Social Movements and Solidarity Structures in Crisis-Ridden Greece

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8 Epilogue

Abstract
This chapter provides the conclusion of the book. It starts by providing an overview of the analysis discussed in the different chapters. Subsequently, the epilogue sets the basis for a discussion regarding the rise of the alternative repertoires and the way they touch upon issues that move beyond the narrow interest of the Greek context. Therefore, it relates the shift from protest-oriented and claim-based actions towards the provision of bottom-up welfare services within the neoliberal political economy. Moreover, it associates the pre-figurative politics of everyday life with solidarity economy, the commons, and the role of the local contexts. Finally, it discusses the relation of alternative repertoires with debates on citizenship and provides some recommendations for future research.

Keywords: Boundary enlargement; Political economy; Pre-figurative politics; Social solidarity economy; Commons

In response to the 2008 economic crisis, the European states implemented a series of strict austerity measures, the most severe of which were implemented in the Mediterranean countries. Austerity agendas were met with tremendous social mobilizations, triggering a new cycle of contention. The exposition of the Greek national debt placed the country at the epicentre of the economic crisis. Similar to the policies of the neoliberal “shock doctrine” (Klein, 2007), Greek authorities signed a series of structural adjustment programmes known as Memorandums of Understanding, with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), European Commission (EC), and European Central Bank (ECB), severely affecting the livelihood of millions of citizens. Despite the desire of neoliberal economists to distinguish the economic realm from the rest of the social spheres, changes in the economic conditions largely affected the Greek political life. The implementation of consecutive electoral rounds, the degradation of mainstream political parties accompanied by the rise of less popular and newly emerging parties, the
formation of governmental coalitions in a country with a strong tradition in one-party-governments, as well as the rise of abstention votes, outline several of the major features that led to broader political instability.

The crisis and its effects also touched the unofficial political terrain of social movements. The harsh economic conditions and the inability of private and public institutions to provide welfare services to large parts of the population, brought the exercise of service-oriented practices by social movement actors to the forefront. We call these alternative repertoires of action. Social movement theories have long argued that times of crises and the rise of contentious cycles give birth to new organizational formations as well as repertoires (Tarrow, 1998). The rise of these alternative repertoires mirrors this process, with the engagement of new activists in collective action.

As outlined in Chapter 1, the alternative repertoires bring further changes to the social movement sphere. Literature on social movements draws distinctive lines between social movement organizations (SMOs) and other organizational formats, such as movement associations, interest groups, and supportive organizations. More precisely, SMOs are supposed to foster action mobilization, while the rest of the organizational formats play supportive roles without engaging their audience in mobilization. In line with post-modern accounts, regarding the fluidity of contemporary structures, the rigid boundaries of these distinctions enter a period of ambiguity. The new service-oriented organizations appear to foster actual mobilization, while alternative repertoires take on a significant role in the activities of the more traditional SMOs. In these terms, the aforementioned assigned roles no longer correspond to the qualitative division of the organizations constituting the social movement community. However, the fluidity of the organizational limits does not only correspond to the roles and repertoires of the organizations. Rather, it reflects a larger social process that fosters the socialization of the ideologically stricter organizations and the incorporation of more radical repertoires in the activities of more conventional collectivities. This shift towards the provision of services by social movement actors, presents an extension of their practical and conceptual boundaries. Prompted by the social movement theories and the Contentious Politics paradigm (McAdam et al, 2001), we treat this shift as a process of boundary enlargement, which constitutes the subject of this study. Although the roots of this process are prior to the period of the crisis, we argue that the crisis and austerity were catalysts for further fostering the boundary enlargement process and allowing it to take place. The process of boundary enlargement adopts a post-modern perspective in dealing with issues related to identities.
(Melucci, 1996). However, the rise of new organizational formats affects the movements’ internal structure and resources. Together with other academic efforts in bridging the structural and cultural traditions of social movement literature, we examine the process of boundary enlargement regarding organizational structure, resources, and identity factors.

Chapter 2 unpacks the critical moments in time that led to the process of boundary enlargement. In line with post-modern accounts, boundary enlargement presents a dynamic character which changed shape many times over the years. The aftermath of the December 2008 riots was the turning point for social movements, triggering them to reassess the means and goals of their community, while earlier periods of mobilization established the initial foundations. Nevertheless, the economic crisis created a number of needs which accelerated the implementation of the process of boundary enlargement.

Similar to its European counterparts, Greece experienced the tremendous rise of mobilizations in response to the conditions of austerity. More than 20,000 protest events took place between 2010 and 2014 (Diani and Kousis, 2014), with 20 of them bringing from 25,000 to 500,000 participants to the streets (Kousis and Kanellopoulos, 2014). The width of the reactions becomes clearer, if we consider that one third of the population took part in at least one protest event (Rüdig and Karyotis, 2013). Anti-austerity mobilizations were not characterized only by their range and the large amounts of people taking to the streets. Almost 20 per cent of the participants who engaged with collective action participated for the first time in protests and strikes (Ibid). Protests and other contentious events created a pool of potential activists. However, soon the claims did not only target the austerity packages but evolved into criticism against the neoliberal political system in general (Della Porta, 2015). Similar to the Spanish Indignados and the occupy movements in the USA, England, and Germany, the Greek square movement constituted the cornerstone of the anti-austerity mobilizations.

The decline of the powerful protests by the end of 2012 increased the prominence of welfare services provided by grassroots collectives. The rise of time banks, community gardens, urban agriculture initiatives, solidarity language and high school courses and numerous other actions, bear evidence of the tendency of social movements towards more practical approaches of political intervention. Contrary to the criticism on new social movements for dealing only with post-materialist concerns, alternative repertoires intervene by pre-figuring the coverage of rather material everyday needs. Urged from the population’s difficulties in covering basic needs, this research focuses on the scenes of food, health, and labour, and the respective repertoires developed there.
Building on the framework of the Contentious Politics approach, this inquiry unravels the new reality of the social movement community in Greece. In order to explore the contentious mechanisms that shaped the development of the alternative repertoires, this research employs a case-study approach with a within-case comparison. Qualitative field research with document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation are applied to approximately 50 grassroots organizations. These organizations deal with the organization of markets without middle-men, collective and social kitchens, the collection and distribution of food parcels, social clinics, and self-managed workers’ cooperatives. Respectively, Chapters 3, 4, 5 correspond to the study of the social movement scenes of food, health, and labour. Chapter 6 indicates some important similarities and differences revealed from the comparison among the social movement scenes of food, health and labour, and also highlights crucial aspects that shaped the trajectories of the alternative repertoires, with regards to the factors of organizational structure, resources, and identity. Chapter 7 introduces the process of boundary enlargement as applied to the recent Spanish anti-austerity struggles, as well as in the 2001 Argentinean crisis, and briefly investigates the contentious mechanisms at play.

This final Chapter 8 sets the basis for a discussion regarding the rise of the alternative repertoires and the way they touch upon issues that move beyond the narrow interest of the Greek context. As such, we relate the shift from protest-oriented and claim-based actions towards the provision of bottom-up welfare services with the neoliberal political economy. Moreover, we show how the application of pre-figurative approaches to politics on an everyday life setting, associates with solidarity economy, the commons, and the role of the local contexts. Finally, we discuss how the rise of the alternative repertoires reveal new aspects related to citizenship and we provide some recommendations for future research.

8.1 Expanding the notion of boundary enlargement

The economic crisis and the austerity measures signaled the shift of the social movement community in Greece towards bottom-up welfare provision. Although the shift from protest to service-oriented repertoires has been sped up in the aftermath of the economic crisis in 2008, it would be unfair to limit its role as a mere consequence of the crisis. On the contrary, this study claims that the rise of the alternative repertoires should be seen under the lenses of a broader process of boundary enlargement. The enlargement
of SMOs’ boundaries in other social settings may expose different forms of application, such as boundary reduction or contraction, and lead to distinct outcomes. Nevertheless, with regards to the case of Greece, this was mostly experienced through the incorporation of service-oriented practices. This process was accelerated due to the disastrous effects caused by the rampant austerity to large parts of the Greek population. More precisely, though, it also reveals deeper social antagonisms.

According to Melucci, it would be unfair to limit the role of social movements to reactions to crises; instead we should acknowledge that they are ‘symptoms of antagonist conflicts, even if this does not wholly exhaust their significance’ (Melucci, 1996, p. 99). Melucci (1996) underlines the qualitative differences that distinguish crises from conflicts. Crises imply the collapse of sets of rules, functions and relations. Therefore, by associating the outburst of collective action with periods of crises, social movements tend to be conceived as ‘a pathology of the social system’ (Melucci, 1996, p. 22). Conversely, conflicts indicate a battle of (at least) two actors over the expropriation and control of a specific set of resources (Ibid). Melucci warns that a potential failure in distinguishing these two processes may risk missing the historical trajectory of collective action. As he emphatically states, the labour movement would not be conceived as a struggle against the capitalist industrial production but just as the working-class reaction to the economic difficulties caused by the crises. In this way, the labour movement would have collapsed once the working conditions became better (Ibid).

The fact that crises and conflicts are distinct processes does not mean that they are not related. Periods of crises develop a number of social conditions which pave the way for the recognition of deeper conflicts. But once these conflicts rise to the surface and become recognizable, collective action should no longer be perceived as the reaction to the respective crises (Ibid). With regards to crisis-ridden Greece, our research shows that the alternative repertoires came to the forefront due to the state and the market’s inability to meet the needs of the population. However, they managed to offer space for reflection, on whether the service-oriented actions are part of broader social conflict between the social movement community and the dominant neoliberal system expressed through public and private institutions. In this regard, the shift towards the provision of bottom-up welfare services develops structures and produces new resources, which act independently from the restoration (or the lack thereof) of the pre-crisis setting.

The alternative repertoires are collective efforts aiming to tackle the economic, political, and social adversities caused by austerity. Our analysis shows that these endeavours are connected with each other, construct
unofficial solidarity networks, and produce their own resources and culture. According to Psimitis (2017), the networks of hands-on solidarity practices construct a radical reality which opposes the capitalist system. These networks express a wider trend, associated with unofficial structures of the social and solidarity economy. Solidarity economy networks adopt an ecological perspective, localize production and culture, de-commercialize goods and services, criticize consumption, and provide egalitarian relations in the economic production (Ibid, p. 329). Although empirical research shows that the plethora of solidarity structures associate, in different degrees, with the aforementioned aspects, the development of these networks promotes an alternative worldview, antagonistic to the mainstream neoliberal logic. Taking into consideration Melucci’s perspective on the conflictual relationship of these views, these solidarity networks seem to be under attack by the capitalist system (Ibid).

Capitalism tries to appropriate these forms of action. By introducing notions and practices such as “social entrepreneurship”, “social innovation”, “good practices” or “social footprint”, capitalism attempts to incorporate the social practices of solidarity economy within the profit-oriented logic of mainstream businesses (Ibid). This harks back to Crouch (2004) work on post-democracy. There, Crouch condemns the role of corporate social responsibility, since this reflects a tendency of outsourcing the state-provided welfare services to corporate actors. In the Greek context, more attention is paid to the role of the state rather than to the one of the markets.

The appointment of SYRIZA, Synaspismos Rizospastikis Aristeras (Coalition of Radical Left), as the leading partner of the governmental coalition between 2015 and 2019, was combined with an institutional promotion of social and solidarity economy. As a first step, the SYRIZA-led governmental coalition established a Special Secretary for Social and Solidarity Economy within the Ministry of Labour, of which the actions ranged from the organization of expos and forums regarding solidarity economy up to the organization of specific bureaucratic agencies responsible for informing potential entrepreneurs on how to set up a cooperative. Moreover, university syllabus started to concentrate specifically on social and solidarity economy, with individual university courses as well as complete master programmes being devoted solely on this new topic. At the same time, a number of new cooperatives appeared, offering consultancy services and legal advice to newly established cooperatives.

In order to secure the grassroots character of the social solidarity practices, Psimitis (2017, pp. 330-346) suggests the further strengthening of these unofficial networks, through the construction of a unified, antagonistic
identity that will respect plurality and the particularities of the different actors. This seems to be the case for the empirical reality in Greece. Either by introducing new terms, such as cooperative economy, or by emphasizing the solidarity aspect of the economy compared to the social aspect, many grassroots organizations tried to distance themselves from state appropriation of solidarity economy. The loose character of their grassroots networks become more concrete, while they issue criteria that exclude initiatives missing a social movement background. As the official political discourses on the crisis fade away, the grassroots networks of solidarity economy are preoccupied with maintaining their radical identity. As such, the cooperatives' new internal debates deal with strategic issues on how to protect themselves in the new neoliberal market environment, and whether collectivism or networking modes are the most appropriate ways in order to strengthen their bonds with the rest of the social movement community.

In respect to the operation of these solidarity networks, pre-figurative approaches are one of the most central issues. Pre-figurative politics propose a type of behaviour that directs individuals to act as they would do in a future, imaginary society, post to the great social transformation. More importantly though, pre-figurative politics are tightly related to broader organizational issues and democratic principles (Psimitis, 2017, pp. 347-348). Pre-figurative politics suggest a reconstruction of the social relationships, which blends the subjectivities with an organized plan of collective action. An important effect of the pre-figurative understanding of politics is that in everyday life, the distinction between individuals and collectives, means and ends, actions and their outcome, become quite blurred (Ibid, pp. 348-351). In this respect, pre-figurative politics are related with autonomous politics, in the sense that ‘organizational forms, decision-making processes, and forms of action are not just means to an end, but ends in themselves’ (Flesher Fominaya, 2007, p. 339). Pre-figurative politics combine the collective experimentation, the imaginary construction of political meanings, the creation of new social norms, the stabilization of these norms in the movements' structures, and the diffusion of ideas in broader networks (Psimitis, 2017, pp. 351-352). All these characteristics have been illustrated in the analysis of the social movement scenes of food, health, and labour. Moreover, they also define the organizational formats in social and solidarity economy.

Although alternative repertoires are studied here through the lens of social movement theories, they also lie in the field of social and solidarity economy. Studies of bottom-up solidarity endeavours, through the approach of social solidarity economy, emphasize the economic perspective in developing a viable alternative to the capitalistic logic of production and
consumption. However, this does not mean that it pays attention only to cases which implement monetary transactions. Gift and exchange economies include non-monetary economic activities, which enrich the universe of social solidarity economy (Benmecheddal et al., 2017; Rozakou, 2016). The role of social solidarity economy is often described as ambiguous, as to whether it has a conflictual relation with, or operates independently from the state and the market (Adam, 2012; Kavoulakos, 2018). What is clear, nevertheless, is the different perspective of solidarity regarding the neoliberal economy.

To briefly outline a few, solidarity economy focuses on labour, cooperative relations and common ownership of the means of production, while the neoliberal economy underlines the capital, profit-oriented relations and private ownership (Psimitis, 2017, p. 363). One issue that complements these differences and derives from the empirical research, refers to the different ways that solidarity and neoliberal economy gain legitimation from wider audiences. Social solidarity endeavours have to cross a difficult path, by proving their economic sustainability and efficiency, underestimating indirectly the great application of democratic procedures compared to capitalist businesses. The opposite, however, is not observed for the neoliberal economy, despite the strong defeat that was signaled from the recent economic crisis.

Solidarity economy initiatives adopt a self-organized approach, which underlines the values of autonomy. Instead of focusing on big narratives, the pre-figurative approach to solidarity economy initiatives, aims to transform the social relationships and the living conditions in the “here and now”. In other words, ‘social transformation comes through the creation of alternatives, not through the existing institutional system’ (Flesher Fominaya, 2007, p. 339). In order to do so, these bottom-up initiatives construct unofficial communities with great attention to the local settings. It is stressed throughout this study that service-oriented repertoires concentrated in local actions. So do the recent municipalist movements developed in the Southern European cities, such as Barcelona, Madrid, Turin and the ones that, to some extent, try to rise also in Greece. A helpful way to approach this emphasis on the local element is through “commons”.

Commons support the collective and communal perspective on material and immaterial resources. Although the interest of the literature on commons tilts more towards the non-capitalistic structures of economy (Psimitis, 2017, p. 269), scholars emphasize that commons are quite necessary for the survival of capitalism. Capitalism needs commons for its reproduction, by using and extracting the profit from the natural and social resources (De Angelis, 2017). This procedure seems similar to the capitalist invasion in the
solidarity practices, as it was described earlier. The risk of the capitalist appropriation of commons becomes apparent especially in times of crises, since they are perceived as the temporary solutions to fix the state and market’s inabilities. According to Buck (2013), there are two potential dangers here. First, in cases where commons are advertised through a neoliberal lens, they ‘can easily be construed as a convenient fix to various internal and external road-blocks to capital accumulation through the exploitation of unwaged labour and the externalization of negative impacts of capital production’ (Buck, 2013, p. 64). Second, in cases where commons are expressed through grassroots orientations in tackling the economic difficulties, they run the risk of pacifying the internal tensions of neoliberalism by fixing its disruptions and leaving the dominant production relations untouched (Ibid).

Among others, Psimitis proposes that the only way to secure commons is through the local communities (2017, p. 370). Moreover, Buck claims that the reproduction of commons should take place through a process of communing, which is resistant to the neoliberal system (2013, p. 64). This resistant character of commons towards the neoliberal enclosures, requires an internal reflection of the subjectivities. According to De Angelis, commoners should ask who they are, what they want and how they can achieve it, having as a necessary condition the prevalence of democratic procedures throughout this process (De Angelis, 2013, p. 73). The neoliberal enclosures can be expressed with the form of the traditional interest-based associations, but also with the spatial appropriation of land, for instance the cases of gated communities in South Africa (Morange et al., 2012). Therefore, the communal protection of commons should be based on open and egalitarian social relations. In this respect, local communities become the protective shield both for the commons and for the individuals’ daily life, against the systemic crisis of capitalism (Papadaki and Kalogeraki, 2017; Psimitis, 2017, p. 376). However, this procedure requires a deeper transformation of the social relationships and the way in which they are understood.

In order to suggest an alternative to the capitalist model, De Angelis (2013) notes that activists should move beyond the established ethical choices and the strict limits of ideology. Regarding the former, the development of individual or collective identities based on a value system that is directed by ethical choices, although helpful, does not represent a comprehensive understanding of commons (Ibid, pp. 88-89). Commons should be seen as a field for the production of new values, shared by people from different political and social backgrounds (Ibid). With regards to ideology, De Angelis argues that the relationship of commons to capital is quite ambiguous. Commons and capital evolve simultaneously throughout time, making it
difficult to determine which affected the other first. Therefore, the author urges researchers to avoid judging commons—whether or not they are absorbed by the system—by using the lens of ideology or identity politics. Commons are neither utopias nor dystopias (Ibid, p. 132). Similar to the dilemma regarding the solidarity-charity character of the alternative repertoires, commons might provoke empowerment, but they can also be repressive. Commons constitute a field of possibilities for social cooperation, but their mere reproduction is not enough for enhancing an antagonistic character to capitalism; rather, the reproduction of commons should target the fields of social reproduction in which people define their basic living needs. Health, food, education, housing, care, and energy constitute adequate fields for the cultivation of an egalitarian logic in commons and for establishing social justice (Ibid, p. 139).

De Angelis’ suggestion seems to refer more to an ideal type and less to an empirical expression of reality. Although sticking to ideological orthodoxy shrinks the possibilities for cooperation, experimentation, and might prove disastrous for the construction of a new value system, certain ideological principles seem necessary for distinguishing the resistant from the resilient character of these grassroots endeavours. Self-organization, direct democracy, and horizontality constitute central aspects for paving the radical path of commons (as the field), through the solidarity economy (as the means). Nevertheless, one way towards the creation of this type of community is through the cognitive enlargement of boundaries. Empirical research shows that sociality and social opening constitute basic elements of this trajectory.

The internalization of the systemic crisis in the activists’ everyday life has enabled attention to be drawn at the local contexts, giving a distinct power to the anti-austerity protest cycle developed between 2010 and 2012. According to Psimitis (2017, p. 382), this experiential understanding of the crisis of capital produced new mobilization resources, which have been appropriated by the individuals. In this respect, the social movements constitute the collective expression and multiplication of these resources (Ibid). The aforementioned claims have been largely displayed in this book. Both the arrival of new activists and the rise of the alternative repertoires mirror Psimitis’ narrative. Melucci further highlights the role of solidarity in relation to the local settings. Together with pre-existing institutional bonds and the presence of listening spaces, Melucci (1996, p. 376) counts the existence of unofficial networks of everyday solidarity, as the third crucial factor which leads to positive responses in situations of emergency. The author claims that these hidden networks of everyday solidarity, as well as
the accumulation of experience through the participation in these practices, are crucial elements for the protection of autonomy within communities. These networks of solidarity, which Melucci calls the “heritage of the communities”, strongly reflect the organizations studied in this book. On this ground, more attention should be paid to how the alternative repertoires interact with and affect the everyday routine and the local social settings.

In the late 19th century, Le Bon (2004) wrote on the transformative crowd behaviour, which turns rational subjects to irrational masses. Almost a century later, social movements have been established as a legitimate form of political action (Tarrow, 1998), while their former “irrational” repertoires have been largely adopted and used by market and state institutions (Meyer and Tarrow, 1998). This change in perception indicates a wider shift of the scholarship, which enabled considering collective action as rational. The growth of social movement studies, as a distinct field of academic work, clearly confirms this suggestion. More importantly, though, it actually marks the embodiment of social movement practices in the everyday setting. Psimitis (2017) claims that social movements in post-modern (and more accurately in post-industrial) societies do not advocate for the potential of a broader social transformation through a revolution. Instead, movements are embedded forms of social transformation interlocked in daily life (Ibid). This is further depicted by the alternative repertoires studied here. Our research treats these service-oriented repertoires as complementary forms of action to the traditional street protest politics. In these terms, alternative repertoires integrate a character of everyday resistance. As Hadjimichalis puts it, ‘on the terrain of everyday life, solidarity movements developed to contest and politicize austerity by doing something lasting longer than a three-hour demonstration’ (2017, p. 172).

How did austerity get politicized in the everyday context? The answer here is not easy, but our argument relies heavily on the boundary enlargement process. Boundary enlargement brings social movement scenes and political spaces closer to each other. At the same time, it triggers contradictions between the material needs caused by austerity and the post-material values of the new social movements. It challenges the solidarity imaginary, by developing a field where the moral shock caused by austerity, urging for direct action and collaboration with the institutional actors, comes in conflict with the ideological purity expressed by the traditional political spaces. Our research shows that this ideological purity caused initial skepticism and inertia to the more traditional organized forms of Greece's social movement community. On the contrary, reflexes and responses from less politicized groups, which used to pay more attention to local
issues and focused on a lesser extent to “big narratives”, were much faster. However, this contradiction between traditional and recently established organized forms of collective action reveals insight, which corresponds to new understandings of citizenship and activism.

Chapter 2 underscores the relative absence of civil society formats in Greece, as these are usually met in other Northern European countries. Mistrust towards the state institutions and the non-governmental organizations over the last 20 years was quite characteristic in the Greek society. Political parties used to fill the gap between the grassroots and the state in modern Greece, while the third sector has been widely accused for corruption scandals. This skepticism has sharply increased in the years of austerity, and particularly once the social movements started to intervene with the local context. Attention of social movements to the local level clearly increased in the aftermath of the 2008 December riots. The empirical chapters show that beneficiaries have often adopted an aggressive stance towards the bottom-up service-oriented organizations and confused them with municipal authorities and professional volunteers. This confirms both the lack of a respective culture for the provision of alternative repertoires by the social movement community, and the mistrust towards the neoliberal civil society organizations (Rozakou, 2008). At the same time, it shows how easily these forms of action have been welcomed by the local population, and also highlights the experimental stage of their operation due to the lack of respective culture and experience from official institutions. The hands-on approach of the alternative repertoires moved the social movements towards fields often associated with civil society organizations and increased their interaction with institutional and hybrid organizations.

The amalgam of different voices shapes the construction of collective identities. However, these collective identities are not solid, but mostly mirror a mosaic of different conceptions, with the internal streams moving from reformist to more radical approaches; from the construction of a common solidarity economy, parallel to the state and the market's dominant role, to the respective construction of a future world build on the ruins of the current. This narrative challenges the rigid divisions that used to distinguish the “bad state”, the apolitical civil society, and the “good social movements”. Of course, the state may still be “bad”, the civil society may still be conceived as the neoliberal trick for outsourcing welfare services, and the social movements may still incarnate the most authentic voice of the people; but the relationships between these three actors are much more complicated and dynamic. Citizenship seems to be a key aspect here.
Citizenship occupies considerable space in the agenda of democratic theorists, a long-standing tradition in the European academia. Urged by this, recent studies of European social movement scholars call for attention to philosophical accounts and social theories, as the ancestors of the European social movement theories (Cox and Flesher Fominaya, 2013). The revival of citizenship in the mainstream political setting is also pictured by the newly established neoliberal parties To Potami in Greece and Ciudadanos in Spain. Although we touch on the issue of citizenship briefly,¹ it is worth mentioning that liberal theories on citizenship focus on the citizens’ autonomy; civic understandings emphasize the active involvement of citizens in the public sphere; while the social-democratic tradition underlines the material needs of citizens and their access to public services (Gerbaudo, 2017, p. 39). Gerbaudo posits that recent movements against austerity put forward the anti-oligarchic understanding of citizenship, as this opposes the dominance of economic and political elites in the social realm. The rise of Indignados and Occupy movements underlines that citizenship does not refer to established rights and obligations; rather, it seems to be a notion that has been appropriated by the neoliberal elites and that should be gained back (Ibid, p. 44). In this regard, the author notes that anti-austerity movements were not protest movements but proposal movements, which suggested potential ways for the restoration and extension of citizens’ rights (Ibid). The anti-oligarchic citizen does not only claim for the ‘bottom-up reconstruction of a crisis-ridden democracy, but also a reassertion of the power of the dispersed citizenry against the concentrated power of economic and political elites’ (Ibid, pp. 46-47).

We are still skeptical as to whether the notion of commons described earlier fits with the anti-oligarchic understanding of citizenship. Following Hadjimichalis, during the occupation of squares, ‘younger middle-class activists gave the tone, but the most deprived parts of the population were absent – feminist and ecological issues were marginalized and union participation was rejected’ (2017, p. 171). Nevertheless, what interest us in Gerbaudo (2017, p. 48) view is that activists do not want to change the system from inside (as the social-democratic view suggests), nor do they see themselves as something completely external and independent from the state (as the autonomist perspective implies). Rather, they see themselves both as insiders and outsiders. This view, which reminds Tarrow (2012) metaphor of “strangers at the gates” (of the polity), mirrors the post-modern

¹ For a detailed analysis of the relationship between civil society and social movements see Diani (2015).
approach of fluid identities and points to yet another element of the boundary enlargement process.

The simultaneous insider-outsider perspective allows us to stress another aspect, which deals with the introduction of the service-oriented alternative repertoires of action in everyday life. During the 1968 protest cycle, feminist movements claimed that the personal was also political. The same goes for the recent outburst of feminist mobilizations against gender-based violence with the Me Too and the Non Una di Meno campaigns in the US and Italy respectively, as well as with similar actions that followed the murder of the LGBTQ+ activist Zak/Zackie in September 2018 and the protests against a number of rapes and femicides that took place recently in Greece. In a reverse process, the recent protest cycle against austerity transformed the political into personal. Political involvement no longer constituted a distinct aspect of the activists' everyday reality, independent from their “normal” routine. On the contrary, activists incorporate their political activities within their daily needs. First, this is reflected by the increase of solidarity structures occupied with serving daily basic needs, such as food, health, sanitation, housing, labour, education, and others. This is also mirrored by the fact that activists contribute to these structures, neither on the basis of their political education nor their theoretical skills, but actually as the continuation of their professional life or based on their practical skills. Doctors are involved in the social clinics; chefs in the collective kitchens; solidarity courses are provided by teachers and professors; directors put on theatrical plays; dance instructors organize grassroots dance courses; while the political is incorporated in the business sector by the introduction of cooperatives in a number of professions. However, we should not be misunderstood here. This is not to say that the service-oriented organizations reproduce the Taylorism model of management labour division based on the professions. Self-organization promotes creativity and the engagement of the members in any task they want. Additionally, collective decision-making removes the passive implementation of orders coming from the leaders of the respective organizations. A plethora of examples show that the social movement community in Greece has been structured on what the activists are willing to offer, and not on what they should offer. Rather, we want to mark a reverse process of engaging those people who can provide their services also based on their professional skills within the social movement community. This element does not show a tendency of movements to reproduce the capitalist relations of the career environment. On the contrary, social movements challenge the stabilization of the traditional social relationships by contrasting
the horizontal environment of SMOs with the hierarchical professional environment, through the provision of the same sets of services. In these terms, the culture of self-organization and direct democracy bridge the political and private spheres on a daily basis.

8.2 Future Research

Meyer (2002, p. 20) posits that social movements take risks in order to construct a better world. Therefore, they should not be studied as another academic field which discusses only specific, popular issues. Rather, researchers should also contribute to this direction by providing answers to meaningful questions. This inquiry has two main intentions: first, to present primary empirical material in order to demonstrate the turbulent reality in Greece from 2008 to 2016; second, to explain and analyse this new reality from the lens of the boundary enlargement process. We hope we succeed in providing some satisfactory answers.

Social movement studies, and the framework of Contentious Politics in particular, were the main theoretical tools employed. Our first suggestion for future research deals with the study of current and past contentious episodes, where the social movement communities experienced changes in their structural and cognitive boundaries. Spain and Argentina are two promising sites for an in-depth analysis of the boundary enlargement process, which allow us to compare phenomena with great geographical distances and during different periods. Although cases which incorporate service-oriented repertoires may further strengthen the argument of this inquiry, studies on SMOs’ engagement with different repertoires and practices bear the potential for better constructing the process of boundary enlargement. On top of that, inquiries discussing reverse processes would be of utmost importance. Potential analyses of the circumstances that lead to boundary reduction or boundary contraction processes can grant a comprehensive picture of changes along SMOs’ boundaries.

Moving ahead, this research touches upon other theoretical frameworks which have not been discussed thoroughly. Theories on social and solidarity economy and the commons offer an important analytical lens, through which one is able to understand the rise of the alternative repertoires of actions. Although we touched upon these issues, we indicate aspects of the social and solidarity economy and commons only partially, without completely incorporating their framework. In other words, we relied more heavily on the descriptive usage of these frameworks rather than on their
analytical strength. Due to this, we recommend future researchers who wish to study the service-oriented repertoires of action, to do so by fully taking advantage of the analytical dimensions of social and solidarity economy and the commons. Post-capitalist approaches, such as Gibson-Graham’s (1996) work on diverse economies, might be a good start. Although it might risk missing the elements of contention and disruption as revealed here, it increases the possibilities for a more detailed understanding of the interaction between grassroots organizations and official institutions.

Apart from suggesting a different analytical framework, we call on future inquiries to pay attention to specific issues that have been stressed here but not studied in detail. Our research design has focused on specific organizations, topics and moments. Therefore, research on other service-oriented organizations, other topics, such as education and housing, or other moments, such as the 2015 refugee “crisis” or the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, will provide new insight and enable a richer narrative of the operation of the alternative repertoires.

Restrictions in terms of the sample, not only relate to the content of the repertoires but also to their local setting, since the field research was carried out in the two major cities of Athens and Thessaloniki, complemented by some organizations from Crete. This enabled the thorough exploration of the boundary enlargement process. However, it restricted the narrative of its application in relatively major urban centres and relatively middle-class neighbourhoods. The study of the alternative repertoires is not limited to sociologists or political scientists. Over the last years, a great stream of anthropological research has drawn attention to the issues of solidarity and sociality by exploring in-depth the internal operation of the service-oriented organizations (Cabot, 2016; Rakopoulos, 2016; Rozakou, 2016; Theodossopoulos, 2016). However, these, too, have focused either on the major cities of Athens, Thessaloniki, and Patra, or on the Aegean islands where the increasing flows of people during the so-called refugee “crisis” resulted in a parallel increase of service-oriented solidarity structures. The operation of the service-oriented organizations in relatively poor and popular districts, as well as in provincial towns, make for interesting subjects of future inquiry. This is not only for the sake of comparison. Rather, it is important to understand the way in which the service-oriented repertoires fit into settings with different levels of politicization and engagement in collective action, settings which have been affected on different levels by austerity, as well as to see what type of implications the different social classes may have on the development of the boundary enlargement process.
Bibliography


