, the collection and distribution of food parcels was a particularly internal practice for the SMOs' activity. Therefore, instead of certification, brokerage mechanisms were more valuable here. Brokerage signified the development of the network of beneficiaries, whose absence would have made the operation of this repertoire impossible.

All the repertoires in the food scene are subject to variation, with regards to the coordinated action, certification and brokerage mechanisms. Nevertheless, they share the contribution of the emulation sub-mechanism for the activation of diffusion mechanisms. This is not only for the sake of the mechanisms' description. Rather, emulation here confirms the literature on social movements, which argues that change in movements' repertoires is very slow. Despite the outbreak of the service-oriented repertoires and the social creativity that characterizes them, our analysis shows that social
movement actors draw heavily on their traditional toolkits. Collective identities in post-modern societies are fluid, relational, and combine the living reality with its pre-figurative potentials (Psimitis, 2017, p. 230). In this sense, emulation seems to be the mechanism that connects the old with the new, tradition with modernity, or even better: modernity with post-modernity. Emulation shows the connection of these alternative forms with traditional SMOs and the transition of activists’ organizational formats and values in the context of everyday life.

The labour scene follows a similar trajectory with regards to organizational structure. Here as well, coordinated action and emulation proved to be the central mechanisms in facilitating the development of the boundary enlargement process. As in the cases of markets and kitchens, coordinated action was essential in the construction of common understandings and a cooperativist identity in the labour scene. However, even more decisive for the trajectory of the cooperatives was the emulation mechanism.

Born out of activists’ efforts to promote self-organized practices in the workplace (that is self-management), cooperatives mirror the experience of applying the social movement organizational practices in the work environment. This becomes quite clear mostly for the cooperatives established shortly before the advent of the new protest cycle, and to a lesser extent, for the cooperatives born during the crisis. With regards to the food scene, emulation mechanisms enabled the “know-how” transition from one organization to another (collective kitchens, collection of food parcels), as well as the repetition of practices from one period to another (from open-air markets to consumers’ cooperatives). With regards to the labour scene however, the mechanism of emulation seems to acquire a more significant role, since it points precisely to the transition of the organizational experience from one social setting to another (from social movements to labour environment). The recognition of collective decision-making as the ultimate power and the establishment of entry and exit criteria for the new members similar to those set by SMOs for activists, are profound characteristics which mark the adoption of SMOs’ organizational practices by the cooperatives. Due to this, the mechanism of emulation constitutes the most central mechanism in the organizational structure of the labour scene. This difference is quite substantial in explaining the distinct trajectories of the food and labour scenes, since it highlights that cooperatives are strongly advised and defined by the traditional social movement practices, regardless of their relatively new organizational formats.

Having sketched out the mechanisms of coordinated action, certification, and emulation, we now turn our attention to the mechanism of brokerage.
As mentioned above, brokerage mechanisms were important for the collection and distribution of food parcels, since the latter was a rather internal practice to the SMOs' activities. However, brokerage mechanisms took on substantial roles in more open collectives, like the social clinics. In particular, brokerage mechanisms show how the doctors' professional networks have been developed and contributed to the establishment of the social clinics. Unlike the food and labour scenes, where the mechanism of coordinated action was triggered after the appearance of the first organizations and acted mainly during the process of diffusion, the social clinics' development was based on pre-existing networks of healthcare professionals.

6.2.2 Trajectories in Resources

The social movement scenes of food, health, and labour present great similarities in the development of their trajectories concerning the factor of resources. This is mostly due to the brokerage mechanism, which proved to be an important facilitator in all three scenes and their respective repertoires. However, one particularity regarding the different functions that resources might incarnate deserves our attention. Depending on the different repertoires, resources have been used in funding similar activities, connecting different organizations, and granting the approval of institutional actors. This is to say that, although the mechanism of brokerage is common in all three scenes, it is also shaped by the respective role resources are called to play. This becomes clearer when looking at the similar paths followed by the markets' organizers and the self-managed cooperatives, as well as the respective similarities between the social clinics and the rest of the repertoires in the food scene.

Starting with the markets without middlemen, the mechanism of brokerage is clearly marked by the practice of the “solidarity percentage”. By distributing a small share from the producers' profits, the markets used to fund impoverished families and social solidarity initiatives. In this respect, they managed to establish connections not only with similar initiatives, but also with grassroots organizations that have quite different activities. Drawing on this, similar was the practice introduced by self-managed cooperatives in the labour scene, where a solidarity percentage was used in order to fund other cooperatives, self-managed endeavours, social solidarity actions and labour struggles.

The solidarity percentage was a common feature developed in the markets and the cooperatives. Another one deals with actions supporting the establishment of an unofficial solidarity market. The markets' attention
to quality products produced in Greece and decent labour conditions for the fieldworkers, overlap to a great extent with the values that define the actions of the self-managed cooperatives regarding their suppliers. The markets’ evolution and their shift towards consumer cooperatives increase these similarities. Moreover, our analysis shows that many consumer cooperatives assisted the operation of the unofficial cooperative grocery stores functioning in the premises of traditional SMOs. This was mainly by providing consultation regarding the respective legislation and hands-on operation of the grocery stores, as well as sharing orders to the same producers. The same practice took place in the self-managed workers’ cooperatives, as it is explained in Chapter 5. Nevertheless, what distinguishes the two repertoires is the introduction of compensation, with the markets supporting the voluntary character of their repertoires and the cooperatives promoting decent compensation for their members. Although this difference is quite salient, the two scenes seem to share a common path towards the construction of an unofficial solidarity economy. Still, we should be cautious. Both markets and cooperatives have relatively lower prices of products and services compared to the standards of the neoliberal market. But, at the same time, by customizing specific fees to specific services they do not reject the dominant economic transactions, as other forms of alternative markets do (Benmecheddal et al., 2017). Nevertheless, by paying attention to the members’ well-being instead of profit, implementing internal horizontal relations, attempting to share the “know-how” techniques as opposed to the rough competition of neoliberal corporations and engaging in funding social solidarity practices, markets without middlemen and social cooperatives distinguish themselves from mainstream economic endeavours.

Together with the aforementioned similarities, resources in the social movement scenes of food and labour increase the social movement’s activity. In the first case, markets are pictured as open hubs, which enabled the dissemination of informative material and the operation of grassroots actions hosted by local SMOs. In the second case, the premises of the self-managed cooperatives have been used as open spaces, where a number of political and social initiatives held their assemblies. Anti-fascist movie screenings and workshops on solidarity economy took place quite often. Both markets and cooperatives stood as collection points for medicine, clothes, and dry food, which was subsequently donated to local social clinics and pro-refugee solidarity actions.

Resources in markets without middlemen and social cooperatives dealt mostly with monetary and infrastructural support. However, this is only one side of the coin, since the alternative repertoires strongly highlight the role
of donations. In this respect, the case of social clinics constitutes a notable example. Drugs and medication were among the most important aspects regarding the clinics’ resources. Although our field research shows that many clinics have set separate associations to receive monetary donations, drugs and medication derive mainly from in-kind donations. With the exception of some organizations, the establishment of separate associations does not find application in the rest of the studied repertoires. However, funding through in-kind donations does. In this respect, the social movement scene of health presents similarities with the rest of the repertoires developed in the scene of food. In-kind donations were also the main resources in the social kitchens (and to a lesser extent in the collective kitchens) and in the organizations responsible for collecting and distributing food parcels. These examples show that the health and food scenes are very much alike on the side of “demand”. The same also happens on the “supply” side. Social clinics and social kitchens provide their services free of charge. The same also goes for the collection and distribution of food parcels, while the collective kitchens introduced a small fee. These examples further strengthen our suggestion regarding the common role of brokerage in the health and food scenes.

Resources enhance the connection among different grassroots organizations, but they also favour the interaction with institutional actors. The “solidarity percentage” connected the markets with bottom-up initiatives, but it also granted their certification by institutional actors. The dual role of brokerage in connecting service-oriented organizations with traditional SMOs and institutional actors does not constitute a privilege of the markets without middlemen; similar to the “solidarity percentage”, social clinics issued medicine donations to local hospitals to support the latter’s activities. Attention to the case of clinics shows that out-group brokerage and certification mechanisms seem to support each other once again. More precisely, the coverage of the clinics’ fixed costs by municipal authorities, as well as the donation of medical and office equipment from institutional actors, hybrid organizations initiatives and associations, can be correlated with the licensing of many markets by municipal authorities to operate in public squares. Respectively, reactions that came from healthcare professional associations against the clinics’ operations, awaken memories of similar claims introduced by brokers’ associations regarding the markets’ operation. Markets and cooperatives on the one hand, and clinics, kitchens, and organizations distributing food parcels on the other hand, present great similarities in terms of their trajectories. However, the similarities between markets and clinics with regards to the institutional actors, highlight the interconnection of these repertoires in terms of resources.
The experiences discussed in terms of the alternative repertoires show that resources do not refer only to the maintenance of the organizations. Through the mechanism of brokerage, resources bring organizations closer to each other. Moreover, the development of ties and supportive practices also bear characteristics related to the factor of identity. In particular, the service-oriented structures do not operate only to cover the needs of their members. Nor do they open their services to wider audiences as a direct strategy for attracting more members. On the contrary, service-oriented organizations make use of their resources in order to support similar structures and diffuse their actions. The diffusion of service-oriented practices is also combined with the spread of cultural elements. Depending on the perspective, the spread of this culture might be seen either as filling the gap of state’s retrenchment and bound to fail, or as hopeful innovative resistance practices which create independent (if not antagonistic) communities in the everyday life.

6.2.3 Trajectories in Identity

McAdam asserts that, ‘as a prerequisite for action, would-be-insurgents must either create an organizational vehicle and its supporting collective identity or, more likely, appropriate an existing organization and the routine collective identity on which it rests’ (2003, pp. 291-292). By analyzing the roots of the alternative repertoires, we came across instances of continuities from earlier periods of mobilization. However, if we focus on the respective organizational vehicles that the alternative repertoires made use of, we conclude that the food and health scenes developed new organizational formats, while the labour scene appropriated existing ones. All of them have, nevertheless, based the development of their collective identities on a new terrain. In order to further explore this field, we focus on the fluidity of identities, as indicated by post-modern accounts in relation to the alternative repertoires.

In line with research on social movements (Rootes, 2013, p. 307), our research suggests that organizations with less defined identities develop ties with other organizations faster and become brokers by bridging previously unconnected organizations. This becomes clearer especially in times when there is a common issue at stake. Although less-defined identities soften the external edges of organizations and allow their connection, field research suggests that organizations with fluid identities cannot escape sharp internal conflicts. Collective identities in the alternative repertoires have been developed through internal debates. They have mainly centred on whether
these endeavours are antagonistic to the respective services provided by the state and the market. On this ground, the markets without middlemen, the unofficial grocery stores established by neighbourhood assemblies and the social clinics, present important similarities, while the self-managed cooperatives in the scene of labour present a contrasting scenario.

The food related repertoires compared their role to the one of open-air farmers’ markets and small local grocery stores. Additionally, social clinics were subject to an ongoing internal discussion on their position, in relation to the public healthcare system. Apart from the more ideologically radical initiatives (mostly of libertarian origins), which perceived by default the nature of their repertoires as opposing to the state and market-oriented welfare provision, the vast majority of the service-oriented organizations argued in favour of their independent character, their ambition to promote fair trade practices and move towards universal healthcare coverage respectively. Nevertheless, their actions did not aim to completely dissolve the dominant systems of power, nor the actors traditionally responsible for the provision of welfare services. Self-managed cooperatives seem to have a more radical view by using their workplace as a means of connecting with other social struggles, and promoting an egalitarian and solidarity view on economy. This difference in the pathways of the labour scene with the other two scenes is better explained by examining the respective contentious mechanisms. The translation mechanism and the sub-mechanism of bricolage in the case of clinics is contradicted with the category formation mechanism in the social movement scene of labour. The former show that identity construction is an amalgamation of different features, while the latter favours a relatively more stable improvement of the collective identity.

Boundary enlargement also implies a cognitive enlargement. One aspect of this cognitive opening points to the social opening of the studied organizations. The food scene presents an adequate example of social opening, since both the markets without middlemen and the collective kitchens had to cope with a rather diverse audience of members and beneficiaries. However, the social opening is another aspect that presents internal differentiation, since some organizations set even their basic principles open to debate, while others perceived their encounter with audiences different from their usual sympathizers, in terms of social opening. Examples picturing both orientations can be found in a wide array of organizations from all three scenes, such as neighbourhood assemblies, organized collective kitchens in traditional SMOs and social clinics.

Regardless of the scale of social opening, the incorporation of service-oriented practices held surprises for the organizers. In each of the studied
cases, the organizers were confronted with beneficiaries, patients, and customers expressing fascist, xenophobic and sexist behaviour. Of course, the more socially open an organization is, the more severely it is affected by this behaviour. This, in turn, facilitated a respective change in frames and practices, defining their organizers’ subsequent trajectories.

Together with the agency of collective action, scholars of contentious politics urge researchers to also pay attention to dominant social powers, such as the state. Our analysis suggests that many service-oriented organizations did not hesitate to collaborate with institutional actors, something that would be quite problematic in a pre-crisis context. On the one hand, social clinics, social kitchens and the organizations distributing food parcels interacted and negotiated with public authorities and institutional actors to different degrees and for different reasons. On the other hand, this applies, to a lesser extent, to the markets without middlemen and self-managed cooperatives. Potential partnerships with institutional actors were decisive for many of these organizations to follow distinct trajectories. However, variation does not appear only in terms of the different repertoires; it can be also found within the same repertoires as well. With regards to the health scene, some clinics decided to closely cooperate with institutional authorities, while others adopted a confrontational approach against state dependency. Similarly, in the food scene, some organizations distributing food parcels received funding from hybrid and institutional organizations, while others relied solely on the non-institutional forms of politics. Additionally, a number of markets without middlemen received approval from the municipal authorities to operate in public parks and squares, while others decided to continue their operation in squatted spaces. Lastly, in respect to the labour scene, some cooperatives did not find it problematic to receive funding from the European Union (EU) National Strategic Reference Frameworks (NSFRs), while others clearly rejected any kind of state-related subsidies.

Social appropriation is probably among the most central mechanisms that defined the alternative repertoires’ trajectory. Whether as a mechanism or a sub-mechanism, social appropriation takes place in each repertoire of the three social movement scenes. Social appropriation mirrors the engagement of previously non-politicized individuals, or better said, non-activists, in the implementation of the alternative repertoires. It also stresses the personal transformation of service receivers into service providers. Although the increased politicization of individuals is bounded by the context of the crisis, the role of social appropriation should not be minimized as a mere reaction to the economic hardships. On the contrary, it should be also connected
with the broader discontent towards the mainstream political settings and the neoliberal representative democracy, as this has been illustrated by theorists of political economy (Crouch, 2011; Schäfer and Streeck, 2013). The sense of community, family and sociality found in these repertoires, contrast the elements of alienation and identities’ fragmentation that come to the forefront in post-modern societies. Therefore, social appropriation represents this mechanism that enabled the actors of these repertoires to leave their passive background and engage in collective action.

As we now turn our attention to the mechanism of social appropriation, it is important to begin by illustrating the process through which it was developed. Starting with the food scene, the markets without middlemen managed to associate their members with specific roles, independent of their political background. The critical component here was sociality. As we explain in Chapter 3, sociality depicts a unique procedure of socialization, which facilitates the individuals’ exodus from their private settings and shows their incorporation in a collective environment, formed out of the difficulties that isolated them in the first place. The sense of belonging to collective organizations, with assigned roles that do not require any expertise, proved to be valuable for engaging beneficiaries in the provision of services. With regards to the kitchens’ repertoires, social appropriation began with the beneficiaries serving and cooking; their participation in collecting donations outside of supermarkets also supported the collection and distribution of food parcels. Similar was the trajectory in the health scene, where instead of sociality, the basic component was the members’ partial commitment. Partial commitment was the characteristic which resulted in individuals overcoming their skepticism in participating in political endeavours stricto sensu and offering their skills by concentrating on the provision of services. Partial commitment does not refer only to the clinics’ core and peripheral members, but also to the donors. Donors were not external to the clinics’ operation; they have been perceived as organic parts of their supporting networks. In many occasions, medicine donations were the first steps donors followed in gradually engaging with the clinics’ operation and finally become regular members. Although to a lesser extent, this path was also followed by the clinics’ beneficiaries.

The labour scene experiences cases with members of cooperatives becoming politically active, as an outcome of their participation in collectively managing their businesses. However, appropriation here was not translated in the engagement of beneficiaries or non-politicized individuals in collective action. Rather, it signals a broader procedure that took place mostly in the initial phase of the cooperatives’ establishment. Particularly,
it refers to the appropriation of the scene of labour by social movement actors. This appropriation, which is inextricably linked to the practices of self-management, marks the transition from a claim-making tradition met in the labour struggles, to the incorporation of the work environment as a field for creative action.

Service-oriented organizations managed to bridge the gap between the claims of the broader anti-austerity struggle and the personal difficulties of the individuals. Together with the aforementioned features of the social appropriation mechanism, the spatial dimension comes to the forefront. Against the neoliberal re-construction of the urban environment which came along with the recent crisis (Hayes, 2017, pp. 29-30), the alternative repertoires imposed the movement reality to the urban landscape. By implicating the sense of community feasts with activists’ repertoires, open-air markets expanded the social movement activity outside the premises of SMOs and underlined the spatial dimension of openness. Although on a smaller scale, this spatial dimension also took place in the organization of outdoor social kitchens and the open-air activities of the collective kitchens in support of specific struggles. Lastly, the public anti-discriminatory actions of the cooperatives, such as workshops, movie screenings, pro-refugee actions, and neighbourhood marches, along with the fact that the majority of their audiences were anti-fascist activists, helped to mark specific neighbourhoods with an activist-friendly and an anti-fascist element.

Bibliography


