

Abstract Proposal

Solidarity Groups Actions and Claims during the Economic Crisis in Greece.

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The current economic crisis imposed significantly on the everyday needs for a considerable part of the Greek population. Austerity-stricken Greece is characterized by the collapse of the welfare state and by increasingly uncovered basic needs. To confront this humanitarian problem thousands formal and informal initiatives and organizations organized solidarity actions, such as barter networks, food banks, consumers – producers networks, soup kitchens, new cooperatives, social economy enterprises, free legal advice etc. Despite those organizations' role in covering needs there are also signs that they make claims for social or political change. Under this light, these actions might also be seen as political claims and actions.

According to the recent literature, the emergence of solidarity and alternative groups is probably connected with social movements, collective action and in many cases is related to political and environmental activism. This paper aims to map and analyze the groups and initiatives which are engaged with solidarity actions, which are alternatives to dominant socio-economic and cultural practices, in Greece in times of economic crisis. It will investigate their socio-political profile, their actions and practices, their beneficiaries, the type of rights and needs they address, and the values under which they act. It is furthermore interested in offering preliminary evidence on whether such initiatives make claims for social change, and if they do, to which extent can these actions be classified as a social movement.

The paper offers fresh empirical data provided by the research project “LIVEWHAT* — LIVING WITH HARD TIMES, How Citizens React to Economic Crises and Their Social and Political Consequences”, under Work Package 6 Alternative Forms of Resilience. The method applied is Alternative Action Organization Analysis (AAOA), an innovative content analysis approach deriving from protest event and political claims analysis, created for the needs of the project, which uses online media sources.

*EC FP7, <http://www.livewhat.unige.ch/>