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Challenging the Commons“

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1. INTRODUCTION

Demonstrations are raging in Lebanon and Iraq since the autumn of 2019. Huge movements against these countries' political systems, actors and economic deprivation, have brought civil society to the streets. The Protesters demand that the political elite is replaced and that new economic measures are introduced. When protests end, certain questions are especially interesting in pursuing such as how does society continue to enforce and implement their receivables? What happens after the protest movements? Do certain groups pursue their political engagement? And if so, how and in what fields? Do the protests empower the activists to change their lives or do they return to their lives as before the protest movements? Do the activists attitudes towards the state change? These questions inspired me to research the activities of civil society in Greece through a fieldtrip to Athens and Thessaloniki from 28.02.18-15.03.18. How civil society reacted when austerity measures hit them and how they continue their actions of protest were the driving questions during my trip to Greece.

Ten years after the financial crisis, The European Institutions, on August 20, 2018 proclaimed the 'end of the Greek crisis' as the loans by the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) and the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) officially expired (Consilium Europa: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/de/policies/financial-assistance-eurozone-members/greece-programme/timeline/>. 23.11.18). The European Institutions cast a positive external image of Greece with rising GDP growth rate, (the real GDP increased by 2.1% in 2017), even though Greece with their GDP of 27967 US dollar per capita still is among the European countries with the lowest GDP (OECD: <https://data.oecd.org/greece.htm>. 23.11.18). Greece was declared financially autonomous, by however this should be viewed critically as the country is still in debt to the European level, the control by the Eurogroup has not ended (ESM: <https://www.esm.europa.eu/press-releases/explainer-efsf-medium-term-debt-relief-measures-greece>. 23.11.18) and a post-programme surveillance will take place in the country over the next few years. However, foreign investors should be attracted as the positive sentiment, should bring back confidence in the financial markets regarding the Euro and Greece itself as a valuable financial and economic investment opportunity. This narrative which derives from a European institutional level is juxtaposed to the perspective of the Greek population. The in-depth interviews with members of the grassroots-movements conducted by the author in spring of 2018 in Athens and in Thessaloniki revealed a demoralized attitude

towards politics and negative expectations regarding Greece's economic future. The population still suffers from the aftermath of the austerity measures imposed by the European institutions and the International Monetary Fund. The social welfare state is still reduced to a minimum and the economic situation has not improved recognisably for the workers. The unemployment rate of 21.5% in 2017 illustrates this point (OECD: <https://data.oecd.org/greece.htm>. 23.11.18). To put it into a perspective: in 2017 Austria had an unemployment rate of 5.5% (OECD: <https://data.oecd.org/austria.htm>. 23.11.18). The striking disparity between the two converse narratives is a fact rarely discussed in academia or in mainstream media.

Numerous scientific papers have explained the institutional aspect, different political reactions and what roles the European Institutions and financial organisations such as the IMF played in the context of the financial crisis in 2011. This depiction of the crisis highlights the institutional aspect, which is the main causative agent. However, viewing the crisis through the lens of critical political economy, reveals that the financial and political class holds the hegemony in Europe. Counter-hegemonic forces that want to change the system the hegemonic class has implemented, gather in the area of civil society, as it is their last refuge.

If civil society actors are the loser of the institutional games which eventually leads to crises such as the one in 2011, it is time to highlight their role, their perspectives and their reactions to crises. Shifting the focus from the institutions to civil society, without denying their causative role, brings out the active element of civil actors and deconstructs their victimhood. Their resilience and their ideas for a better world should, however, not be romanticised. The possibilities for participation and the expected annulation of the austerity measures and neoliberal, economic restructuring measures did not, for example, eventuate with the election of the left-wing party SYRIZA in Greece.

According to the interviewees, their decisive point in becoming active were the anti-austerity protests in 2008 and 2011 and their reasons for further engagement. The author tried to find people or groups to interview who continued their engagement after 2011 as the author wanted to explore in what fields they are engaged and what goals, values and hopes are underlying their endeavours. The research was designed in an open manner. Various groups and initiatives were searched in order to cover as many perspectives as possible. After the interviews, the areas of engagements and their similarities and differences were analysed (in the chapter on methods and methodology the procedure will be explained in more detail).

Several methods were used in this thesis: thirteen unstructured interviews, one group discussion and seven participant observations were conducted. The methodology of the Grounded Theory was utilised, the interviews were coded, and categories were created.

In the main part of this thesis (4.1-4.4), four categories which describe the values, goals and field of actions of the initiatives will be described: the collective political engagement, the role of communities, the spatial articulation of the initiatives and their claims to urban commons and the ideas of economic transformation, situated in the field of social solidarity economy.

The theory section of this research will therefore elaborate on the history of civil society (e.g. Kaene 2003), as well as its relation to the state (e.g. Ostrom 1990) and the market sphere (e.g. Cox 1998). In the chapter on spatial articulation the concept of the commons, focusing on the urban and productive commons (e.g. Lefebvre 2003; Harvey 2012), will undergird the actions by the initiatives which were interviewed, such as urban gardens, creative spaces etc. The claim to have the right to be economically engaged, is discussed and explained with the examples of several cooperatives/collaboratives in the same chapter.

The research questions that were in the back of my mind during the interviews were the following: How can an alternative system that does not lack equity be created? How do social movements evolve? What branches and ideologies project what image of the future? What possibilities or burdens should or shouldn't the state have? What groups are the most active? What similarities can be detected in the groups? How is transformation possible? The research questions were deliberately vague, as the interviews were unstructured, and the interviewees could elaborate on the topics most important to them. The research questions, therefore evolved, and some turned out to be irrelevant and new ones developed. In the end, the following research question guided the analysis of the research in this thesis:

What transformative potential did the anti-austerity protest release and how did civil society actors continue to articulate their claims – politically and spatially?

How did levels of trust in civil society change (as a reaction to the recession)?

2. THEORY

This research focuses on civil society, which is why a theoretical embedding of this concept is necessary. In the following, the term and its' historical changes will be contextualised. The difficulties arising with the concept civil society and how the interviewees themselves interpret the term, will be discussed in this chapter. It is written from the standpoint of the critical political economy and is based in the concept of 'Critical Realism'. In this conception, knowledge should be produced critically and should have the ambition to promote political and social emancipation (Puehretmayer 2013: 217.). Being developed as a counter movement to positivistic approaches, this thesis follows the cognitive interest of socially constructed realities.

The theoretical focus of this research is civil society. However, this term has a long history and is broadly discussed among scientists. The understanding of the concept has a long tradition and changed over time. Misuse or different connotations of the term are possible as the definition is vague. Moreover, in each language 'civil society' has a different connotation. In this research the focus will be on the English word and history of the term. The German perspective ('Bürgergesellschaft') will be left out as the main language of this research is English and concentrates on few Greek expressions. In each language and in each time the meaning of the word differed (Kocka 2004:67). The chosen approach targets the European perspective to civil society as this research is based in Greece. However, it should not be forgotten that this view is rather euro-centristic and that other understandings of the functioning of civil society exist. A short outlook on some of these theories can be found at the end of this chapter. The approach used in this study derives from an emancipatory and critical perspective and uses an empirical analysis to describe the transformations going on in the Greek civil society (Fein, Matzke 1997:17). However, to be able to understand the term and its connotations today, it is important to have a brief insight into the historic discourse on civil society.

2.1 Roots and changing philosophical interpretations of civil society

"The term 'civil society' has a long history, tracing back to the *societas civilis* in Aristotelian tradition" (Kocka 2004:66). Aristotle interpreted this term as building communities and the consolidation of civilians to create a political civil society, called 'polis'. According to Aristotle, the polis is by its nature a community of citizens who unit for realizing the good and virtuous life. The civil society or community is considered identical with the state (Fein, Matzke 1997:10).

Another revival of the concept of civil society was in the phase of enlightenment process in Europe in the 17th and 18th century. In the English language this term had a rather positive connotation (Kocka 2004:67). It stood for the utopian plan for future civilizations and slowly acknowledged as a synonym of an anti-state and anti-absolutist attitude (Kocka 2004:66).

Instead of romanticising these thoughts on civil society, the next abstract will entail on the one hand a short summary of important intellectuals in the field of civil society and on the other hand a critical reflection rather than an encompassing analysis of their visions. Furthermore, the differentiation of various abstract concepts of civil society, such as civil society and its relation to the state and the private sphere as well as to the economic area, will be presented.

One of the first European intellectuals who is mentioned in the advent of civil society is Tocqueville. Even though he was fascinated by the American growth of civil society in the 19th and democratic institutions, he connected this development to the Christian faith (Kaene 2007:31). As it came to the colonialization of Algeria, he was a strong advocate for the expansion of France and supported the subjection of Muslims, as he regarded them to be minor due to their faith (Kaene 2007:31). This racist and colonial attitude cannot be left aside.

Hegel's perception of civil society was linked to the rise of the "modern West", as well. (Kaene 2007:11). The "[...] historically produced sphere of ethical life anchored between the simple world of the patriarchal household and the complex governing institutions of the modern state", was the "grazing ground of the middle class of male property-owning citizens (Bürgerstand)" (Kaene 2007:11). Opposed to Hegel's concept of family as a sphere of harmony (which he linked to his patriarchal understanding of women as individuals mainly of feeling), in civil society individual interests clash and, in this way, it destroys its own pluralism (Kaene 2007:11). Therefore, constant state and legal supervision is needed to steer and channel civil

society endeavours: "Civil society is a mosaic of private individuals, classes, groups and institutions whose multiple transactions are regulated by civil law and, as such, are not directly dependent upon the political state itself" (Keane 2007:11).

Max Weber stood in a tradition with Tocqueville regarding their view on civil society as being indispensable for functioning democratic institutions (Pollack 2003:52). Both, being advocates for the pluralism theory, are often mentioned together with Robert Putnam. He underlines the need of a functioning civil society to have efficient regulatory and bureaucratic institutions, as well as for a flourishing market economy (Pollack 2003:52).

As shortly presented in this chapter the concept changed several times and is often used as an area for political power negotiations. Civil society was the symbol for positive and utopian concepts in the 17th and 18th century and slowly was interpreted and used as a concept against absolutist power. In the 20th century the concept was framed as an anti-state unit against dictatorships. In the 1980ties the term had a renaissance. Its critique towards dictatorship changed towards an anti-capitalistic approach (Kocka 2004:66f.).

2.2 State and civil society

This leads to the question of the relationship between the state and civil society. The negotiation process and connection between the private and the public sphere, between the family, the state and the economy are interwoven. Various perspectives enlighten different aspects of these interrelations. To continue with the approach of Hegel:

"The ideal state is not a radical negation of a natural condition in perpetual war (Hobbes, Spinoza), an instrument for conserving and completing natural society (Locke, Pufendorf) or a simple mechanism for administering a naturally given, automatically self-governing civil society (Georg Forster). Hegel rather conceived the state as a new moment that contains, preserves and synthesizes the conflicting elements of civil society into a higher ethical entity" (Keane 2005:13).

The connection and the nourishing, dialectic effects of civil society and the state should not be dissolved in Hegel's opinion. He emphasises the participatory character of democratic institutions. However, the rational character underlying this conception can be criticised, as a fully objective and homogenous legislative apparatus is not existent. The social democratic view of the state towards the society would also be a regulatory and supporting. A strong state and a well working civil society are complementary.

From a (neo-)liberal point of view criticism is uttered that competitiveness is being diminished. State surveillance and state intervention in social tasks are rejected. By cutting the interference, civic engagement will prosper (Pollack 2003:47). Civil society organisations are, therefore, pushed into non-economic and self-sustaining domains. Civil society is seen as an opponent of the state. The liberal view of a restrained state versus the social democratic perspective of a strong state are opposed to each other. The renaissance of the concept of civil society, nowadays, could derive from the crippling capacities of the regulatory element of the political system. With the social state being under pressure because of the widening income gap and the changing labour market, for example, democratic institutions are obliged to take action and they have to justify their legitimization (Pollack 2003:46).

Another controversial view on civil society is that it takes over the burdens and duties of the state. "Almost always, when socio-political problems are identified that cannot be mastered with conventional instruments of state regulation or direct intervention, civil society is introduced sooner or later as the solution" (Münkler 2007:92). Civil society as a remedy of a collapsed system, as it is the case for Greece, is an easy answer for the problems that were ignored or worsened by national and international politics. Romanticising the possibilities and capacities of civil society would mean to neglect the political task to change their political decisions. Not only is the concept of civil society idealized, but it is also added a normative aspect.

"Whereas the development of a liberal state under the rule of law since the nineteenth century has been characterized by a progressive formalization of the concept of the citizen and a reduction in the qualifications needed for one to be a citizen, the political concept of a civil society is clearly connected to a 'requalification' of the concept" (Münkler 2007:93).

Being an active or competent citizen is linked to the level of political engagement and has a normative component. The burden of these expectations has to be seen critically, as in a market economy the state should not be suspended from its tasks. On top of that, if the concept of 'good/civil citizens' exists, the reverse image of a citizens is present as well – the 'bad citizen'. Keeping in mind that in times of colonialism the term "civil" and "to civilize" was used to justify the violent subjection of an uncountable amount of people, the term 'active citizen' should be reflected and used critically. However, Münkler gave an example of a positive definition of an 'active citizen' to make civil society prosper: "The citizen is, instead, someone aware of the value and preconditions of coexistence based on political participation and social

solidarity, someone who knows the burdens of self-government and accepts them, fully aware of the long-term negative consequences of refusing to accept them" (Münkler 2007:94).

Coming back to the welfare mechanism of a state: the question whether strong welfare states suppress civil action and involvement(engagement?), can be denied. If welfare states function properly, they are even generators for common good orientation and civic spirit (Münkler 2007: 97). The Scandinavian model is an example for this (Pollack 2003:54). The state is not a barrier for the blossoming of civic engagement but can be a platform for building linkages between citizens and mediate politicians and the citizens to formulate and implement more effective policies. Habermas, however, identifies the civil society being the stage for the negotiation of problems which arise from social problems or the private sphere. Addressing social challenges on a political level is the power of civil society (Pollack 2003:53). In this example, civil society is the area where citizens actively engage in formulating policies.

It should be mentioned that most civil society organisation are active in their national borders. Exceptions are international movements, like for example the anti-globalisation movements. However, according to Kocka, civil society organisations mainly operate in the nation-state framework (Kocka 2004:76). How this is partly true for Greece will be described in chapters of the empirical work. It cannot be generalised that the initiatives only operate in the national border of Greece. It should be kept in mind that hegemony is coerced internationally. The side effect is the development of an international civil society, as well. This topic, however, cannot be covered by this thesis. It will only be shown that transnational networks are maintained and collective action is evident in the initiatives which were visited during the field trip.

The discussion about the welfare state and the limits of the state lead to a dilemma of left-wing advocates: "Because of the crisis of state, the left wing has lost the main addressee of its political demands and proposals. As a result, it is precisely from the ranks of the left that dramatic and exaggerated expectations are occasionally projected onto civil society" (Münkler 2007:92). This is a very common discourse in Greece, especially after the SYRIZA government has not fulfilled the wishes of left-wing voters and the trust in political institutions is already very low. It should be kept in mind that civil society cannot be the remedy for poor governance (Hularias 2015:23).

2.3 Economy/the market & the relation towards civil society

The understanding of civil society in relation to the market, or in other terms the economy, was not always portrayed as opponent spheres. In the 18th century market and civil society were the same and functioned as opposed arenas to the state. Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson had similar ideas of civil society due to their role and participation in economic life (Kocka 2004:68). "In the Scottish Enlightenment, Adam Smith and others had earlier noted the [...] problem: market societies can only become 'civil societies' if and when they cultivate norms of politeness and moral improvement through policies of charity and welfare towards the poor" (Kaene 2005:21). What is left aside in this manner is the reason for social inequalities. The focus on inequalities occurred in the 20th century, and step by step civil society was constructed as opposed to market and capitalism. Münkler focused on market mechanisms which generate social dysfunctions:

"While drawing attention to the political dangers linked to the overuse and abuse, [Münkler] proposes that a politics of civil society can draw attention to the fact that the best antidote to both these social dysfunctions and governmental sclerosis is the 'willingness of citizens to display social solidarity engagement'" (Kaene 2005:22).

2.4 Gramsci's view on civil society

An intellectual who wrote down his thoughts on social inequalities or bargaining social rights with political instrumentalization and the sphere of market, was Antonio Gramsci. The struggle of civil society which is going on in Greece cannot be allocated exclusively in the area of politics. However, the problems occur in the economic sphere and affect civil society, as well. The overarching theories by Gramsci help to analyse the underlining conflicts in Greece, Europe and on a global level. His ideas cannot be transferred one to one to the situation today, but should always be reflected as an interpretation of his time and his thoughts on the political situation of Italy during the Fascist era and his time in prison. On the one hand, it is important to reflect his writings as historical analysis of the interwar period. On the other hand, with extracting the underlying abstract concept, another level of interpretation regarding the crisis in Greece and Europe occurs.

Gramsci rejected economic determinism. Instead, he focused on the revolutionary power and negotiation processes of civil society. Even though he never explicitly gave a definition of civil or political society (Vasilis 2013:7), it is a crucial actor when it comes to

hegemonial endeavour of the ruling class and class struggles in general (Vasilis 2013:2). For Gramsci civil society is a sphere where hegemony is exercised (Buttigieg 1995:8). The struggle over political power is crucial. Civil society is the terrain in which this contest for hegemony is taking place: "The site of hegemony is civil society; in other words, civil society is the arena wherein the ruling class extends and reinforces its power by non-violent means" (Buttigieg 2013:26). It is therefore no neutral zone. Once hegemony is achieved, consent for cultural and ideological ideas is enforced.

"Education, culture, the widespread organization of knowledge and experience constitute the independence of the masses from the intellectuals. The most intelligent phase of the struggle against the despotism of career intellectuals and against those who exercise authority by divine right consists in the effort to enrich culture and heighten consciousness" (Gramsci Prison notebooks; In: Buttigieg 2013:20).

Therefore, culture is the ideological tool to realize the goals of the bourgeois class. It is not a static condition, nor exclusively the result of cultural dominance (Vasilis 2013:4). According to Gramsci, the bourgeois class has won the struggle over hegemony. It reproduces its hegemony by presenting its special interests as general interests and by exercising its direct dominance through the state or through its hegemony over civil society and culture (Vasilis 2013:5). Hegemony can be described as the ability to unify and to maintain an untied civil society via ideology, even though it is not homogenous, but, is characterized by deep class contradictions (Vasilis 2013:5). Hegemony is coerced through the state as well. The interests of some subordinated groups are marginalized. For subordinated communities, civil society is the space to gather and organize themselves, to establish counter hegemonic activities and to form a counter hegemonic bloc (Katz 2006:336). As Pollack stated, civil society is just one part of society but does not represent all facets of society. Moreover, it is neither a collective actor, nor homogenous, nor does it have a centre or is it a rational and calculating entity (Pollack 2003:51f.).

Buttigieg describes the institutions of civil society, such as (political) newspapers, science, the church etc. as the "material structure of ideology". If a social group becomes hegemonic, it means that it has acquired control over the politico-juridical apparatus of the state, permeated the institutions of civil society and has taken over the leadership of the cultural zone (Buttigieg 1995:27). For Gramsci, the moderates won the competition over the ideological hegemony and he argues that it did not arise from direct struggle over power but "from their place and function within civil society" (Buttigieg 1995:21). Through the state, the

dominant classes enforce their dominance within the civil society and at the same time achieve their consent (Katz 2006:336).

Those classes embedded capitalism as the norm and as the dominant ideology which penetrates the economic system and the sphere of civil society, as well. Civil society becomes an extend of the state and spreads through diffusing political and cultural assimilation the ruling ideas and creates consensus (Katz 2006:335). A so-called passive revolution is implemented by the dominant classes if they allow certain "freedoms" of self-expression, however maintaining the consent to the current relations of force (Katz 2006:335).

"This reasoning relates directly to the current hegemony of neoliberalism, with the backing of the United States as the dominant state, as well as a host of other states, interstate, and non-state actors (such as the European Union, World Trade Organization, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund) forming a historic bloc, which inevitably co-opts the major organizations in the global civil society, and uses them to promote its agenda under a cloak of openness" (Katz 2006:335).

Maglaras Vasilis gives further examples how this hegemony is implemented in civil society: "The church, the unions, the broader civil society's union with their multiple goals reproduce the ideological dominance of the bourgeois class and extract the consent of the workers to the capitalist manner of production" (Vasilis 2013:2).

In this understanding the state is the embodiment of power and could be a thread to freedom as it might enter the private sphere as well. The latter is the space where freedom can be exercised. Opposed to the private sphere, in civil society individuals go beyond their individual fights for their own interests and encompass the life of the community (Vasilis 2013:4). This sphere can serve as a creative space and collective basin for subaltern groups. From there, through education, the marginalized groups can form a counter-hegemony to become a counter hegemonic block. Cox argues that a hegemony of global capital can only be developed within the auspices of a global civil society (Katz 2006:336). The topic of global civil society will be elaborated in the chapter 'economic transformation' on international networks. Furthermore, Gramsci differentiates the state into two main elements: the political society and the civil society. These subsystems contain the "the system of political rule and the system of civil society" (Fuchs 2005:112). In Gramsci's perspective, political parties, the parliament, ministries, courts and the military are subsumed under 'political actors' and all non-parliamentary groups are assigned to the sphere of civil society.

Gramsci was convinced that a counter hegemonic bloc can evolve bottom-up from civil society. Therefore, a coalition of forces needs to be established: "The alliances developed in mobilizing counter-hegemony must extend beyond classes, to include various social forces – an alliance of class and social-democratic groupings" (Katz 2006:336). However, several conditions have to be reached to set up the right conditions for hegemonic change: for Katz, organisation, networking and a coalition of disadvantaged groups are one of them. A second factor is an ideological turn, a social democratic ideology which counters the neoliberal agenda of the existing hegemony. And the third aspect is an action integrating intellectual and political struggles at several levels, from local to global.

"But civil society a-la Gramsci is also where leadership and movement from below can emerge, when deprivation is mobilized through consciousness, and a revolution can be attempted" (Katz 2006:336). Dominant hegemonic forces might prevent the formation of a counter hegemonic bloc (Katz 2006:338). However, there are factors which can weaken civil society, for example cultural decay or the impoverishment of cultural life, weakness of political parties, personal conflicts instead of serious politics and universities that are penetrated by parties (Buttigieg 1995:31).

Gramsci's understanding of civil society is therefore a dialectic one, as it is penetrated by ideas of the dominant class and is at the same time able to organise a counter hegemonic bloc. This can be explained as a simultaneous double movement within civil society (Katz 2006:345). The idea of forming counter-hegemonic institutions and establish a different concept of state were Gramsci's and Karl Polanyi's vision (Buttigieg 1995:14). The continuation and systematic development of workers organisations and local bodies would be inherited in the new model of socialist state. The goal is to de-centre the bourgeois state and to increase autonomy of local and trade unions acting beyond the reach of the old regulatory laws (Buttigieg 1995:14). "Gramsci insisted adamantly that the revolutionary transformation of society starts in civil society, and, ideally or theoretically at least, it is not fully accomplished until the extension of civil society is so complete that it no longer needs a coercive apparatus to protect" (Buttigieg 1995:19). If the counter hegemony is successful and implements its own rules, according to Gramsci, another counter hegemony will immediately be formed. Gramsci overestimated the possibilities of revolutionary activities of his time (Buttigieg 1995:12) and this mistake should not be repeated nowadays, as capitalism is still the dominant narrative almost worldwide.

Gramsci's convictions on economy were as well strongly influenced by the observation of Italy's southern economy which was dominated by the north. He called to end protectionist policies, which he spotted as one of the main factors for the misery and exploitation of the peasants in the South. He called for an economic system that is partially autonomous from political and ideological power of the state (Vasilis 2013:69). Nevertheless, these recommendations derive from a certain political and economic situation in the interwar period in Italy. The transferability is therefore questionable. A striking difference between Marx and Gramsci is Gramsci's perspective on the disentanglement of the concept of civil society from the concept of economic interaction (Vasilis 2013:1).

2.5 Civility

Baumgarten, Gosewinkel and Rucht analyse in their paper from 2011 the term 'civility'. Norbert Elias described it as an internalised control over affects and the satisfaction of needs and goes along the reduction of the use of violence (Baumgarten, Gosewinkel, Rucht 2011: 289). Dimensions of civility are human, political and social rights, non-codified norms and practices of everyday interaction ((Baumgarten, Gosewinkel, Rucht 2011:294). The question which arises in this context, however, is who defines who will be included to civil society. If civility is a requirement for the inclusion in civil society, then a process of "othering" is implemented and should be seen critically (Baumgarten, Gosewinkel, Rucht 2011:303). Norbert Elias is accused to have a Eurocentric perspective and does not include other types of daily interaction and social behaviour into his analysis ((Baumgarten, Gosewinkel, Rucht 2011:301). This creates a normative ideal of social behaviour.

However, let us begin with the general understanding of the concept of civil society before revealing Western ideas of 'civility'. According to Baumgarten, Gosewinkel and Rucht, civil society can either be seen as a space for social action, a form of social interaction or a type of collective action (civil sociality). The space or sphere of social action is the intermediate area between the state, the economy and the private sphere or the family (Kocka 2004:66). The areas are connected. One could also argue that civil society is the space in which political and economic endeavours are articulated, or, as Gramsci would claim, the space in which hegemony is implemented by the dominant class.

However, not only is the area of action important, but the form of social interactions that shape and define civil society. The normative values that are mentioned in this context are

independence, tolerance, non-violence, cultural norms, values and daily behaviour. This explanation is very actor-centred and is partially based on an individualistic view of the concept (Baumgarten, Gosewinkel, Rucht 2011:302). The types of social action can be as well non-conflict, oriented towards the commons and compromise (Kocka 2006: 68).

Civic involvement is nowadays one of the requirements to the concept of civility. The 'active' or 'competent' citizen has a strong normative component and one can only acquire these skills through civic education:

"The citizen is [...] someone aware of the value and preconditions of coexistence based on political participation and social solidarity, someone who knows the burdens of self-government and accepts them, fully aware of the long-term negative consequences of refusing to accept them" (Münkler 2007:94).

Nevertheless, civil society should not be romanticised as a free sphere and democratic actions. First, civil society is not a homogenous, collective actor which has a direct political power to act. Nor does it have a centre or can be steered centrally (Pollack 2003:51). Private and public interest are transcending. Furthermore, civil society can have anti-democratic traits or politics can be hampered by exuberant civil society engagement (Pollack 2003:54).

2.6 Critiques of the eurocentristic concept of civil society

Nowadays normative values which are attributed to active citizens are increasing (Münkler 2007:93). However, one should be cautious seeing civil society as the birthplace of high values. This is followed by the question of who belongs to the group of civil-society, who is excluded from this and who sets up which criteria for the definition.

'Civility', in the understanding of Baumgarten, Gosewinkel and Rucht, means the recognition of the other which can be practised in different ways, through different institutions and different daily interactions or articulations of political ambitions (Baumgarten, Gosewinkel, Rucht 2011:305). Speaking positively about civil society and civility, they can be defined as "[.] going beyond fighting for their own interests and encompass the life of the community as a whole" (Vasilis 2013:4).

However, the negative connotations with these concepts cannot be left aside. "[.] '[C]ivil society' is not just a geographically specific concept with pseudo-universal pretensions; [..][but], it has a strong elective affinity to 'the West', and even potentially plays the role of an agent of Western power and influence in the world" (Kaene 2005:30). The word civil

society itself includes the normative component of 'civil'. To civilize is strongly related to the subjection of people during the times of colonisation (Baumgarten, Gosewinkel, Rucht 2011:289). This ethnocentrism and the concept of civility was used as an imperative and ruthless legitimization by the conquerors.

"The concept of civility is inherent in that of civilisation and bears the same historical burden. Civilisation was used to distinguish 'civilised' European societies from their colonies. These were characterised as 'uncivil', 'primitive' or 'barbarian'. Accordingly, dichotomies were brought into play to justify civilising missions and imperialism" (Baumgarten, Gosewinkel, Rucht 2011:301).

Romanticising the concept of civil society trivialises the historical burden and the risks of attributing certain values to peoples' actions. "[.]U]ntil now the history of civil society has also been the history of the dominance of one social group over others, the history of groups that remain fragmented, subordinated, and excluded from power" (Buttigieg 1995: 29). Therefore, the concept of civil society is strongly connected to power and dependencies. "[.]T]he language of civil society is the fact that European talk of civil society originally presupposed and required the disempowerment or outright crushing of others elsewhere in the world" (Kaene 2005:31).

Looking at the example of Greece and at the presentation of the financial crisis in Greece by Western European Politicians as well as by Western European media, common people were blamed, instead of disclosing the manifold political and economic malfunctions and the complex system of dependencies that were created.

"The worst branding has been used, debasing them to abject civil societies of corrupt and lazy people, legitimating assaults against social movements by the police, with tear gas if not with weapons. [...] The reproduction of 'weak' civil societies under possessive neoliberalism is thus achieved by a blend of coercion, propaganda, quasi-Orientalism and constant surveillance against any kind of spontaneous movement and popular creativity" (Leontidou 2015:96).

This judgement, however, is not a new phenomenon regarding the perception of the Mediterranean. Mediterranean cities have been presented as preindustrial and were set on a similar level with African cities (Leontidou 2015:91). This shows the strongly eurocentristic approach. Of course, the two geographic and cultural sites are not comparable on any level. Instead, it shows that everything which is not fitting to Western concepts will be disparaged

and constructed as "the other", "the enemy" or the "under-developed". These arguments have racist traces and are perpetuated today. The Western conception of civil society only regards those as the 'civil society' who behave according to Western norms. Otherwise, their transformative potential is ignored or even downgraded. "[.]Eurocentrism, by applying the Western understanding of civility in a naive and rigid way to non-Western societies" (Baumgarten, Gosewinkel, Rucht 2011:305).

This is closely connected to the concept of Orientalism by Edward Said. "Indeed, my real argument is that Orientalism is - and does not simply represent - a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with 'our' world" (Said 1995:12). German media mostly blamed the Greek civil society for the Greek debts. The presentation of the "lazy Greeks" says little about Greeks themselves, but hints towards the ideological imperialism and the strategic political coloration of the crisis to justify the austerity measures. As the complexity of the origin of the debts is hard to display, populist, simplified and even incorrect explanations are served.

Another trait of the concept of 'civil society' is the western presupposition that other forms of civic interactions cannot exist or are ignored and not acknowledged. Baumgarten, Gosewinkel and Rucht, for example, mention the Indian caste system and the Chinese concept of harmony as unities that differ from western imaginations of civil society. For instance, restricting the freedom of speech to not endanger the unity of a community is in contrast to individualistic concepts that prioritise the individual well-being over more collective values (Baumgarten, Gosewinkel, Rucht 2011:302f.).

Shalini Randeria is one of the scholars advocating that different forms of civil society have to be recognised and accepted. She presents, for instance, three different versions of civil society in India: the traditionalist concept which calls for 'human governance' strengthening indigenous traditions of mutual aid and conflict resolution; the modernist approach in which civil society is a sphere of voluntary associations used as buffer zones between the individual and governmental institutions and, last but not least, a modern attitude which sees civil society as a "plurality of secular and inclusive institutions that enjoy considerable autonomy from state power" (Kaene 2005: 32).

2.7 Explanation of the terms used

In this thesis the term ‘civil society organisation’ will be used to describe the conjunctions of active Greek people who decided to work either for social transformation, political or economic transformation. Their lowest common denominator is the will to take different actions in these areas. The term non-governmental or non-profit organisation will not be used. The explanations are rather developed out of the analyses of the initiatives than being an outcome of a scientific discourse. Their self-attribution, however, did not comprehend the term civil society organisation. The term mentioned was not even mentioned once by the interviewees. Instead, they used “initiative” or ‘association’ to describe their organisation. Non-governmental was not used as they do not solely focus on counter-governmental actions. Even though most of the actions are very political and do address social and governmental challenges or shortcomings, their focus is on building a resilient civil society to be more independent from governmental or economic nuisances. If they speak about their relationship towards the government or European institutions, they mainly highlight the wish for financial independence from these institutions.

Moreover, the term non-profit organisation is also not used. The dissociation of profit, especially profits for the purpose of enriching oneself and secure oneself, is rejected by the initiatives which were interviewed. Instead, their actions, no matter if it they economic endeavours or are pursued for other goals, are designed to have various impacts and always have a benefit for a group of people, rather than serving individualistic interests.

The term ‘collective’ was used several times. In this case, the interviewees stressed the collective action and the group building process, which undermines the departures from an individualistic narrative. The term ‘commune’, however, was strictly rejected as well. Further explanations for this argument will be carried out in the section ‘Creating Communités’.

Following the arguments of the interviewees and taking the analysis of the interviews into account, the term ‘civil society organisation’, as well being aware of the historical and political roots of this term as stated above, will be used alongside the term ‘initiative’ and ‘collective’. These represent, on the one side, the description of the interviewees and on the other hand, represent the scientific background which accompanies this thesis.

What are the connections to Greece regarding different manners of civic action? In the main part of this thesis several ways of civic engagement will be presented, and which are opposed to Western norms or neoliberal norms.

3. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The choice for a qualitative research design was taken to gain insights into the various initiatives in Greece, into their practices of cooperation, their ideologies and their strategies within the group, and further to discuss their external communication and actions. According to Flick, the findings of this thesis can only be classified as a snapshot at the point of the research, during the field trip in March 2018 (Flick 2007:255). Along with ongoing changes in the political landscape the grassroot organisations might adjust their conduct and attitude, especially as many of the initiatives are politically active (this characteristic is described in section 'collective political engagement').

This research follows an inductive research process (Charmaz 2011:181). The overall goal is not to make generalisations which can be directly transferred to other regions. The objective is rather to show a trend evolving from civil society, gaining ground in Greece and becoming well-known in the local population. These specific trends do not have to appear in the same way in other countries, however the potential of being spread and adopted by other initiatives are inherent in the ideas which are developed or redesigned in Greece.

The Grounded Theory will be used as the methodological framework. In applying its' tools and methods the academic proposition will be transparent and comprehensible (Steinke 2007:323ff.). The attempt is to critically reflect the research process. Therefore, a critical review on the research process will be embedded in each section.

The research trip to Athens and Thessaloniki was taken place on the 28.02.-15.03.18. The timetable of the trip with all information can be found at the end of this chapter.

3.1 Grounded Theory as a framework

With Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss publishing "The Discovery of Grounded Theory" in 1967 a new form of qualitative research was invented (Glaser; Strauss 1967). The reunification of the quantitative "cause and effect relations" to explain causal connections was a turning point for social sciences. Thereby, the integral approach and the various methods led to a better understanding, rather than just explanations of social and political phenomena and discourses in each context (Dannecker; Englert 2014:9).

Donatella della Porta highlights that the Grounded Theory is still not applied frequently when it comes to social movement studies: "This neglect could be linked to the fact that scholars have seldom investigated some of the aspects that fit best with a grounded theory research strategy - perceptions, identities, emotions and more in general, cultural dimensions of protests [...]" (della Porta 2014:22). Therefore, this thesis will follow the methodology of the Grounded Theory to enrich social research studies and to promote Grounded Theory.

An open research format was chosen to include aspects mentioned by the interviewees. The aim was not to validate hypotheses, but to be able to break free from the subjective conceptualisations of the researcher and to have a better understanding of the concepts of the interviewees. Making the goals of the initiatives and the negotiation processes the subject of discussion, preconceived categories and objectives would hinder knowledge production (Strauss und Corbin 1996; Schultz 2014:92). The compilation of categories will be described in the coding section.

The empirical material forms the basic data interpreted by the researcher. How prior knowledge of the researcher influences the coding process is widely debated (Schultz 2014:76). "We construct research processes and products, but these constructions occur under pre-existing structural conditions, arise in emergent situations, and are influenced by the researcher' perspectives, privileges, positions, interactions, and geographical locations "(Charmaz 2014:240). The constructivist approach described by Charmaz is inherent in this research. As previous knowledge of the researcher cannot be ignored, self-reflection, by writing memos and keeping a research diary, helps to reveal preconceptions (Della Porta 2014:25).

3.1.1 Data Collection and Sampling

Data collection, data analysis and concept building accompanied by constant interpretation and data and category re-evaluation is an ongoing process (Reichertz 2010:224). It is important to mention that the continuous sampling is a reflective procedure influenced by the researchers' knowledge (Mattoni 2014:29).

The process of open/initial sampling describes the search for initiatives and interviewees before going on the field trip and marked the beginning of the research. Theoretical sampling is used as a parallel procedure to underpin the assumptions or to debunk them (Schultz 2014:80). This theoretical basis guides through the investigations and unfolds new aspects helping to select relevant information during the entire research process (Charmaz 2006).

During the phase of open sampling the search for initiatives and grassroots-movements was on the one hand performed via social media channels, as Facebook and internet websites. On the other hand two informal interviews were arranged with people living in Vienna having knowledge about social movements in Greece. The first interview partner was Lisa Mittendrein, on the 5th of February 2018. She is a member of the network Attac in Vienna (Attac Vienna. <https://www.attac.at/ueber-attac/was-ist-attac/wer-wir-sind/buero.html>. 05.12.2018.) and wrote a book about social solidarity economy in Greece in 2013. Contacts and first information about discourses and scientific issues which she couldn't cover in her thesis, helped to go further into detail. The second informal meeting on the 26th of February 2018 was with Konstantina Zoehrer a member of the Omnicron Project (Omnicron Project. <http://omikronproject.gr/>. 05.12.2018.), a small initiative which wanted to collect many of the grassroots movements and make them visible. She provided general information about the situation in Greece and more contacts to initiatives.

The assumption that many initiatives of social solidarity economy and grassroots movements which are active in the field of social transformation, are based in the two main urban areas, Athens and Thessaloniki, was supported by Lisa Mittendrein and Konstantina Zoehrer. It is important to mention, that bottom-up processes are happening in the countryside and on the islands of Greece, as well (Mittendrein 2013:109). However, due to time constraints these areas are not part of the analysis. The visited initiatives were contacted partly via information details from other initiatives, and partly via email or Facebook. One week was spent in Athens and one week in Thessaloniki. The exact timetable of the trip which was taken place in March 2018 is attached in the Appendix.

“And since the main outcome of grounded theory is to develop different levels of abstractions from the data, the researchers decide when to stop collecting data, and hence when they consider their final sample to be satisfactory, depending on when they are able to show that they have achieved some level of ‘theoretical saturation’ (Glaser and Strauss 1967) [...] – that is, when the conceptual categories elaborated during the research are sufficient to gather and analyse more data without the need to modify them any further” (Mattoni 2014:29).

The selection process followed several rules. The goal of this research is to show the variety of movements and to point out how they work, in which ways and how they want to shape social transformation. Therefore, the context was not narrowed down to specific fields of action. With the open research process, categories and codes were not determined in the

beginning, but evolved out of the circular coding process. The great diversity of activities reveal the transdisciplinary character of this research. However, some restrictions were applied during the selection process of the initiatives. An informal group as initial founders are crucial. Moreover, they should not be state-funded. It turned out that some of the initiatives are funded by the European Union, however, they were kept in the sample as this differs from state support. Further details on the role of financing can be found in the section 'productive commons'. The three main areas of interest were social transformation, collective political engagement and how civil society actors articulated their aspirations spatially. The role of agriculture is indeed very important in Greece (Mittendrein 2013: 106), however will be left out due to the reduction of complexity in this research. The focus will be on urban movements.

3.1.2 Triangulation

To include multiple viewpoints and to broaden the perspectives on bottom-up initiatives several different methods were used to collect the data. A combination of methods is beneficial to get an integral view on the grassroots initiatives and to achieve a deeper understanding of their activities. (Ayoub; Wallace; Zepeda-Millán 2014:67). Donatella della Porta states that specific methods can be fruitful for research: "[...] participant observation in social movement activities, including preparatory meetings, movement assemblies, and public protest; in-depth interviews with activists, including life histories, that might focus on different aspects related to mobilizations" (della Porta 2014:26). The following methods have been deployed: eleven in-depth interviews with activists, two expert interviews, one focus group discussion and nine participant observations. Details are attached in the Appendix.

3.2 Methods

3.2.1 Interviews

Thirteen unstructured interviews with members of the initiatives were conducted. Several different methods of interviewing were applied. The interviews are categorised as systematic expert-interviews (Dannecker; Vossemer 2014:162). Mainly the interviewees have been activists themselves and active in an initiative. Therefore, they are able to share knowledge about their projects. Even though this information is subjective, it is helpful as the focus of this research will be on the framing of the initiatives. With this practical knowledge the researcher gains insight into the processes. The systematic approach cannot be fully separated

from the theory-led expert-interview approach by Bogner and Menz (2005:36ff) which focus on the subjective dimension of the interviewees. "People's interpretation of reality" (della Porta 2014:258) contributes to theory testing and building and to understanding of the micro-dynamics and ideas of social transformation but does not have the objective to promote generalizations.

Two explorative interviews have been performed before the field trip in the explorative and conceptualizing phase (Dannecker; Vossemer 2014:162). Lisa Mittendrein and Konstantina Zoehrer were interviewed in February 2018 in Vienna. Both being experts in the field of social solidarity economy in Greece, helped me to obtain contextualized knowledge and an understanding of the specifics of researching in Greece in the context of social movements.

All interviews were conducted in an open, non-directive and flexible way (della Porta 2014:234). However, if certain aspects were not mentioned by the interviewees, a loose guideline was followed to address the main areas of interest of the research. Even though the neutrality of a researcher during the interview is generally required, this behaviour was not expected by the activists. They expected my subjective assessment of political or economic topics, otherwise they would have not been open or wouldn't have wanted even to share their knowledge and opinion. This exhibits the mistrust towards academia or journalists. With many academics and journalists coming to Greece to understand the crisis, the activists often experienced a sensational attitude of the interviewers. By only extracting knowledge and personal stories without giving anything in return, many protesters felt exploited. To ensure that nothing negative will be written about them, they now only give interviews to people who have a similar ideological background. This implies that the interview resembled a conversation where opinions were exchanged and it was expected from me to take an active role in the conversation. As consequence, the research became time intensive (Dannecker, Vossemer 2014:156) and the length of the interview differed between thirty minutes and two hours, but mainly lasted for one and a half hour. Every interview was transcribed and fully coded, as the purpose was to identify categories and subjects which were most important for the activists.

All interviewees were anonymised, as they wanted to be seen as a part of the collective although their subjective opinion does influence the conversation. They often pointed out the collective character of their initiative and sometimes they did not want their names to be

mentioned. The assurance of confidentiality was given. With the consent of the interviewees, the interview, as well as the group discussion, was tape recorded.

3.2.2 Focus groups/group discussion

Several weekly assemblies in the different initiatives were attended. The method of (participant) observation was used mainly due to the language restriction, as almost all of them were held in Greek. However, one of them, the assembly of the initiative 'Communitism' was conducted in English. This group discussion in the initiative 'Communitism' evolved in a weekly assembly. The assembly included everyone who was present, asked about their interests regarding Communitism or if they want to contribute to art space or the community in any form. Hence, I was an active participant and the objective of this meeting was to discuss ideas and other topics that came up. "[...] [They] expected not just to act together but also to transform each other reciprocally, building new identities and values, becoming communities" (della Porta 2014:304). After the round of introduction, a group discussion emerged. According to della Porta it is possible to be an active element in the group discussion as a researcher. Asking one question regarding my research interest, I also stimulated the debate (dell Porta 2014:287).

Underlying meanings and norms form those group answers and the collective process influences the individuals. The collective framing process shapes the identity of the group itself and is explored during the group discussion (della Porta 2014:21; Bloor et al 2001:6). "In contrast to individual interviews, [group discussions] allow the researchers to observe the group interactions that underlie the construction of collective identity, collective action frames, and the emotional dynamics involved in the creation of oppositional values" (Blee; Taylor 2002:109). The group discussion was, like the other interviews, transcribed and fully coded. In addition, interactions were observed and written down in memos. Everyone was anonymised. Only two participants, who were refugees, were marked with the code 'refugee', as it turned out this was important for themselves. They mentioned it several times and it did stimulate the discussion to go in a different direction, plus their perspective differed from the others.

3.2.3 Participant observation

Seven participant observations were conducted in the following initiatives:

- *Micropolis* (Thessaloniki): a house running several alternative social and economic activities
- *diem25* (Athens): a party which launched their programme in 2018, claiming to be rooted in civil society and the grassroots-movements; taping the interview was therefore not possible.
- *Attac* (Athens): former members of attac invited me to dinner. The meeting was informal and therefore not taped, but memos were taken afterwards.
- *Pocket Garden Assembly* (Thessaloniki): the assembly taking place on a regularly basis, discussion upcoming topics
- *Saving Food Festival at Impact Hub* (Athens): Organised by WWF it was an action of an awareness campaign, trying to find supports for their food saving campaign.
- *Alternative Tour Athens* (Athens): the four hours tour through the inner city of Athens and the neighbourhood Exarchia gave insights to the protest movements in Greece.
- *Square protests on Exarchia Square* (Athens): informal protest activities were observed and written down as memos.

The constructed nature of observations is undeniable (della Porta 2014:146). Being not able to speak Greek hindered to understand the content of the assemblies, which left me to interpret the situation, observing dynamics of the discussion and body language. I always had translators besides me who gave me a short overview on the topics being discussed and on opinions, which were uttered. The symbolic dimensions of protests (della Porta 2014:147ff.) were experienced during the Alternative Tour in Athens and the mapping and observation of protests in Exarchia Square, one of the hotspots of protest in Athens.

Almost every interviewee mentioned the heterogeneity in their collective and this could also be observed through this method. However, the gaps between ideology and practices were mostly revealed in the observation and participation of the assemblies (della Porta 2014:150). For instance, being fully open, integrative and non-hierarchical, turned out to be quite difficult. Even though aspired by the initiatives, it was sometimes not reached as some activists admitted. Socialisation and role taking was visible during the group discussion in Communitism. The controversial role of the researcher/observer, the different realities of the researcher and the observed ones, make it difficult to interpret the situation. Therefore, the

explanations of the translator and my active questioning regarding a specific investigation was crucial to grasp the meaning of the observations (Slezak 2014:180ff.). Memos, a research diary and situational maps accompanied the reflection process. To question my own research and opinion, protocols were written. When doing a participant observation during a weekly assembly, I always asked for the consent of the participants.

3.3 Analysing data, generating abstractions and concept building

The analysis follows the four-level approach of Charmaz (2014). The first level is called open coding. The second is the process of focused coding. In this research those two will be explained together due to the similarities which is inherited in those methods (Strauss, Corbin 1990). Afterwards axial coding reveals the co-occurrences and puts the codes into context. The fourth process is selective coding in which the codes can be reassembled in a specific order according to research interest. The used analytical tool is Atlas.ti.

3.3.1 Open coding/focused coding

Open coding or initial coding describes the process of line-by-line coding. Codes emerge from the text itself and sometimes even from expressions used by the interviewees themselves (Mattoni 2014:30). The level of abstraction and interpretation is still low in this phase. Not only chapters but the whole text was coded due to the fact, that the open research design gives space to the categories emerging from the interviews. The open coding process was done twice for each text, as new codes were created during the first round of coding.

After the second round of initial coding 68 codes were detected. One important category that was mentioned from several interviewees, that was in-vivo coded and was kept until the end of the analysis, is the term "radical". Several activists aspired to be radical, used the term frequently or judged other projects due to their understanding and level of "radicality". The term "human" appeared as well frequently and was due to this fact as well in-vivo coded. Information about this expression can be found in the section "social transformation". It is obvious that this amount of codes is huge and therefore, they were reduced in the phase of axial coding and combined with new interpretations of codes.

3.3.2 Axial coding

Axial coding partially, overlaps with the process of open coding as mentioned above. After the first round of axial coding 61 codes were still prominent. Moreover, the codes were merged and assigned to four categories which were recommended by Strauss and Corbin (1990): "conditions, interactions, strategies/tactics, consequences" (Mattoni 2014:31). These four categories can be used as abstract general frames in which the codes can be contrasted. The linkages in those categories disclose the similarities and differences of the codes. In this way, data can be set into new relations (Charmaz 2006:76f.).

To give a small insight to the method of categorizing, some codes that were joined to the four categories of Strauss and Corbin (1990) are listed below:

1. Conditions: 2011, history, capitalistic, variety of network, governmental level etc.
2. Interactions: volunteer, workers unions, central person, refugee, transdisciplinary etc.
3. Strategies/tactics: method of action, social solidarity economy, cooperatives, spatial articulation etc.
4. Consequences: chaos, crisis, self-management, right to the citizens, resistance etc.

Selecting data and simultaneously analysing it can be helpful (Schultz 2014:84), but was not possible due to time constraints. Nevertheless, memos which were written meanwhile were analysed and reinterpreted, also during the field trip. This influenced the open guideline for the interviews and the interest of research and the research question. Spatial articulation was one of the more dominant categories than expected. The intensity of political action was also very high. Another example is the connection with Argentina and Spain which influences the initiatives.

Additionally, one quantitative element was used in the analysis. Certain terms influenced the story line according to their frequency in the data. Each interviewee had, as expected, a focus on certain aspects or terms. However, the word "we" and "people" was used most frequently in every single interview. Moreover, the word "I" appeared less often than "we" and "people".

3.3.3 Selective coding

In the, for Glaser and Strauss (1967) third, for Charmaz (2006) the fourth analytical stage, selective coding, the focus is set on one or more core categories (Mattoni 2014:32f). This level of interpretation allows a more abstract view on the coded data and helps to build a "story line" (Schultz 2014:87). General themes and a concept are built around the scientific findings. In this research, four story lines were created: "collective political engagement", "creating a community", "economic metamorphosis/productive commons" and "spatial articulation". Under these topics the code families were allocated. In each chapter, the codes will be mentioned and explained.

3.3.4 Reflection Process

During the research process two methods were used to accompany the scientific reflection process: writing a research diary and drawing situational maps. The two approaches will be described in the following section.

3.4 Research diary and memo writing

A research diary is a systematic reflection of the researchers constructed reality, opinion and non-deliberate hypothesis and preconceptions. Memos are handled in this research process not only as a tool to capture ideas but are as well used as a set of data being analysed and scrutinised. "At the same time, memos also render the research process transparent and traceable, since they can be seen as the researchers' analytical narrations with herself during the analytical process" (Lempert 2010:247). Useful information was written down as memos before the research trip (from October 2017 until the end of the research). Squares of resistances were mapped. During the interviews, body language, the atmosphere or additional ideas that popped up were captured as memos.

One critical element, which concerned me during the field trip, was the problem of not being able to speak Greek. During meetings or assemblies, which were mostly held in Greek, I had to rely on a translator and on his or her view on the situation and on how the discussion was presented to an "outsider". More importantly, all the interviews were conducted in English, which is neither my mother tongue, nor the mother tongue of the interviewees. Certain expressions might have been communicated in a different way which possibly took away certain level of interpretational freedom. The cultural dimension which is connected to language has to be seen critically in this case. However, sometimes language differences that are detected and clarified, offer an even wider perspective on a certain phenomenon. For

instance, the differences of the terms 'collective'/'cooperative'/'collaborative' were explained to me by Theodoros Karyotis and will be further elaborated in the chapter 'productive commons'.

3.5 Situational Map

To open up the analytical process Clarke supposed to use situational maps (Schultz 2014:86; Clarke 2005:84). Allocating the initiatives according to their areas of action, helped to grasp their similarities and differences. Situational maps were also important while coding. The data was rearranged and set into new order. During the field trip, a first situational map which can counted as part of the selective coding process was drawn to sort out the field of action and a first possible structure of the thesis. The second drawing intended to clarify the activities the collective Vio Me. This is called arena maps or social worlds and are "cartographies of collective commitments" (Clarke 2005:86). The third was part of the selective coding process and formed the base for building the storyline of the thesis. Such mapping is a simplification strategy to have a better overview over the data. The maps are not static but are constantly changed and undergo a repositioning process (Clarke 2005:90). The three most important situational/arena maps can be seen attached.

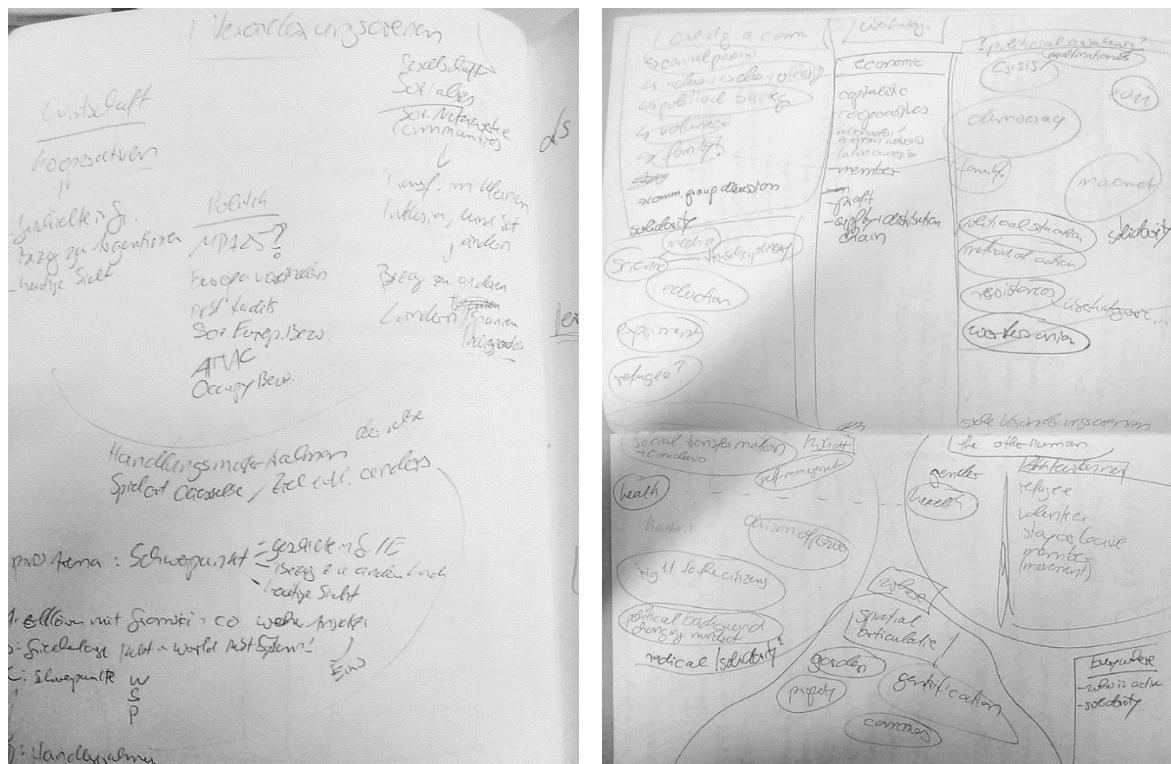


Figure 1: Situational Maps, Natascha Ickert

3.6 Timetable

Field trip 28.02.-15.03.18 – Athens&Thessaloniki

The following timetable focuses on the field trip and relevant meetings and interviews done in Greece from the 28.02.18 to the 15.03.18. The notes are structured as followed:

Name of the initiative	
Name of the contact person, if allowed	Short description of the initiative or person
Location, Time	
Method/Duration of the interview	
Website (if existent)	

VIENNA

Monday/05.02.18

Lisa Mittendrein

Margaretenstraße 166/3/25, A-1050

Vienna, 10 a.m.

Informal Interview (not recorded),
memos, 45 min.

Description:

Expert on social solidarity economy in
Greece

Monday/26.02.18

Omnikron Project

Konstantina Zoehrer

Corbaci Cafe, Vienna, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Interview 1h 30min (not recorded),
memos

Description:

Expert on social movements in Greece

ATHENS / 28.02. bis 07.03.18

Wednesday/28.02.

- Observation of neighbourhood Exarchia
- Mapping the squares of resistances, observation

Thursday/01.03.

- Observation of neighbourhood Metagxiou

Communitism	Description: Cultural community centre
Kerameikou 28, Athens, 7 – 11 p.m.	
Interview 30 min., Group discussion 1h 15 min, participation of weekly assembly	
https://de-de.facebook.com/communitism/	

Friday/02.03.

Alternative Tour Athens

Exarchia, Psyri, Monastrikai, Athens,
12 – 5.30 p.m.

Memos

<http://www.atathens.org/politicsandhistory.html>

Description:

Tour through Exarchia, Psyri and Monastrikai in Athens on social movements and resistances

Anti Violence Network

Kiki Petroulaki, Psychologist, Ph.D.

12 Zacharitsa Str., Athens, 6 – 9 p.m.

Interview, 2h 7min.

http://antiviolence-net.eu/index_EN.html

Description:

NGO, prevention and help in case of domestic violence

Saturday/03.03.

Saving Food Festival: Impact HUB/WWF

Karaiskaki 28, Athens, 4-5 p.m.

Observation, conversation, memos

Description:

Awareness-raising event to fight food waste

European Village/Yoga in the park

Monastiriou 140, Athens, 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Participation, memos, conversation

<https://www.european-village.org/>

Description:

First contact with the café and event location of European village

Sunday/04.03.

- Free

Monday/05.03.

ATTAC

Marica Frangakis

Restaurant Rozalia, Athens, 8 p.m.

Dinner, conversation (not recorded), memos

Description:

Member of SYRIZA, she invited other former members of the network ATTAC (international network which fights for social justice and economic change)

European Village

Ifontos 17, Athens, 3 p.m.
Interview, 1h 27 min.
<https://www.european-village.org/>

Description:
Interview with one core member
of the collective

Impact Hub

5:30 p.m.
Καπαϊσκάκη 28, Athens
Interview, 40min.
<https://athens.impacthub.net/>

Description:
International Start-up hub

Tuesday/06.03.

Campfire Innovation

3:30 – 4:30
Karditsis 8, Athens
Interview, 1h 9min.
<https://campfireinnovation.org/>

Description:
Enterprise which offers
consultancies to grassroots or
NGOs, especially active in the
sectors involved with refugees

Khora

5 - 6 p.m.
Tsimiski 21, Athens
Interview, 30min.
<http://www.khora-athens.org/current-future-projects/>

Description:
Free shop, legal support and
information for refugees

THESSALONIKI / 07.03 – 14.03.

Wednesday/07.03.

Pocket Garden, Alexander Svolou Street
Municipal Library of Thessaloniki, Eth. Aminis 27,
6 – 8:30 p.m.
Participant observation of weekly assembly,
memos
<https://www.facebook.com/geitonia.svolou/>

Description:
Community collective fighting
for the use of urban commons,
community building initiative

Thursday/08.03.

K136
Kostas Nikolau
6:30 – 9 p.m.
Al. Svolou 54, Thessaloniki
Interview, 2h 9min.
<http://www.136.gr/article/what-initiative-136>

Description:
Expert for social movements in
Greece, Aristotle University of
Thessaloniki, Professor for
Ecology and Social Solidarity
Economy

Pocket Garden, Alexander Svolou Street
Navarinou square, Thessaloniki, 3-6 p.m.
Interview, 2h 10min.

Description:
Interview with one core member
of this initiative

Friday/09.03.

Mikropolis cinema screening about Rojava
Theagenous Charisi 50, Thessaloniki, 6:30 p.m.
Participant observation (cinema screening about
Rojava), memos
<http://mikropolis.gr/>

Description:
Squat and social space, café,
shop, event hall

Saturday/10.03.

Redivida Cucina Povera
Alexandras Papadopoulou 70, Thessaloniki,
3 - 4:30 p.m.
Interview, 1h 17min.
[https://de-
de.facebook.com/pg/rediviva.thess/community/](https://de-de.facebook.com/pg/rediviva.thess/community/)

Description:
cooperative, tavern

Sunday/11.03.

Kipos³

Kerkiras 18, Thessaloniki, 11 a.m – 1 p.m.
Interview, 1h 5min., observation, memos
<https://www.facebook.com/cityasaresource/>

Description:

Urban farming and gardening,
community building project

Bios Coop

Aristotutlous square, Thessaloniki, 6 – 9 p.m.
Interview, 2h 7min.
<http://www.bioscoop.gr/>

Description:

Interview with core member of
the consumers 'cooperative Bios
Coop, having the goal of quality
food organised in a collective
way without intermediates

Monday/12.03.

Theodoros Karyotis

Cafe Nice Ntepo, Βαφόπουλου 18, 3 – 4 p.m.
Interview, 1h 33min.

Description:

Expert and activist in Greece in
and on social movements

Social Center

Ermou 23, Thessaloniki, 9 p.m. – 11 p.m.
Observation (weekly meeting), memos
<https://www.facebook.com/socialcenterthess/>

Description:

Squat, Multi-purpose facility of
material solidarity for
immigrants, open social centre,
meeting place of movements
and struggles

Tuesday/13.03.

Vio.Me Cooperative

Laertou, Pilea 555 35, 11 a.m – 1 p.m.
Interview, 1h 47min.
<http://www.viome.org/p/deutsch.html>

Description:

Workers' collective, producing
detergents in squatted factory

ATHENS 14.03 - 15.03.18

Wednesday/14.03.

Social Kitchen „The Other Human“

Plateon 55, Athens, 4 – 7 p.m.

Interview, 1h 50min.

<http://oallosanthropos.blogspot.com/p/social-kitchen-other-human.html>

Description:

Social centre and free food provider, Interview with the founder Konstantinos Polychronopoulos and two other members

Thursday/15.03.

MeRA 25

Gamveta 6, Athens, 10:30 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Interview (not recorded, 30 min.), memos

<http://mera25.gr/homepage-en/>

Description:

New party that evolved from the movement DiEM25, interview with members of the party

4. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

The overall goal of the initiatives is to trigger social and economic transformation. In the main part of this thesis four areas of action will be described. They derived from the interviews and describe the values, goals and activities of the initiatives: collective political engagement, creating communities, spatial articulation - challenging the urban commons and economic transformation. During the coding process these four categories turned out to be essential when it comes to social and economic transformation.

First, a short overview over the protest movements in Greece since 2007 will be given. The anti-austerity actions will be contextualized with different theories, such as the Resource Mobilization Theory and the New Social Movement Theory. To illustrate their political engagement, the efforts against the water privatization in Thessaloniki of the initiative K136 will be explained.

The second chapter gives examples on how and why the initiatives create communities and how they articulate their claims. The concept of 'The Other Human' by the initiative 'Social Kitchen' summarizes their ideas on solidarity. Moreover, fluctuating and continuously changing roles and concepts of communities characterize the reality of the members of the initiatives.

The third chapter deals with the spatial articulation of the initiatives. Their negotiation process with the municipalities and their activities to enforce their right to the city are the main areas of interest in this chapter. It will be discussed if the emergence of creative spaces and urban farming might lead to gentrification processes and how the initiatives try to oppose these developments.

The fourth topic covers the endeavours to initiate economic change. In the framework of social solidarity economy, the initiatives reorganise labour and redefine profit. The struggles in changing the way we define and pursue economic activities of the collaborative Vio Me will be used as an example.

4.1 COLLECTIVE POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Analysing the forms of protests today, it is important to mention that Greece has a long history of resistance movements. The approaches of social and economic transformation, as it will be presented in the main part, enqueue to the various protest movements and actions. A short overview on the history of protest movements in Greece will enlighten the cultural background of today's initiatives.

4.1.1 Anti-austerity protest

In this section, the most important moments of anti-austerity protests will be analysed. The various protests will not be summarized under one theory, as characteristics of many approaches and theories can be found in each of the protests from 2007 up to 2018. The purpose of this overview is not to present a chronological outline, but to analyse the different forms of social movements and forms of protest which will be matched with different theories and approaches. In the words of Christian Fuchs: "The emergence of social movements is not determined, but a complex result of crisis, resource mobilization, cognitive mobilization, self-production - searching for singular laws of the emergence of movements is an expression of one-dimensional, linear, and deterministic thinking" (Fuchs 2005:111).

Since the financial crisis started in 2007, the protests have become more frequent. The first serious protests in Athens in the district of Exarchia were triggered by the death of a 15-year-old school kid who was killed during a demonstration. This incident cannot be understood as a direct response to the crisis, however, during the protest general discontent and the high youth unemployment were addressed which have linkages to the crisis. This form of protest can best be attributed to the theory of collective behaviour (Aslandis 2012: 2). Spontaneous protests, an angry crowd and people driven by strong emotions, were the main characteristics.

In 2010 and in 2012, professional associations affected by the dictated austerity measures, initiated strikes. Labour unions have a strong standing in Greece. One important union is called PAME, which was founded by the members of the communist party in 1999 and ADEDY, which is the union of employees and civil servants. The GSEE is also a large workers' union, which co-organized protests in 2013. These movements and demonstrations mobilized by parties and trade unions can be analysed with the 'political process model'. The political

opportunity gives well-organized groups the opportunity to mobilize. In this case, the connection of the protesters with the institutional structure is important.

The strategic framing serves both the organizers and the protesters. The occupation of Syntagma Square in the summer of 2011 can be seen in the light of the protests of the Arab Spring (Leontidou 2015:94). "The protests turned against the current crisis policy, the democratization of the country, the dominance of the troika, the enrichment of the Greek elites and the dysfunctional political and economic system" (Mittendrein 2013: 76). The resistance resembled the Spanish Indignados Movement in 2011 and was even called like this by the interviewees (Theodoros Karyotis 2018). Not only left-wing forces gathered to express their displeasure, but all kinds of people with different political attitudes. This protest was not organised by trade unions and established groups. As Katz stated: "The alliances developed in mobilizing counter-hegemony must extend beyond class, to include various social forces - an alliance of class and social-democratic groupings" (Katz 2006:336).

The protests spread throughout Greece. Open plenaries, working groups and many more actions were set up. Those protests were the moment when people became politically active and furthermore joined forces to start an initiative with a transformative character. Not only opinions were expressed, but strategic plans were developed, and new associations founded. This kind of protest derives out of the new social movement approach.

The structural change of society which was caused by the austerity measures caused the emergence of protest and movements going beyond class and materialism. The "struggle for the collective control of meaning and new forms of identities" correlates with their will to break free from oppression and subordination. Building up new counter-hegemonic forces should be achieved by creating new initiatives which shape the political landscape and set up stronger social relationships strengthening the resilience of civil society (Fuchs 200:104).

The idea of 'social constructionism' focuses on the activists' complementary psychological patterns. A kind of 'collective identity' was created through emotions during the protests. Through their disappointed hopes, following the rational choice approach, the people gather together even if their political attitudes would divide them. The collective identity is thus both a goal and the toolkit that connects the activists (Aslandis 2012: 16). In 2012, before the second austerity package was passed, further protests took place.

The protests reached a sad climax when a retiree committed suicide in front of the Greek parliament. He left a letter explaining that he was economically and socially ruined because of the austerity measures.

2013 and 2015 were the years of the big protests of the unions. Both in January and in August 2013, the unions called for strikes (see Spiegel 2013, 2015). An explanatory pattern can be the theory of deprivation. People were filled with frustration and rising discontent about the social and political developments: being exposed to relative or material deprivation due to political choices, they articulated their anger on the streets. The deprivation theory focuses on the question: why protests arise? „Those individuals who were accustomed to a stable increase of their wellbeing are the first to take the streets when deprivations kicks in, not the ones who have nothing to lose“ (Aslandis 2012:3).

In February 2016 and January 2017, an occupational group that is not well known for protesting, organised for protest. Farmers blocked 68 street streets and protested against tax increase and pension reforms, which particularly affected this group, as well as lawyers and engineers. The Resource Mobilization Theory can help to understand this form of protest. According to this theory, people with similar goals or with similar ideologies act rationally and self-focused to enforce their will.

However, it needs networks and resources to enforce their ideas. Agricultural networks were mainly set up to support farmers; political activism tends to be in the background. However, if needed, this network can be used for different purposes as well. The blockades that have spread across the country show how effective this network can be. Following the ‘resource mobilization theory’, this social movement can be seen as “the result of the successful mobilization of resources and political opportunity” (Fuchs 2005:104). According to this mentality, social movements compete against each other. In this case, the farmers movement competes with the marches organised by the labour unions.

The protests continued in 2017, but they remained in the same pattern of social movements discussed above. The fact that all the different forms of movements can be found in the Greek protests and that marches, strikes and blockades are so frequent, show the willingness of civil society to rebel against the dominant political course. “The link between the rise of the post-industrial society and the appearance of new social movements has been well

documented (for instance, Touraine 1981; Melucci 1996), and December 2008 is a clear instance of this kind of movement in Greece" (Diakoumakos 2015:310).

The New Social Movement Approach (NSM) does not fully fit into the concepts of the initiatives in Greece. One important counter argument is that the activists of the NSM mostly focus on non-economic issues (Fuchs 2005:122). This is for instance opposed to the collective action of Vio Me trying to not only to transform civil society, but to demand the renewal of the economic system. However, the initiatives can be classified as forms of critical protest.

"Critical protest is oriented towards the future, it identifies possibilities within existing society that help to improve the situation of mankind and to reach a higher and progressive level of societal organization. Conservative protest movements are not oriented towards the future, but towards the past or that which actually exists, i.e. they do not want to substitute structures of domination by co-operative and participatory structures, but rather want to conserve, transform or rebuild domination" (Fuchs 2005:130).

The movements in Greece were indeed outward-looking. As they called their square movements 'movement of Indignados', they refer to the Spanish Square Movement in 2011. Protesting austerity measures united them. Moreover, similar or even the same methods were used, such as assemblies, occupations, discussions on the squares and opening the discussions towards social solidarity economy and other alternative topics. One of the activists interviewed, Theodoris Karyotis, mentioned the similarities with the 'occupy movement'. The concurrent movements like 'Occupy Wall Street', movement of Indignados or the Arab Spring and anti-austerity protest around the world should not be left aside when interpreting the resistance movements in Greece.

The currently (June 2019) reigning left-wing party SYRIZA plans to phase out the adjustment program in 2018. Whether this can be attained is questionable. So far, the neoliberal reforms induced by the current government are not a turn away from the austerity measures and do not loosen up the dependencies on the Central European Countries and the international financial institutions. Privatizations and further implementations of the austerity measures pave the way for even further liberal, capitalistic reforms. If civil society or labour unions can successfully demand a political turn is uncertain. In the book by Lisa Mittendrein, the title explains the situation in Greece accurately: "Solidarity is everything and remains" (Mittendrein 2013).

4.1.2 Political engagement

The initiatives which were interviewed derived out of the protests. Their common ground is the will to transform society. As described in the theory part of this thesis, the interviewees underscored the importance of self-description. They did not see themselves as a social movement. They rather stated they arose from that background, but they do not see their actions as a movement. Neither are they strongly connected to each other, in the way that they coordinate their actions. An exception is the initiative K136. As their goal, as it will be portrayed later, is to organise joint resistance against further privatisation of the water in Thessaloniki, trying to build up a strong network and mobilizing people, NGOs, governmental organisations and private actors. Therefore, K136 will be the only organisation which will be described as a social movement. All the other actors and activists will be named as initiatives or collectives. However, the initiatives, which are civil society organisation, were part of the square movements in 2011 and the initiatives can still be seen as a part of a bigger movement working for social transformation.

4.1.3 Role of the state – institutional character and the rise of SYRIZA

One main aspect identified during the interviews are the endeavours of creating pressure groups and other political initiatives. The way financial and debt crisis in the European Union has been handled on an international and national level, has had huge impacts on civil society in Greece. As stated in the introduction, several severe decisions on an institutional level had been made that influenced the lives of many Greeks. The effects on civil society had been discussed controversial. One aspect is the role and the institutional capacities of the welfare state in Greece. The other aspect is the debate on the resilience of the Greek civil society. In the next chapter, the role of the state and civil society in Greece before 2008 will be analysed and furthermore contrasted to the strategies, the constitution and the actions of civil society in 2018 (the year the interviews were conducted).

To understand the political endeavours today, it is important to understand the relationship between the civil society and the state in Greece. The state dominance in Greece is striking (Huliaras 2015:29). The state is mainly centralised with civil society having only few possibilities to participate in the political process. The parties are highly interventionist and centralised, as well (Jones 2015:32). "Furthermore, the state still understands the role of civil society as a tool to promote its own policy, not as something genuine that develops society in

a multilevel way, freeing productive and independent power” (Kondonis 2002:60). Generally, civil society actors have restricted possibilities to engage in governmental or legislative processes and are not supported sufficiently with financial means.

The reasons that led to build such an institutional construct might be for instance the role of religion, the years of dictatorship or fast modernization and implementation of neoliberal reforms. Furthermore, “foreign intervention in the country by European powers and western forces likewise moulded the social environment in Greece and the way that Greeks perceive civic involvement” (Mavrikos-Adamou 2015:54). The patron-client network and clientelism are not solely a new phenomenon of today but are rooted in history. Bokova Irina states that in South-eastern Europe, “[q]uite often the state is an instrument of private, group or party-biased interest” (Bokova 2002:27). For her, the Europeanization of the political system is carried out through ‘clientele policy’ (Bokova 2002:29). To focus on historical developments and explanations is, however, problematic, as the hidden assertion is “that very little can be done to strengthen civic engagement, political participation and social activism” (Huliaras 2015:23).

The welfare state is rather ineffective in Greece. With the crisis the situation of the social security system worsened. The austerity measures were implemented which entailed the cut on the high social welfare spending (Polyzoidis 2015:16). The low number of the non-profit organisations can be explained by the centralised state leaving very little room for NGOs and other civil society organisations.

The austerity measures worsened the trust of the Greeks in their institutions even more as the European Social Survey shows (Ervasti, Kouvo, Venetoklis 2019). Not only is the trust in the institutions below the European level, but the trust within the society is rather low as well ((Ervasti, Kouvo, Venetoklis 2019). With the election of the left-wing party SYRIZA in 2015 many hoped for a shift in politics and for the end of the austerity measures. When the interviews were conducted in 2018, the hopes did not seem to be vivid anymore. The austerity measures could not be stopped and privatisations went on. The interviewees, who mostly supported SYRIZA in 2015, were disenchanted as they hoped their policies have been more effective. Diakoumakos points out that SYRIZA was most friendly to post-materialistic demands, “SYRIZA received between 30% and 35% of the vote in all age groups younger than 45 [...]” (Diakoumakos 2015:309).

"There was a huge wave of mobilisation, people getting in the streets, trying to find new ideas. However, there were many defeats. People were told that real change can be achieved by mobilising and protesting. And then you saw the opponent was very strong. I mean, a very good example is, when in 2012 we had a huge mobilisation outside the parliament. Millions of people tried to stop the voting of the austerity laws and the austerity laws were implemented anyway" (Karyotis 2018).

Theodoros Karyotis (himself being actively involved in the Indignados Movement in Greece) rejected that the rise of the protest from 2008 and especially in 2011 were "controlled" by SYRIZA. However, with the party being present and active in the protests, it grew in popularity and created the image of a political party rooted in civil society. "You could say that SYRIZA drew a lot of support through its active participation in the protest of 2011" (Karyotis 2018).

The apathy and the disappointment stroking the activists crushed the mass movements from 2011. The hope of achieving change through the involvement of a party is not an option anymore for most people. Therefore, the mass movements lost their force. "Because everyone planted their hopes and their dreams or plans went towards the party. And when SYRIZA betrayed these hopes in 2015, there is nothing to substitute this party. There are no structures left. Everything is either co-opted or destroyed" (Karyotis 2018). If it is the fault of the party, if they did not want or could fulfil the claims of the protesters, is not the subject of this thesis and would need further analysis. However, the feeling of betrayal is unquestionable, as every interviewee mentioned it.

"But I am as well very disappointed, and I had very serious issues with friends that were in SYRIZA and left the party. It is a government that has an agenda. They try to do small things, not big things that really make a difference. Not very radical. But they do things, so the society will recognise it, accept it and will see it as an alternative way of behaving, working and living. I don't believe this would have happened under the previous government. But generally, I am very disappointed" (European Village 2018).

The mass movements are not active anymore. However, as I want to show in this thesis, political and social engagement still exist. Nevertheless, the form of protest changed. If the trust in the political institutions can be rebuilt soon, is questionable. The trust within the civil society though can be reinforced. The downfall of the political hopes can even be seen as a political opportunity for this endeavour. A democratization process cannot be done without the strengthening and the integration of civil society growing towards a democratic state (Kondonis 2002:43).

"A main question is how levels of trust and networks change as a reaction to a recession and whether these changes facilitate the ability of communities to deal with difficult financial times" (Jones 2015:29). As politics were not seen as the eligible facilitator for the change, the protesters claimed for, self-organisation and mobilisation within civil society gained popularity.

The austerity laws, which were implemented against the will of the people, had a huge effect and might be still underestimated in the European Union. The feeling of the system not being a democracy grew since 2008 and is still existent in the eyes of the interviewees. Hate against the situation will maybe end up in the hate against others. Nationalistic or racist movements are nurtured by this development, as well as the resentment against the EU institutions. These developments emphasise autocratic and nationalistic movements in the whole EU. The rise of the political right, in Greece mainly the right-wing and nationalistic party Golden Dawn, is strongly connected to the crisis. Re-politicisation did not only happen in the spectrum of the left, but nationalistic ideas found and still find fertile ground in an insecure economic, social and political environment.

"Right now, we are living the defeat in the sense that all our hopes were with the new left government at some point. The new left government came but it was the same or worse. Because when there was the right-wing government, people were protesting. With the left-wing government, no one is protesting. So now we are living the defeat of this. I don't foresee any good things happening very soon. We are still shocked by this" (Karyotis 2018).

This shows that the election of the left-wing party changed the behaviour of the protesters. Since the party came to power, the strong drive of the movements vanished, because protesters hoped for the party to fulfil their claims. The dual power with the extreme right-wing party Golden Dawn was mentioned in almost every interview. Therefore, this party is seen as a threat, however, it does not translate into the same political movements as the austerity measures did in 2011.

In the next chapter, the Indignados Movement or Square movement, as it is called by the activists, and the initiative/movement K136 will be presented and analysed regarding their participants, their arenas and methods of action, concluding with the internal transformations within the movements and their effects and influence on the activists.

4.1.4 Who participates?

The anarchist movement in 2008 in Athens was the start of growing mobilisation in the following years. Mainly (radical) left-wing activists, some describing themselves as anarchists, mobilised the protests in 2008. The resentment grew soon, and the topics people protested for expanded with the financial crisis hitting Greece. "The idea assumed [...] is that Greece is characterized by a number of structural defects, the most important being a political system traditionally based on patronage and a weak civil society, while Greeks are deeply disappointed by their politicians and the political system itself is in crisis (Mouzelis 2009)." (Diakoumakos 2015:296).

The rise of post-materialistic values and demands being articulated in 2008 were mainly formulated by a younger generation. Karyotis depicts three "waves" of anti-austerity mobilisations in Greece. The first emerged during 2010, the second in 2011 with the Indignados Movements and the third wave from mid-2012 onwards. "Age, which is not a factor during the first wave, becomes statistically significant for those under 50 years in the second wave and is further narrowed down to the under 35s during the third wave" (Karyotis 2018: 166).

Different classes took part in the square movements in 2011. Not only were many generations involved, but also the participants had various political backgrounds.

"2011 was open to a wider part of society. Many different ages, many different backgrounds. You have a big middle-class component in 2011. Which we didn't have in 2008. [...]. In 2011 you have many people who come with moderate social democrat discourse. Let's make the state strong again and let's make redistribution through the state. However, then you have many people who are in favour of self-management" (Karyotis 2018).

The different types of ages reflect the manifold reasons people protested for, as well. For many grassroots movements or initiatives the Square Movement of 2011 was the starting point for further collective actions.

In the initiative K136, majors, individuals, workers unions and other initiatives or associations took part in protests against water privatisation in Thessaloniki. The topic of water could unite various groups of people. The collective Vio Me is, as well, politically active as they fight for their right to stay in the occupied factory and continue their work. They have been becoming a political pressure group as the inhabitants of Thessaloniki and even further support their efforts.

Coming from a social constructionist background, any action is political. Even if an initiative has no clear political vision, like Communitism for example, through their will to bring

people together and building a community, they create a small example of a society without (or with less) prejudice and try out alternative forms of interaction, communication and expression of thoughts and ideas.

4.1.5 Methods of action

To raise awareness on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to engage individuals several methods were used.

"The [...] December events introduced forms and repertoires of political mobilization previously unknown to Greece, such as neighbourhood popular assemblies or the use of blogs and social media as tools of coordination (TPTG 2011, 120–121). These very same tools were used by the *ganaktismenoi* [square movements and assemblies in 2011] and made their presence possible (Theocharis et al. 2015)" (Diakoumakos 2015:309).

The tools and forms of protest and interaction were transferred from the anti-austerity movements in Spain which were called *Indignados*, as well. The interviewees themselves pointed out the linkages to Spain and that it was transferred to Greece. "A considerable number of these initiatives emerged through the Citizens' Assembly organised at the municipality or neighbourhood level, in the aftermath of the 'indignados' movement on Syntagma Square in 2011" (Vathakou 2015:167). "The concept of direct democracy of course existed theoretically long ago [...]. But to think about it again and consider it and use it. It was there it happened; meeting people, connect with people and create this trust." (European Village 2018).

The activists questioned the current form of representative democracy during all these protests, as their expectations and trust in institutional change were belied. Their protest continues, not in the form of demonstrations, but is articulated in the actions within the grassroots movements and initiatives. The trust the member of European Village is speaking about, can be referred to the concepts of social trust which is the foundation of social cohesion and therefore of social capital. In the chapter of 'creating communities' concepts of social trust, social cohesion and social capital will be explained. Building up trust within civil society wasn't easy for the protesters at the square movement in 2011.

"It was process for us to start talking and trust each other. How can I trust your intentions? How do I know that you really want to help and be part of it or maybe you are police? But then after the Square, and this is the amazing thing, we didn't stay there two months and then disappeared and disconnected. We left the square, but we found other ways to cooperate and creating this bonding and trust. It was an amazing

moment and for me it was a historical moment but then we threw the seeds there and then the flowers somehow flourished around in many different ways" (European Village 2018).

Apart from the initiatives and the protests in the streets and the squares, several different forms of protest occurred since 2008. Performances, interventions, web blogs, occupation of buildings, general strikes, graffiti and stencil on walls (Diakoumakos 2015:293). These forms of protest could still be found in Athens and Thessaloniki in 2018. The claims circle around consumerism, commercialization of art and entertainment. It was and still is a call for (radical) transformation.

"The citizen is [...] someone aware of the value and preconditions of coexistence based on political participation and social solidarity, someone who knows the burdens of self-government and accepts them, fully aware of the long-term negative consequences of refusing to accept them" (Münkler 2007:94). However, this knowledge about the conditions regarding solidarity and the internalisation of certain values regarding self-management or as Münkler calls it 'self-government', cannot be assumed to be existent without education in direct democracy, for example. To achieve a high rate of civic involvement, citizens have to be educated and train these traits. Münkler states that civic involvement and civic education mutually define each other, and both contribute to enhance each other. However, one should not fall into the trap of identifying civil society as the birthplace for high values (Vasilis 2013:3). Nevertheless, "[...] such forms of political and civic education have an immunizing effect against the attractions of populism, which is a constant companion of democratic orders and can be most successfully domesticated within civil society" (Münkler 2007: 96).

One of the areas where political engagement and active interest in political ideas is provoked are universities. During the research in Athens and Thessaloniki, protests in the form of posters and solidarity gatherings in the buildings have been observed. The occupation of the Polytechnic University of Athens is a popular example of the university being the place for negotiation and demanding political rights or changes. As the anarchist movement is as well connected with the protest in the universities, it can be said that interventions and articulation of protest is present in the universities in Athens and Thessaloniki. The interviewee from Pocket Garden explained the role of the universities in Thessaloniki in the following way:

"In Greece it is not like a European university. Here universities have a sort of political meaning. Many people do concerts and parties to support let's say social and solidarity actions. We occupy the university and we make parties and we sell beers and the money goes to the solidarity fund. It serves political issues.

It is sort of fundraising for solidarity actions. It is very common in Greece and you don't even need a regulation, we just go there say hello we are this group, we want to make a party"
(Pocket Garden 2018).

This citation shows mainly that the university is seen as a political negotiation space. The informal ways of gaining financial assets for certain solidarity activities have the side effect that political messages can be easily spread. Therefore, there is a higher chance of getting involved or to be confronted with political articulations.

Moreover, not only artistic or alternative forms of protest, but also well-established ways to mobilize people were used. The movement K136 used face-to-face interactions and word-of-mouth advertising to spread their ideas. When the collectives against the water privatisations were set up, the movement K136 called for an official referendum to let civil society decide about the water privatization. However, this process was denied by the government. Nevertheless, they continued their fight and set up voting polls outside on the streets in public space, inviting teams from the European Water Movement initiative to monitor and legitimize their process. This example shows how an alternative idea, like creating collectives as a legal entity to ensure the right to use and own water collectively, is pressed into the corset of the existing legal processes. The process of water privatization, however, was not only stopped by the collective engagement by the citizens. Just as the Greek court confirmed officially that it was illegal to exclude the K136 initiative. This shows the legal and political constraints of civil action as the court, being an institutionalised body, was the key factor of the decision to interrupt the water privatisation in the end. Therefore, the power of civil society and the democratic possibilities must still be seen critically in the context of austerity. Nevertheless, without their civic actions and their enormous effort, the water would have been privatized. New ways of engaging civil society should be discussed more widely. The court being the ultimate force stopping the process shows that still civil action is not yet fully politically accepted. A broad moral and political discussion is needed to make participation legal and possible.

Moreover, old networks and structures benefitted from the square movement and the engagement against the water privatization. Members of the workers unions were often active members in the protest and used the political opportunity.

How power relations can be questioned and how many different possibilities come to light, can be seen in the case of the K136 initiative. While trying to convince several mayors to

fight against the water privatization, several opinions on the way how this should be done have been uttered. The mayors argued to assign the power over the water in the hands of the municipalities. Within the movement, no homogenous action or idea existed that everyone shared on how the water privatisation would be stopped or to whom the rights of the water distribution etc. should belong. Even if the rights on the water have not changed as the privatisation was stopped, the collectives which were formed to overtake some percentages of the water still exist and can be reactivated if needed. This leads to the question what effects these mobilisations had if this leads to an internal transformation or a switch in the perception or a politization of the interviewees.

4.1.6 Internal transformation

These examples show the political engagement and the acts of politicising in civil society. The discussions and the endeavours of creating a collective enlightens the various possibilities that exist besides capitalism. The activists of K136 undertook struggles and discussions to find supporters for their ideas. These efforts can be described as political and civic education.

The training of generating political thoughts or actions were as well exercised in the square movements of 2011. By discussing the political status quo collectively, awareness has been raised for politics. The fact that thousands of people were engaged in the protests of 2011 and their continuous engagement in initiatives, shows that civil society is active and politically willing and ready to interact. The findings of the European Civil Society Survey indicating a “weak” civil society in Greece are, therefore, highly questionable (Sotiropoulos, Karamagioli 2006:2). Not being active in legal entities are, as explained above, rooted in the critical attitude deriving from the past where political hopes and trust were shattered. Therefore, articulating political endeavours through alternative actions, such as for example getting the water back in the hands of the citizens through collectives, might be more attractive for engaged individuals in Greece. Measuring the social impact or counting the initiatives and evaluating their impact on the individuals is very hard, as psychological transitions or changes in behaviour in the long term are hardly measurable. However, through these qualitative interviews, the general trend and the reasons behind their actions can be documented and these clearly show the tendency for a raised political awareness being translated into actions in the initiatives.

"However, only the traditional forms of political participation, such as voter turnout or labour union membership, are declining, while extra-institutional political participation, such as occupying buildings, demonstrating, or boycotting products, is on the rise; as Gundelach (1995) and Norris (2002) have argued, value change is an important contributor to the turn from traditional forms of political participation to activism" ((Diakoumakos 2015:307).

The members of the self-managed garden Kipos³ says: "Everyone can fight for democracy, whatever political ideas. But in the end, it is what you do every day that makes you. Not what you want or wish to happen. And it has the end inside" (Kipos 2018).

The main core of the strikes, protests and other forms of political resistance is civil society. With the majority of the population backing up the activists, a political pressure group was built up. Even though the outcome of civilian resistance or alternative political engagement does not always translate into new official political and legislative implementations, the activists are secured and often the state does not intervene. "With the election coming in 2019... No one knows what is going to happen, but at least we are more ready to whatever challenge might come up, because now we are sort of a pressure group or we become a sort of pressure group" (European Village 2018).

As the big wave of mobilization declined since the referendum in 2015, attitudes have significantly changed. All of the interviewees were less opportunistic regarding the political situation in Greece and in Europe. Having internalized this distrust, they are more likely to build up networks on their own or trying to achieve change on a municipal level. The interviewees are not putting their hopes in change induced by national politics or parties anymore. If and how this partially historically constructed mistrust affects civil society and if the social cohesion is more likely to regain importance will be analysed in the next chapter, which deals with the trend of creating communities as a main goal of many initiatives.

4.2 CREATING COMMUNITIES

The idea of building a community is inherited in all the initiatives that were interviewed. Different tools and methods were used to create communities. Each one focused on a different topic, ranging from the sectors in society which were affected by the austerity measures, like health and economics, to creative branches, like art, or dealing with urban commons. In this chapter, the differences of the communities will be described first. Afterwards, the members and their systems will be analysed. Moreover, the tools and methods for building a community will be outlined. The internal group consolidation process is not the topic of interest in this chapter. Instead, the communities' underlying norms and goals, as well as methods which accompany this process will be examined. As the community building processes should not be romanticised, the difficulties and constraints will be portrayed. Concluding remarks will give an insight into the values and goals of the activities of these initiatives.

4.2.1 Classification of the initiatives – social perspective

One goal of this thesis is to show how the initiatives try to engage socially and economically. The initiatives offer various answers to a declining social capital and social trust which was even more disrupted in times of the crisis. All initiatives try to tackle a social problem in different ways. Diversifying their range of actions is an indicator for their problem-solving understanding of social problems within civil society. Economic, political and social distrust is widespread in Greece. In this context, initiatives present their own solutions to these challenges.

The following chart gives an overview on the different sectors. The categories evolved from the process of coding. The economic undertakings were divided in three sub-categories, as they indicate the different understandings of economics. The code 'capitalistic' depicts enterprises of which the main goal is to generate revenues. Social and political aspects or ideas on solidary economy are excluded. The term 'radical' encompasses endeavours of changing/questioning/challenging the perception of the capitalistic system as a whole. The term 'radical' itself was chosen because the interviewees themselves used this word for counter-capitalistic actions. Every organisation offers different approaches to achieve this vision. Social solidary economy or creating cooperatives, which function in a different way, are popular alternatives to the capitalistic model. Every initiative will be mentioned and described in the section of their main interest.

Moreover, this table will be shown repeatedly at the beginning of each chapter of the main part of this thesis. The initiatives relevant to the chapter will be described shortly and their approaches will be compared to each other and linked with theoretical concepts of civil society. A longer description can be found in the appendix, where the initiatives are listed alphabetically along with the organisations' self-description, their location and links to their websites, if existing.

Initiative	Social Codes					Economic Codes					
	Political	Community-oriented	Self-managed	Spatial articulation	Health	Refugee	Food	Art	Capitalistic	Inbetween	Radical
Anti-Violence Network	✓	✓			✓						
Bios Coop			✓	✓			✓			✓	
Campfire Innovation						✓			✓		
Communitism		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			
European Village	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓
Impact Hub									✓		
K136	✓	✓	✓								✓
Khora			✓	✓	✓		✓				
Klops ³		✓	✓	✓							
Pocket Garden	✓	✓	✓	✓							
Rediviva Cucina Povera			✓				✓				✓
Social Kitchen	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				
Vio Me	✓		✓	✓	✓						✓

Table 1: Classification of organisations

Anti-Violence Network

The initiative describes itself as a non-governmental organisation. They are mostly dependent on European or national funding. Their goal is to offer support to women who face domestic violence. They are in a way political as they observe national policies regarding this topic. However, it is difficult to influence or comment on these policies due to several bureaucratic and political obstacles.

They focus on creating communities as they realised that a supporting network is what encourages the women. Monthly meetings offer a safe space to empower the women in workshops. In supporting the survivors psychologically, they provide valuable contributions to their health and lives.

Communitism

This initiative characterises itself as a community or even family. Financed by its members, art and community building is the focus of Communitism. Their goal is to foster the engagement within the neighbourhood around their building. Non-hierarchical decision-making and empowerment of every member is very important for them. Therefore, the category “self-management” is fitting as well.

With a refugee housing next to their building, they invited the habitants to participate as well. Compared to other parts of society of this neighbourhood, some refugees are eager to be part of Communitism.

European Village

The goals of the organisation European Village are numerous. Fostering social inclusion, jobs, environmental sustainability and European youth exchange are their main objectives. Therefore, they opened a café in Athens which is used as a meeting point for the people living in the neighbourhood.

“Initially, it was about a group of people that went in this area in the park where the cafe is today, and they have a discussion there about what can we do, because they were friends and they were quite into the social movements. [...] They wanted to do something related to social transition of towns, permaculture, environment, about relationships, how we build them on horizontal level and such interesting things and when they had discussions in the park, and they saw this space” (European Village 2018).

K136

On the one hand, the initiative can be described as a bottom-up initiative against the privatisation of water in Thessaloniki. On the other hand, it can also be defined as a social movement, as the active people successfully stopped the privatisation process. Thus, the movement had political implications. The goal was achieved through gathering supporters and creating a pressure group/community. Even though the aim of the movement was not of economic interest, they tried to establish a non-capitalistic system of owning, using and distributing the water resources.

Kipos³

This initiative evolved from the PhD thesis by Eleftheria Gavriilidou. "Neighbourhood Laboratory is an urban gardening project that supports community engagement and citizens' co-ownership of the re-activation of the public space" (Start Greece. <https://www.startgreece.net/fellows/eleftheria-gavriilidou>. 28.10.19). Re-activating a neighbourhood community in Thessaloniki, using the tools of urban gardening is linked with the call for the right to the city and questioning the urban commons and renaturing the urban space. The initiative is fully self-managed by the members of that garden and patronaged by the city administrative institutions. This urban 'experiment', as it was called by the initiator Gavriilidou, wants to serve as a model for further similar projects.

Pocket Garden

Reviving the local community in the Thessaloniki and questioning the urban commons is also the idea of the initiative Pocket Garden. After organising dinners on the streets, their next step is to negotiate with the city administration for the allowance to use the space without monetary obligations or supervision by the city (as it is the case for Kipos³). The process of discussing the rights to the city and challenging the urban commons is the goal of this bottom-up initiative. Therefore, it is classified as political.

Social Kitchen

The people of Social Kitchen provide food to everyone by cooking daily in the streets of Athens. They also have a flat which is used as a meeting point for everyone. As they are only cooking outside to reach as many people as possible, it is assigned to the category 'spatial

articulation'. With people losing their jobs, dropping out of health insurance and sometimes even losing their housing, Social Kitchen supports them with food to cover some basic needs. They work exclusively with donations (aliments and money) and are therefore excluded from the economic categorisation.

The interviewees attached importance to the framing and the wording of their group, if it is called an NGO (Anti-violence network), a grassroots initiative (Pocket Garden), an experiment (Kipos³), or cooperative (Rediviva Cucina Povera) which put emphasis on the concept of social solidarity economy (European Village) etc. This indicates that the urge to define groups and exclude others is very important to the interviewees, even if their goal is to include as many people from different backgrounds as possible.

The following table shows the definitions of how the organisations frame their group.

Name	Social move- ment	Cooperative	Initiative	Experiment	NGO	Social Enterprise
Anti-Violence Network					✓	
Bios Coop		✓				
Campfire Innovation						✓
Communitism			✓			
European Village		✓				
Impact Hub						✓
K136	✓					
Khora			✓			
Kipos ³				✓		
Pocket Garden			✓			
Rediviva Cucina Povera		✓				
Social Kitchen			✓			
Vio Me		✓				

Table 2: Framing of the organisations

4.2.2 Process of defining

The differentiation between non-governmental organisations, associations and initiatives/communities is crucial for the local actors. The terms communes, network, association (for profit and without profit), NGO or NPO, family and cooperatives were used during the interviews. The active groups insist on defining themselves. However, this often implies excluding others: "Another definition of community is people who exclude" (Pocket Garden 2018). During the group discussion in the organisation 'Communitism', diverse opinions were uttered regarding inclusion and exclusion.

"Person 1: So, we don't actually only support artists, we support community building through art. So, art is our language.

Person 2: Fully inclusive.

Person 3: Inclusive is a tricky word.

Person 2: Because of the name I thought that you are a commune, a commune house?

Person 3: [...] Inclusive is a tricky word. I have a personal thing with words like empowerment, inclusiveness and equality. Empowerment according to whom and for what reason? Who is empowered?

Person 2: Inclusiveness could actually be used in a way that is excluding...

Person 3: Yes. I don't want to use these words because you never know..." (Communitism 2018).

The inner group defines matching characteristics/values that distinguish them from other groups. This process is a form of 'othering'. "Otherness is accomplished using rules of behaviour and the mechanisms of discourse, interpretation, and performance set by hegemonic groups" (Cohen, Krumer, Nevo, Avieli 2017:399). Even if the group is not hegemonic, like in the case of Communitism, each group defines their own rules and their own principles of communication, which excludes other people. Through defining exclusion criteria, the identity of each group is shaped. As can be seen from the above citation, the word and the concept are reflected critically, and it is acknowledged that full inclusiveness might never be accomplished.

One of the founding members described their process of inclusion in the following way:

"Everyone is welcome, at least you are not extreme. Any idea is welcome, at least it is not extreme. I realised, here, people, they fight for whatever and against what they don't like. But we do focus on what we do. From that path we get stronger because we are building - not fighting to break something" (Communitism 2018).

This statement can be seen in the light of the rising right-wing ideologies which can be witnessed all over Europe. In Greece, the trend towards uttering radical ideas is more prominent on both ends of the political spectrum and radical activism is widespread. One example is the

popularity of the nationalistic right-wing party Golden Dawn. However, radical leftist activities are also quite prominent. The quarter Exarchia in Athens is known to be a hub for left activists. The radicalisation of ideas and the clash of concepts are clearly visible in civil society and in politics. The crisis fuelled the call for radical ideas. The rise of the left party SYRIZA and the party Golden Dawn during the elections of 2015 can be taken as evidence (Politico. <https://www.politico.eu/europe-poll-of-polls/greece/>. 13.11.19). In general, the citation above shows that their activities to form a group are seen as a counteraction against political radicalism which was fuelled by political instabilities. This reveals a contextual understanding of their activities in the light of social and political changes.

The creation of communities is not only seen as a counter movement against institutional instabilities, but the focus is on the ways of internal communication and participation.

"I love these things here that, the moment you step in, they are not judging if you are bad or good. No. They are waiting to listen: what do you have to tell us. And how you can be part of it. If we just keep judging each other and looking where is the mistakes, we will never be able to form a group" (Communitism 2018).

They move away from hierarchical interactions and methods of communication. Instead, they practise methods of direct democracy. They communicate at eye level with everyone. Listening and demanding of the members to take an active part is essential. The emancipation of the individual is the goal of all the communities. Nevertheless, group consolidation processes go hand in hand with the role each member takes. In the cooperative 'Vio Me', the members deliberately switch roles and reassess their roles constantly. A more detailed description will be given in the chapter on economic transformation.

4.2.3 The concept of 'The Other Human'

Particular attention will be devoted to the initiative 'Social Kitchen – The Other Human'. This group defined a certain concept which they called 'The Other Human'. Analysing and comparing this concept with the practised values of the other initiatives makes it possible to detect the reasons and goals of creating these communities. The initiative 'Social Kitchen' is a special case as they put their group criterion even in their name. 'The other human' refers to the exclusion of people from society which is understood as a problem. Those who were already socially disadvantaged were even more marginalised by the crisis.

"Everyone of us is the other human. And we can become another human just all of a sudden. You have a job and then loose it. Have your house and then loose it again. Everything can happen in life. The important thing is that we have to care about each other. Because if the home of your neighbour is on fire, he cannot

stop it if you don't help him. And even your place can be on fire as well. We all make mistakes because we are human. We will not let destiny or luck rule our faith. There are others who want us to be separated but they see us like giving trust. So, we want to be together. That's our medium" (Social Kitchen 2018).

In this citation a lot of hints towards the concept of 'the other human' can be detected. Instead of categorising people, the group calls everyone human. Interestingly, they do not use the word equality. Welcoming and not stigmatising people is in the centre of attention. Humans are not categorised by their employment stage or money. It is about switching roles in life and in society either due to external events or for personal reasons. This change of roles should be accepted, however, not romanticised.

With the austerity measures negatively affecting civil society in Greece, the consciousness that a person's life standard can be downgraded due to external reasons is very present. This understanding is contrary to the neoliberal understanding of career management. In the neoliberal ideology, a person's own endeavours and self-optimisation are the main reasons for a good life. Only oneself is accountable for the possibilities in life. With the crisis in 2007/8 and 2011 Greek people had to experience the opposite. They were hit by external, economic factors, without the means to change the situation. For those engaged at 'Social Kitchen' it is important to not stigmatise people according to their past, their social status or their circumstances in life. Respecting everyone and sharing what everyone needs, in this case food, should bring people together and reduce prejudices. A simple talk during a meal or eating the same food in the streets may create a certain feeling of togetherness. Being visible or daring to be visible is an important factor for the members in 'Social Kitchen'. They turn away from the concept of clustering people and from breaking social bubbles to see that the other person is just as 'human' as you are, despite different social and economic problems. A human being who might be in need, as we all might get into a situation where we are in need.

The first sentence "Every one of us is the other human" (Social Kitchen 2018) points towards the idea that everyone is partly the same. At one point during the interview, they explained this idea in a different way. They said it was like a mathematical fraction, the denominator was the human being and the numerator was the name of the individual. "One part is always the same" (Social Kitchen 2018). This common denominator is the basis and seen as the ground for the intrinsic motivation to help others. It is not seen as an extra work that should be emphasised. Being a human requires automatically to stand in solidarity with others.

4.2.4 Types of communities

While doing research on all these communities, the differences became more evident. In the following section, the various types of communities which were detected and analysed through the interviews will be described. Afterwards, this will be collated with the theoretical hypothesis on the 'weak' civil society (in Greece). Even though not every initiative that was interviewed is community-oriented, most of them do gather a community around them. The characteristics of each type of community will be described.

The types of communities in this section will be differentiated by how long their community members stay and by the time frame in which they are or want to be active as a group. Certain distinctions have been made: temporal, intermediate, long-term and transient communities. However, all the groups have long-term goals, they have existed for several years and are probably sustainable. A clear assignment cannot be made as the composition of the communities fluctuates and their goals vary as well.

Temporal communities can be classified as a certain number of people gathering for mainly one reason. Their connection is rather weak and there are strong similarities with social movements that form during protests. The movement K136 can be subsumed under this label. However, a smaller group of people stays active and keeps on following their long-term goals. Furthermore, K136 is a network that can be reactivated in case of need. An easily reactivated network as K136 is therefore helpful in understanding the water protest movement in Greece in 2015, regarding this movement in the light of the resource mobilisation theory. Intermediate and transic communities have striking similarities. A transic community, as described by a member of Khora, does not form strong bonds within the group:

"Yeah, like, there is a really strong sense of community and it's also a very transic community because everybody in the space is quite 'transitian' in a way. It's volunteers, especially when they come from other places, the people who come here as refugees mostly don't want to stay in Greece" (Khora 2018).

Depending on which goal a group wants to achieve, the formation of an either long-term, intermediate, temporal or transic community is recommended.

People coming together and creating groups and communities form characteristics and content to shape identities. The formation of social networks is very important in a civil society such as Greece. As addressed in the theory section of this research, civil society is often described as 'weak' which is characterised by Huliaras as "lack of civic engagement" and "few institutionalised civil society organisations" (Huliaras 2015:11). "A main question is how levels of trust and networks change as a reaction to a recession and whether these changes facilitate

the ability of communities to deal with difficult financial times" (Jones, Proikaki, Roumeliotis 2015:29). The implementation of communities shows the variety of actions taken by civil society and how they facilitate change. Low levels of trust towards institutions and towards international organisations which could be detected during the interviews, presses civil society organisations which were formed during the crisis, into informality. Not being legally assigned is seen as a positive identification feature. As social trust towards politics is low, excluding themselves from this system is a statement against the prevalent political situation. Therefore, they emphasise other identification characteristics such as solidarity.

4.2.5 Concepts of solidarity

The search for the answer of who is active was hard to grasp in the interviews. The question of class, social groups or income for instance was hardly covered during the interviews or even refused to be answered. Instead, the concept of their understanding of solidarity was in the centre of the interviews: "The people who participate actively here, they may vote for SYRIZA they vote for the communist party, they may not vote at all or they consider themselves anarchists. Solidarity has no label" (Social Kitchen 2018). Each time, the interviewees underlined that their actions want to reach many target groups and often they minimised the differences of the social milieus. Their actions should include everyone. Even though the people involved in the initiatives underline that they come from various backgrounds, Vathakou states as well that it often has a strong leftist ideology behind it (Vathakou 2015:174). Some are solution-oriented. The initiative 'Social Kitchen', for instance, fights for a better life for all but does not change the basic problem which is the lack of work or social securities. Other collectives concentrate on a problem-solving approach. The cooperative 'Vio Me' tries to incorporate ideas of alternative working realities and combine those with solidarity actions which allude to other fields of civil society.

The interviewees avoided to make their members the subject of discussion and, instead, focused on solidarity. The following section will address this topic in more detail. The interviewees were familiar with the various approaches of solidarity. The distinction from other views of solidarity was important to the interviewees, as mentioned by them in almost every interview.

The short overview of the history of the understanding of solidarity opens up the opportunity to unveil certain trends in this discourse. This shows that the assumptions and

thoughts given by the interviewees have to be analysed as an outcome of the discourse itself as well. It must be kept in mind that this analysis is written from a Eurocentric perspective and, due to time and thematic constraints, leaves out other concepts of solidarity.

"The invention of modern solidarity emerged in the early nineteenth century, in the wake of democratic revolutions" (Laville 2015:41). The social link emerged out of interdependencies of individuals and groups rather than from religious feelings. Workers organised themselves in associations and revolted against exploitation (Laville 2015:42). Mutual help, protest, collective actions and self-organisation were the main focus of the civil society actors. However, their claim remained on the call for better working conditions. The whole system was not yet questioned.

In the second part of the nineteenth century, solidarity was not used as an alternative term for equality anymore. Instead, philanthropic solidarity, benevolence and paternalism were seen as solidary actions. Yet, helping the poor voluntarily was a hidden action to control the behaviour of the ones in need, too. Philanthropic solidarity replaced the fight for equality with the fight against poverty. The belief of collective action was replaced through individual responsibility and made solidarity a private matter. Therefore, independent associations were repressed (Laville 2015:42). Vathakou also stresses that philanthropy is a one-way, top-down action, having the economic power to provide for those who do not have the same economic preconditions (Vathakou 2015:173).

During the interviews, the concept of philanthropy was also mentioned:

"My aim is not philanthropy. I am not against, but it is not my point. The powerful people help the poor people; this is vertical. But solidarity means horizontal. You have a problem and I have power and we will work together in solidarity to do something together. I have something to take from you if you have something to take from me. Not material. That's how I see all these cooperatives and all the people. That's the theoretical and ideological frame and of course in a procedure of social change" (K136 2018).

This statement reveals several postulates. As it indicates a power asymmetry, it promotes a hierarchical structure of aid which was mentioned by Laville as well. The interviewee dissents from this point of view. In his opinion, solidarity has to be a vertical relation leaving behind the concepts of 'expert – non-expert' and denying pushing an individual into the role of a victim. Forcing a person into a passive position disables the ability of emancipation which could derive from collective action.

In the early 20th century, a holistic version of society that is more than the sum of individuals emerged as a trend and along with that, the public dimension that focused on rights. The faith

in associations and in individuals was replaced by the control of the market (Laville 2015:43). However, this included the separation of the economic and the social sphere and the concept of the Keynesian state was implemented. Additionally, this intensified the constitution of a welfare state system. Collectives and individuals faded from the spotlight.

The trust in the welfare state widely eroded in Greece with the crisis. No interviewee uttered his or her trust in the Greek welfare state. Consequently, collective actions that are fully decoupled from the state or public funding are the favoured type of initiatives.

"We want to create an as safe environment as possible. which is not easy. Because we also face a lot of financial crisis. But we managed somehow with the help and solidarity to be able to exist. We don't take any funds from the state, we don't have any collaboration with banks (laughs)" (European Village 2018).

This citation even shows that solidarity is used to dissociate the initiative from the state. The concept is used as a tool and as a methodology against the Greek system and the crisis.

Moreover, it is often used as a legitimation to hinder the closure of initiatives. Vio Me for example gathers supporters from their district Thessaloniki and even beyond. Making the collective bigger and not only receiving solidarity but also helping other collectives amplifies their standing in Thessaloniki. In this way the society backs them up. This support by the civil society legitimised their actions and stopped the closure of Vio Me several times, as politicians did not want to exasperate their constituents (Vio Me 2018).

However, in the 1970ties the clash of the capital and labour came to the surface again. Now, consumption, the way of life and democratic representations were called into question. The social and environmental costs of the so-called 'progress' and the commodification of the commons were questioned. Solidarity as a collective claim for better social and ecological environment were the uniting topics. "Some occupied the growing space for NGOs which, from the neoclassical economics perspective, were a response to market failures in the provision of individual services and to state failures in the provision of collective services" (Laville 2015:45).

By tackling changing challenges new forms of solidarity and alternating points of convergence emerged. Even though the analysis of the solidarity concept is written from a European perspective, the trend of focusing on democratic rights and refocusing on collective solidarity actions which are also initiated by workers can be detected in other continents as well. For example, the interviewees referred to the workers movement in Latin America (Silva 2009:56ff). The international solidarity was important and shows the outward-looking approach of the initiatives: "The water movement for example. There is a European water movement and the water movement of Greece was integrated and participated in all the acts of

international/European water movements or international water forums" (Karyotis 2018). Emphasis was put on the inter- and transdisciplinary actions. This can be understood as multiple layers of solidarity actions. Vio me, for example, is helping to store donations for refugees, allowing a local seasonal market and other cultural events to take place on their factory site and promoting matters of other initiatives. This transdisciplinary action will be expounded in the section of economic transformation as well, as it defines the collaboratives that were interviewed.

Reciprocity was mentioned several times by the interviewees: "Solidarity shouldn't be one-way. Solidarity also means giving" (Vio Me 2018). In Social Kitchen the 'share-concept' is a similar approach, not proclaiming a victim and a person who is able to help. Being aware that these two positions, being a victim and being economically well off, can switch and that these roles are fluid dissipates the hierarchical power relations between two interacting actors. This is accompanied by the responsibility which both sides have towards each other: "We thought it's our obligation to help" (Vio Me 2018). "The practical implementation of solidarity is empowering, because it mobilises people, through the principles of equality and reciprocity, to take responsibilities for themselves and other members of their communities" (Vathakou 2015:174).

Another specification made by the interviewees is the differentiation between the words *solidarity* and *aid*. "For me, it's about equality and like standing alongside people rather than separation in aid. Trying to break down the barriers like language or culture or categories like 'refugee' or 'volunteer'. We are a community of people" (Khora 2018).

The intrinsic definition of the communities relies on the separation between the civil society and the state. The initiative European Village categorically denies any state aid. They want neither money, nor any other form of non-fiscal support (European Village 2018). Social Kitchen has the same negative attitude towards state intervention in any form:

"Before the elections, they came in contact and ask Kostas, for example, to be an active supportant and be also in the elections from a different political party. But he said no. Like a lot of enterprises, they wanted to give the social kitchen/the other human money and of course we said no, because, and that's also very important point, if you are an NGO an enterprise can give you money as an enterprise and have also return the taxes. So, it's the winner. And it's not so much a pure act of solidarity"

(Social Kitchen 2018).

The ailing trust in the state is discoverable in every interview. One member of the initiative Pocket Garden explains how they experience state intervention in their initiative.

According to him, it was hard to find a free space in the city and even when they found a suiting spot, it was clear to them that being able to use the area for free was not an act of solidarity. Their refurbishment of the area and even banishment of disliked groups like drug addicts or homeless people were 'of advantage' to the city administration. The process of gentrification and how the initiatives deal with the symptoms of their actions will be described in the chapter of spatial articulation, hence it will not be elaborated in this chapter. Of course, the advantages the government sees in initiatives like Pocket Garden or Kipos3 are not congruent with the goals of the initiatives. As the reaction to create a community or an initiative often derived out of state failure, the ambiguous relation towards the state is understandable. Therefore, the general question arises if institutions can act in solidarity or if this is not possible at all. "It is the choice to appropriate the crisis that triggers the process to go beyond solidarity, to promote democracy, rights, and public spaces (core elements of political change) and to express collective identities and community empowerment" (Zamponi, Bosi 2018:809).

In his book 'Solidarity', Heinz Bude provides final remarks on the concept, aggregating different versions of the concept and breaking it down to a personal level. Solidarity cannot be forced through moral arguments, nor should it be used as a therapy for the wounded self. He says solidarity might be useless for the whole and expensive for oneself. However, with acting out of solidarity I accept the absurdity of my own being and at the same time I rebel against it. The ones who are solidary united bring forward proof that together we can go on and we do not have to surrender. One only knows to value solidarity when loneliness has been experienced (Bude 2019:163). His analysis can be read in terms of solidarity as an action bringing advantages for oneself as well. This assumption is underpinned by the statement of a member of Kipos3: "It's about solidarity in the idea of how I can think everything is better, if your life gets better. Not mine. How can my life be better because your life is better" (Kipos³ 2018). When it comes to solidary actions it cannot be ruled out that personal advantages might be a reason for the actions.

This leads to another critique of the concept: overemphasis and romanticisation.

"We have structural reasons that explain things [the crisis]. Otherwise we are romanticizing the resistances and movements. You deny structural failures. And the movements trying to overcome them. We just see it as a romantic undertone of a disaster. Like 'ah ok there is a hurricane that struck. But look at these people who trying to save their neighbours from the destroyed homes. No. No, I don't think this is good research. This is good sensational journalism" (Karyotis 2018).

4.2.6 Who is active – more ‘we’, less ‘me’

Even though the interviewees did not want to assign people who are active in their initiative to certain social milieus, they named the roles of the group members. The analysis shows that they subdivided the roles. The following classifications were found when coding the interviews: user, consumer, member, family, volunteer, refugee, team, friends. The interviewees emphasised that switching these roles constantly, is part of the definition of these terms. No person only takes only one role, but changes roles. The words clerks or labourers were never used. Later in the section on economic transformation the reasons for this will be explained.

In the research only few quantitative analyses were made, as this study concentrates on qualitative research. However, one quantitative inquiry focuses on the frequency of the word ‘I’ and ‘we’. In each interview it was analysed which of these two words was used more often. The research yielded that the word ‘we’ took the first place in 13 out of the 14 interviews. This shows that emphasis is put on collective action and collaboration rather than on personal goals. Even though most of the interviews were conducted only with one person, the interviewees did not take the chance to talk about themselves but rather elaborated on their initiative and their joint activities.

In the next part, the terms ‘family’, ‘volunteer’, ‘member’ and ‘refugee’ will be evaluated separately as they were frequently used in several interviews. The terms served as a code during the analysis. The context in which these words were used will be elucidated in the following section.

4.2.7 Family and reflections on social trust

‘Family’ was mentioned in the interviews with Social Kitchen, Communitism, European Village, Anti-Violence Network, Bios Coop and Vio Me. The word was mentioned several times with regard to the crisis.

“I think the Greek family plays a very important role in the sense, ok we have the crisis we suffer but, we have very strong family bonds. Which means parents still pay and help kids. For a long time. Here the family structure is completely different than the one from the north. [...] You are 30 years old and they still support you. Psychological, financial, and the reason why you don’t see this crisis in Athens, people not living outside in the streets so much, is because of family” (European Village 2018).

As analysed in the theory chapter on civil society in Greece, the trust in the Greek state is declining or already low. That is why other social security networks have to take over. With NGOs not having a good standing in society or not being well established or trusted, another instance needs to step in. The member of Vio Me who was interviewed during the research trip

in Greece pointed out the importance of the family network as well: "No. it's not enough to survive only by this salary. We have our families that are supporting us" (Vio Me 2018).

The interviews showed that the instance that helps to calm the effects of the crisis in Greece is the family. The members of the Anti-Violence network confirmed the strong role of the family as a strong social security network. In their work against domestic violence, they observe conservative gender roles. Strong family boundaries may lead to a certain level of security. However, the Anti-Violence network deals with the negative effects of the family being the main security system which can favour domestic violence against women (Anti-Violence Network 2018).

Another research question, which is not the main topic of interest in this thesis, would be how family structures were affected by the crisis. The interviewees mentioned the important role of the family during the crisis but did not explain how it affected the relations within the family. Did the crisis change the view on family or their relations? Did it intensify the trust in the concept of family or is the contrary the case?

What can be seen is that if people cannot rely on their family for different reasons, similar structures and the concept interpreted in a different way were established. Communities that were created were called 'family' by several interviewees: "Yeah, so, we have sub-teams under the family of Communitism" (Communitism 2018). The members of Social Kitchen also referred to the concept as follows:

"It's everything but cooking. Actually, like family I would say. And there are 450 families we help with food every month" (Social Kitchen 2018). In Communitism, refugees, people from abroad and Athenians come together to form a new and rather stable network which they call 'family' as well. The members of Social Kitchen help those who do not have support from their families nor the state. The group again creates a network. Forming a group means building up relations between the members. Their claim is to form very strong connections and relations between people, so strong that they even call it family. In the cultural Greek view, family is understood as the strongest alliance.

How can this return or even intensified relation to the concept of family be theoretically embedded? The concept of social trust helps to understand the framing processes. "A main question is how levels of trust and networks change as a reaction to a recession and whether these changes facilitate the ability of communities to deal with difficult financial times" (Jones 2015:29).

For the timeframe between September and October 2017 (Special Eurobarometer 467), the Eurobarometer indicates that the Greeks were less happy with their family life compared to the last survey (minus 6% since the last survey). Greece takes the last place with 86% of the interviewees agreeing with this statement (Special Eurobarometer 467 2017:24). Lyberaki and Tinios (2014) come to the following conclusion: "Austerity tests the capacity of formal welfare provision, and so eats into the liquidity of the informal support system. The crisis is thus transmitted from the state to the family" (Lyberaki, Tinios 2014:193). However, this is very alarming because, as Huliaras stated: "[...] the state, political parties and the family are the country's strongest institutions" (Huliaras 2015:11).

The concept of social trust and social capital helps to understand why the creation of community can be essential in times of crisis. Classical economists view social capital as an option to commodify social relations and use their ability to network to create monetary or economic value. In this research, another definition will be in the centre of attention. Social capital in the form of social trust which helps to overcome the symptoms of the crisis in Greece. This definition is detached from the quantified power relations which are created by waged labour and other forms of economic endeavours. For this reason, I will concentrate on the concept of social trust as a prerequisite for any economic or social interaction.

"The term 'social capital' commonly refers to the mechanism of such social relationships as networks, norms and trust to induce people toward cooperation. This concept has been emerging as a vogue across social sciences for the two recent decades since the seminal works of sociologist James Coleman (1988, 1990) and political scientist Robert Putnam (1993a, b)" (Hayami 2008:96).

Staying in the tradition of Coleman and Putnam social relations will be furthermore categorised as horizontal and hierarchical structures of civic engagement. The latter can be called institutional trust as well. It describes the network between the citizens and the state. This formal network/trust and the acceptance of policies is low due to the financial crisis and former political instabilities (Jones, Proikaki, Roumeliotis 2015: 37). The interviews proved this distrust towards political institutions. Interviewees did not approve of institutional interventions in any form. One of the main reasons for their activities is their impression of the state failing to support its citizens. Horizontal relations can be classified as general trust and particularised trust. Generalised trust implies a high level of honesty and common values. To determine these values some of the initiatives (Social Kitchen, Vio Me, K136, Communitism f.e.) wrote down their own codex and goals. This enforces generalised trust.

"Particularised trust is prevalent in the types of relationships that are found within Greek society, since there

remains a general suspicion of unknown individuals, and thus interpersonal trust develops based on reciprocity and knowing the other through personal contact and personal experience" (Mavrikos-Adamou 2015:46).

"Concerning social networks in Greece, a general assumption in the relevant literature is that formal networks are weak whereas informal networks of family and friends are significantly deeper" (Jones, Proikaki, Roumeliotis 2015: 34). Trust as an expectation of cooperation aspiring a positive outcome promotes social cohesion. The interviewees distrusted certain people who were not part of their community. On the one hand, this could be the result of othering which was described in the former chapter. On the other hand, it can support this assumption by Jones, Proikaki and Roumeliotis.

The approaches of bridging and bonding social capital by Putnam help to better understand this phenomenon (Pollack 2003:51ff.). Bridging social capital is defined as overcoming social boundaries. Social Kitchen, for example, tries to overcome roles and the preconception of roles in society. With their idea of 'The Other Human' and their action of cooking in the streets to reach a wider range of people, Social Kitchen is actively trying to reduce social gaps in civil society. Other initiatives such as Kipos³ focus on bonding social capital. Engaging neighbours through community gardening can have the ability to break down social boundaries, however, it mainly strengthens the cohesion within the group. Generally, it can be said that creating communities can have the effect of an emergency relief mechanism in times of crisis (Jones, Proikaki, Roumeliotis 2015: 37). In sum, the shift to community-based frameworks may have been triggered by the assemblies during the protest movements in 2011:

"When you have to deal with thousands, at some point millions of people that have different backgrounds and occupying the place, which is against the law, then you have issues of trust. In the beginning we didn't know each other. It was a process for us to start talking and trust each other. How can I trust your intentions? How do I know that you really want to help and be part of it or maybe you are police? But then after the Square [occupation of Syntagma Square in Athens 2011] we didn't stay there two month and then disappeared and disconnected. We left the square and we found other ways to cooperate and creating this bonding and trust. In the square we met, it was an amazing moment and for me it was a historical moment, but then we threw the seeds there and then the flowers somehow flourished around in many different ways" (European Village 2018).

The initial distrust towards other people can be seen in this citation. Still, after this time of occupation and discussions trust evolved. It is very interesting that the word 'trust' was used several times by the interviewee and that it was a crucial condition to work together with other people and to start building groups.

By building up trust and thus enhancing social trust in general and enforcing social cohesion, the focus shifts towards a collective understanding of society. This refers to the Eurocentric view of civility and civil society which was analysed in the theory section of this thesis. The Eurocentric views of civil society “[...] are based on an individualistic view of human beings that prioritises individual wellbeing over more collective values” (Baumgarten, Gosewinekl, Rucht 2011:302). However, all the interviewees’ focus on the creation of communities shows that there is a trend towards collective values and collective action rather than individual fortune. Even though the will to cooperation might as well derive from the social and economic need initiated by the crisis, the will to act together had already persisted for several years and was successful from their point of view. Anyway, without wanting to romanticise this transformation, it opens up new ways of social and economic action and goes beyond emergency relief mechanisms. Being continued and further elaborated new social engagements might manifest in civil society.

`Volunteer`, `member`, `refugee` – changing roles in a changing environment

Who are the people being active in the initiatives? How do they define themselves? Three main categories were extracted in the coding process: `volunteer`, `member` and `refugee` were the three mostly articulated definitions by the interviewees. In this chapter the categories will be evaluated and explained in which context they were mentioned.

A `member` is used an expression and sign of the equal opportunities to design and co-determine the decision made in the initiatives. Sometimes a membership fee needs to be payed to be eligible to vote and be part of the initiative (in Bios Coop for example a fee is taken and used as a monetary basis for their supermarkets). In the section of economic transformation in this thesis the tasks and meaning of members will be further illustrated.

Being a `refugee` is not seen as a permanent role by the interviewees. The refugees themselves rather see it as a momentum which is fluctuating. The initiatives give them the possibility to move away from a stagnating, passive role and being accepted as an active member. "We should use this legal state, because all the focus now is on refugees. I think in two years something else will come and we won't be the spotlight" (Communitism 2018). The interviewees from Social Kitchen, Khora, Communitism and Campfire Innovation pointed out

the involvement of the connection of refugees joining their initiative and their insecure but special role. One refugee stated in the group discussion in Communitism:

"I think for us also it is the time where we start. you said from the low.? Because we are the lowest. There is always a system above, but we are moving. And regarding the social movements around Athens: there are so many. In different ways. Especially of movement of refugee and migrants now. There are many people who get themselves involved in this situation and they create their own movement. Individual movement" (Communitism 2018).

Shifting the focus from refugees fleeing to other countries towards them creating an (individual) movement or being engaged in movement activities could raise them out of their passive role. Changing the framing of the actions of refugees could reinforce their active role in society.

The third category 'volunteer' was framed and discussed during the interviews as well. It was mentioned by the interviewees without any specific request, which points towards the inner struggles of the initiatives to define the term and accompanying actions. A member of Khora who came from Great Britain in 2016 to support the situation of the refugees in Greece described the change of her mindset the following way:

"One of the things is how we categorise people and how we put people in boxes. So, for instances, like, I tried to not use the term refugee as much I possibly can because I know lots of people who have migrant background and feel, maybe, oppressed by it. And I see how it produces a kind of us and them. Volunteers and refugees or however people do it" (Khora 2018).

Dissolving the vocabulary gives people the chance to take an active and empowered role. Yet equal standpoints in the initiatives should not cover the members' different backgrounds or possibilities. As the term volunteer is commonly understood as a voluntary worker without payment, the initiatives cannot identify with this concept and hardly use it. Payment or accumulating money is, except for the social enterprises, not their goal. Only if they use funding or any other form of monetary interaction, it is used for a goal rather than for remuneration. 'Work' is detached from their actions to realise their plans. The connection of money and work is described in the chapter of economic transformation in more detail.

Vathakou Eugenia stated in her article (2015) that a semantic change was occurring during and after the crisis in Greece. The word 'kinimatikos' is used to describe an individuum who is active in the social movements:

"It should be stressed that before the crisis, the term 'kinimatikos' was associated with an anarchist approach. However, following the 'indignados' movement of Syntagma Square the term was increasingly adopted by people who do not espouse anarchism, but consider themselves members of a broader social movement with

the above characteristics" (Vathakou 2015:177).

The strong feeling of ownership and commitment is as well associated with this term.

4.2.8 Tools to build communities

In the next chapter the tools to build communities will be explored. Furthermore, the function of the communities for their members will be presented. This chapter displays how a transformation of civil society can be realised. The tools to build communities that are introduced are examples by the initiatives that were interviewed and do not cover all possible tools.

Art, waste, food, gardening, free shops and cafés have been the mediums to bring people together and work for a common goal. Two of these will be presented in detail: art and food. Even though it might not be a surprise that these two mediums have the potential to bring people together, they show what an important role they can play in creating a community. The medium of gardening will be examined in the chapter of spatial articulation.

Communitism, Khora and Social Kitchen have free shops offering clothes, books or anything people donate. The free shops refer to the idea that financial value is not the goal of these communities. Solidarity and the idea of circular economy are the main drivers for these shops. The café and the events that for instance European Village, Pocket Garden and Communitism operate or organise serve, on the one hand, to advertise the initiatives and, on the other hand, to earn money to fund their collective actions. Self-enrichment is not the goal of these cafés or events.

Detaching from financial aspects is as well important when it comes to the medium of art. Several times during the interviews the topic of art was mentioned. One inspiring story came from a member of European Village who described why art was such an important medium during the occupation of Syntagma Square in 2011 in Athens:

Art played for me the most important role. If art wouldn't have been there the square wouldn't have last for so long. Because we stayed almost 2 month there. Occupying the square. [...] If we didn't have artists to make us feel safe and better there, if we wouldn't have artist to play music ,if we didn't have artists to perform theatre or doing events, the police and the violence would have been worse. And trust me, we experienced war there. Art made us feel united not be afraid, stay there and do stuff there. It was about art, about discussions about democracy, about direct democracy" (European Village 2018).

The interviewee continued to describe one story during the time of the occupation:

"I remember musicians which an important role they played! One night we were a lot of people in the square. There was one band rock, Greek rock, and that moment when he played suddenly the police

attacked around from all the sides, suddenly with teargas and I could see the clouds of teargas [...] And we were in the middle. And this guy who was in the middle didn't stop. He continued playing the music. The people were there, the artist was there, the police was there. But because of the artist we stayed there. We weren't afraid. And the police couldn't attack. Because the artists were very famous people. In the way they saved us" (European Village 2018).

Music and art were the uniting element during protests. Art didn't change her mind about society but it gave the interviewee hope, held the protesters together and was the underlying melody of change. Without the artists it would have been harder to stay. It changed the atmosphere and the context and changed how people saw the resistance. It made it more comfortable and connected the protesters as well. Art made a transformation of the circumstances possible.

The initiative Communitism uses art for several reasons:

"Person 1: Because art is the. Art always creating the lens that connect us with others in different ways.

Person 2: You don't have to speak the same language, you don't have come from the same background.

Person 1: And art is not only the drawing, or painting or music. It is cooking and talking and moving and . that's why we chose it.

Person 2: We consider what we are doing here an art form. Because it creates different outcomes" (Communitism 2018).

Art was described later as a language through which they communicate. It breaks language, communication and expression barriers in a group with people from different backgrounds. The assertion that 'art is not only drawing' points towards the understanding of art in a deconstructing way. Art is therefore not only their tool to communicate but also their goal, as the last sentence of the citation shows. They even see art as a medium for social engineering (Communitism 2018). In the interview they detected not a lack of creativity but rather a lack of possibilities to express creativity. For this reason, Communitism dedicated a part of the building to serve for purposes of art. This topic will be addressed again in the chapter of spatial articulation.

However, not all the interviewees agreed with the statement of art being a suitable method for change. Karyotis stated:

"I don't believe in art as a force to change society. [...] Art is a self-referential system and often it is very, very disconnected from society. So, you might come up with some really, really radical ideas and some really avantgarde concepts, which may be useful. But I don't think if you want to engage with problems of society or change society you can start from art" (Karyotis 2018).

If art reaches out to everyone and if it is suitable to break down language barriers or if it builds up new barriers to understanding needs to be reflected critically.

The second medium which will be described in more depth is food. Through eating or cooking the activity itself fades into the background and the goal to build trust and networks between people comes to the fore. "It's everything but cooking. Actually, like family I would say" (Social Kitchen 2018). The focus is not only on the need for food but on the action of connecting, as well. As financial aspects are deliberately dropped the asset is somewhere else: "[...] and the profit is here *points to his heart*" (Social Kitchen 2018). For Social Kitchen, who cook outside on the street, food is a way to connect people.

Working with the medium 'food' means a lot more than just fulfilling needs for the cooperative supermarket Bios Coop. With the austerity policies hitting Greek people, food was not easily affordable to everyone anymore. Moreover, the members of the cooperative wanted to improve the quality of the food, wanted to focus on regional products and support local farmers as well. Self-management and experimenting with methods of direct democracy is as well a way to regain food sovereignty by being able to decide on all steps of purchase and sale. European Village even wants to go further and experiments with new forms of agriculture and promotes community supported agriculture. Furthermore, European Village also wants to reduce the actual and the psychological distance between the food production and the consumers. Therefore, learning how to grow crops and about the origin of food and their ways of production is another goal of their initiative. The topic of solidary economy and agriculture is widely discussed in the research discourse. Lisa Mittendrein for example is one of the researchers discussing solidary economy and ecology in her book: 'Solidarität ist alles, was uns bleibt: Solidarische Ökonomie in der griechischen Krise' (Mittendrein 2013).

4.2.9 Goals and values

This chapter deals with the objectives set by the communities and discusses the underlying values. The crisis and the cuts on the welfare system were addressed in the interviews. As the interviews were analysed with qualitative methods, the findings do not qualify as general assumptions or as being transferable.

The feeling of being taken over by external events, in this case the austerity policies, is for all the initiatives an important reason to start forming a community. Apart from that, the feeling of deliberate division is another reason for the people to take action. Breaking free from

external restricting boundaries fuels a new wave of activism and emancipation. The values were on the one hand extracted from the interviews and on the other hand written down by the initiatives in their statutes.

First, through building communities the members try to stabilise their lives which were shattered by the crisis in 2008/2011. Social support and the healing effect of a community was mentioned several times during the interviews: "It is my personal opinion: everyone has come in this team to cure something or save something or realise something with themselves" (Communitism 2018). Social Kitchen is as well working on the restoration of social cohesion and reintegration of those who are or were confronted with difficult situations in their lives.

"The people who start living on the street, they start feeling another human. A lot of people who are in the social kitchen/the other human and help us were homeless. They became again active in the society and now they are living in a house and they took back what they lost. It's magical to see everything is possible without a legal entity. People got married through social kitchen. And children. Life changing. Drug addicts got clean through social kitchen and now he is offering the money that he used to spend for drugs to the social kitchen" (Social Kitchen 2018).

The members of the Anti-Violence Network underpinned this statement of community building as a process of rebuilding social skills in times of crisis (even though the organisation focuses on domestic violence): "You know after years of violence, they lost their social skills and they start rebuilding it with each other. [...] In the end they manage to do it by themselves they also create some groups online where the chat they check each other if they are safe or how they are doing" (Anti-Violence Network 2018).

In the phase of coding certain social skills were detected. Especially the ability to discuss and confront one another is trained in the initiatives. As the initiatives try to work without hierarchies, finding consensus, formulating common goals and negotiating their framing are the biggest challenges. One hypothesis is that these skills have to be learnt as well, as the former professional structures did not demand these abilities. One interviewee described the Greek society as "disintegrated and deprived".

"[...] [T]heir shared hope was that the flexible, multilayer organisational structure might help build arenas for confrontation among different associations and subjectivities, expected not just to act together but also to transform each other reciprocally, building new identities and values, becoming communities" (della Porta 2014:304).

Another question is whether the process of community building can be seen as cultural production, too. In the conclusion of the thesis, this will be analysed in more detail. Not only communication and the spirit of solidarity are tested and experienced, but educational values

are also transmitted. Education and the distribution of their newly gained knowledge in participation and community building constitutes an important part.

"For me it has many values this place. A demonstration place, educational values, communication values, because I have met here many people that I knew since I was born in this neighbourhood and lost contact in the meanwhile and I found them here again after 20 years (laughs) living in the same neighbourhood without talking to each other" (Kipos³).

4.3 SPATIAL ARTICULATION – CHALLENGING THE COMMONS

4.3.1 Classification of the initiatives – spatial endeavours

Initiative	Social Codes				Economic Codes							
	Political	Community-oriented	Self-managed	Spatial articulation	Health	Refugee	Food	Art	Capitalistic	Inbetween	Radical	
Anti-Violence Network	✓	✓			✓							
Bios Coop			✓	✓			✓			✓		
Campfire Innovation						✓			✓			
Communitism		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓				
European Village	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓	
Impact Hub									✓			
K136	✓	✓	✓								✓	
Khora			✓	✓	✓	✓						
Kiops ³		✓	✓	✓								
Pocket Garden	✓	✓	✓	✓								
Rediviva Cucina Povera			✓				✓				✓	
Social Kitchen	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓					
Vio Me	✓		✓	✓	✓						✓	

Table 1: Classification of organisations

Several initiatives articulate their endeavours by proclaiming to use space in the city. In the following section, the initiatives which proclaim their right to the city will be summarized. This list can be used as a glossary as, later in the text, only specifics of the initiatives will be described.

Bios Coop

The cooperative has the goal to offer quality food at reasonable prices to the inhabitants of Thessaloniki. They fall into the category of spatial articulation as they want to expand in the city and have several supermarkets (two in 2011). Different supply chains, a new organisation of the supermarket and bearing the responsibilities and financial risks collectively, are the main indications of this initiative. They connect the farmers and the city. Moreover, their supermarket is a spot for mostly local food supply in the urban pattern. Being the intermediates between producers and consumers the initiative will be specified as having spatial and economic endeavours.

Communitism

Being an art space in the neighbourhood of Metaxourgeio/Athens, their goal is not to make financial profit but to offer a creative space in this neighbourhood and to do community building. As this district is facing gentrification processes (Karakatsanis 2015:196) their spatial presence has implications. How they deal with this situation will be addressed in the chapter which discusses gentrification.

European Village

The initiative has several pillars. One is their café which is situated next to the 'Plato Park Academy' in Athens. Their involvement of the neighbours and their ambition to link the café with their farming project outside of Athens, makes this initiative relevant for the category of spatial articulation. As they are offering student mobility programmes on the one hand and trying to put the principles of the social solidarity economy into practice, they are listed in this chapter as an initiative with spatial, economic endeavours.

Khora

The initiative supports refugees. Their house in Athens, which is run by volunteers, provides a free shop, an asylum support team, a sound lab, a café and co-working spaces. Renting a house in Athens, the non-profit organisation has a physical and long-term place and it is used as a contact point for refugees.

Kipos³

The idea of a community garden was initiated by Eleftheria Gavriilidou as her PhD project. The idea was to establish a neighbourhood garden on the one hand and on the other hand, to enable the production of food in the city, to question supply chains and our division of the urban and rural landscapes. The strong ties which were made within the community coming together in this project, turned out to be an enormous gain for themselves and the project as a whole. It is "[...] urging to rethink urban living experience, under also the municipality's assistance, aiming finally to combine the current need for a new social and ecological infrastructure" (Krzysztofik, Dymitrow; Biegńska et.al 2017:37).

Pocket Garden

Being inspired by neighbourhood parties from Spain/Barcelona one member of this initiative transferred this idea to Thessaloniki. Building a community was the first step. Later they claimed the streets, brought tables (legally) to the Alexander Svolou street (Thessaloniki) that became the arena of interaction. Their latest project is to get the permission to be responsible for a small part of wasteland in the city centre in order to transform it into a small park which will be organised collectively.

Social Kitchen

The initiative cooks donated food on the streets, every single day of the year. Everything is done voluntarily with no money involved. Being outside on busy squares or in the streets is highly relevant as the goal is to provide food to everyone, to reach as many people as possible and to enable meetings and conversations among strangers from various backgrounds. Therefore, acting in public space is crucial.

Vio Me

Vio Me is the only example in Greece of a squatted factory which was taken over by the workers of the former enterprise and is used for further production. Using the property which belongs to the state, after the former manager was expropriated to pay off his debts, is a form of claiming their right to work. The manufacturing building is seen as an urban productive common and so, they question their right to use it.

4.3.2 Civil society in the urban context

Kaene Johan illustrates that European cities have not been havens of social pluralism, freedom and equality. Instead, inequalities were highly visible (Kaene 2005:5). Money-economy and the cities are interlinked: "Urban life also stimulates consumers' needs, which is unsurprising considering that cities are the seat of the many-sided money economy, in which sellers are compelled to whet 'new and unique' needs of consumers" (Kaene 2005:8). Many sociologists have uttered their opinion on the role of civil society in the urban context. Simmel and Hegel for example both recognised civil society as a mass that needs state supervision as it would otherwise be self-crippling or produce self-destructive dynamics (Kaene 2005:9, 13). Their statements have to be interpreted against the background of the struggles and social conflicts raging in European cities. However, being the hub of revolution, cities can be the space for self-government, market freedom and solidarity as well. Kocka speaks of civil society as a "comprehensive project with utopian qualities" (Kaene 2005:19).

4.3.3 The right to the city and the urban commons

In times of crisis, especially in 2011, civil society went out into the public space and protested against the austerity measures which were imposed by external institutions.

"The destruction of livelihoods and social safety nets, and the opposition these processes have encountered from affected populations and their supporters, highlight that the commodification and privatisation of labour and land continue to be contentious and crisis-prone" (Gidwani, Baviskar 2011).

As the costs of austerity are often externalised mainly to civil society, the resource of land/space/property is at the centre of conflict. Peck describes austerity as a cyclical condition (Peck 2015:4). "Given downturns in speculative investment on the one hand, and the turning screws of government austerity on the other, many cities are bearing the physical scars of disinvestment, disuse and decline; in vacant and abandoned spaces of private rescission and public retreat" (Tonkiss 2013:312).

To understand the idea of the right to the city and the urban commons, the city has to be understood not only as the buildings and their architecture but, rather as the social process which is evolving by individuals and groups who live in and use the urban space. Moreover, David Harvey states, public spaces are transformed into urban commons through the social practice of political engagement, changing the purport of the spaces. "Syntagma Square in Athens, Tahrir Square in Cairo, and the Plaza de Catalunya in Barcelona were public spaces that became an urban common as people assembled there to express their political views and make demands" (Harvey 2012:73). The interviewees reported that the occupation of the squares had been the turning point in their self-conception as activists. The importance of collective engagement, the possibilities of the social solidarity economy and the attempt at low-level, direct democracy became concrete and feasible. The spatial articulation and the negotiations on the streets and the squares were the key to success. As the discussions were in public space, they were transparent, accessible to everyone and most importantly, they were demanding the right to the city, their right to be seen and heard, their right to negotiate and articulate their opinions. The 'right to the city' in Lefebvre's words, is the right of not being "excluded from centrality and its movement" (Lefebvre 2003:150).

However, the discourse continues about the differences between public space and the urban commons. The public space is opposed to the private space. The underlying assumption is the undisputed differentiation between these two and the existence of individualised property rights. For the liberal theorist John Locke, acquiring property as the outcome of remunerated labour, is set as one of the goals in a capitalistic society (Harvey 2012: 75).

"But when Marx takes up how labour-power becomes an individualized commodity that is bought and sold in fair and free markets, we see the Lockean fiction unmasked for what it really is: a system founded on equality in value-exchange produces surplus value for the capitalist owner of the means of production through the exploitation of living labour in production (not in the market, where bourgeois rights and constitutionalities can prevail)" (Harvey 2012:76).

With financial capitalism and privatisation being enforced under the pretext of austerity in Greece, the conflict of the use of private and public space is brought to the fore. The initiatives that were described above, therefore, continued to articulate their demands and goals in terms of space, as well.

"The right to use that common must surely then be accorded to all those who have had a part in producing it. This is, of course, the basis for the claim to the right to the city on the part of the collective laborers who have made it. The struggle for the right to the city is against the powers of capital that ruthlessly feed upon and extract rents from the common life that others have produced" (Harvey 2012:78).

Apart from many forms of the commons, such as 'social common', 'intellectual and cultural commons', 'musical commons', 'species commons' (and many more) this chapter deals with the 'urban commons'. The goal is not to offer a generic definition of the commons, rather to highlight the aims of the initiatives (which often formed communities) and their attempts at articulating them spatially in the cities (Athens and Thessaloniki). In times of uprising social conflict and dispute on the use and on the ownership of land, the initiatives demand not only their political and social participation. Moreover, activists question the use of the public spaces, as venues of capitalistic endeavours and call for redistributions or reconsiderations of public and private spaces. Redefining spaces and deconstructing the framework of public and private is the tool they use to declare new spaces as urban commons. "In a sense, commons thrive and survive by dancing in and out of the State's gaze, by escaping its notice, because notice invariably brings with it the desire to transform commons into state property or capitalist commodity" (Gidwani, Baviskar 2011). As a result, the right to the city is a physical and hermeneutical transformation of what used to be seen as public or private and includes the demand of social and political participation of civil society. Commons are therefore contrary to the concept of 'commodity' (Gidwani, Baviskar 2011). Maja Hojer Brunn defines the commons in relation to the people who are actively engaged with implementing and fighting for them. Focusing on communities that produce these kinds of commons bringing their struggles for resources into the fore, the overlapping claims and negotiations are reflected. Instead of the goods or physical surrounding, people are put into the centre of attention (Brunn 2015:154).

This definition, which will be the basic understanding in this thesis, as well differs from other scientists, such as Ostrom (1990) who separated objects and subjects and did not emphasise the role of cultural behaviour or appropriation (Hojer Brunn 2015:154). The social and cultural values which are sometimes even reinterpreted are at the heart of the initiatives that were interviewed. Relationships of power and struggles of the civil society can be seen and the focus is on the practice of 'commoning'. The focus will not be on the localisation or the description of the civic commons (sidewalks, streets, parks etc.) but rather on the social processes, ideas and framing which manifest themselves through the transformation of the civic commons. Moreover, the claims and aspired conflicts will be explained in the further section.

4.3.4 The other human taking the streets

The practice of 'commoning' can be well described with the example of the initiative Social Kitchen – The other human. The method of cooking every day outside in the streets or in squares which are highly frequented was born from the intention to make free food accessible to as many people as possible on the one hand, and, on the other hand, it is a statement on raising awareness of the crisis and criticising it.

They openly show that solidarity actions are possible and open up the opportunity for personal exchange during a shared meal. The space where they cook is transformed into a community space, a space of solidarity. By being visible in public the initiative makes those people visible who were affected by the crisis and might be ashamed of being hit by negative external circumstances. Their cooking on the streets can be as well seen as a temporary space intervention or a form of protest.

Streets are perceived as an abstract space of transition. By transforming it into space for human interaction and slowing down or even stopping the process of transit people redefine its meaning. Moreover, it can be interpreted as a political statement against the austerity measures. The members of Social Kitchen do not criticise the political and economic situation through civil disobedience or temporal protest marches but through constant realisation of their utopia of a solidarity. They want to send out a positive sign and address mainly the people. As a bottom-up initiative it believes in supporting the structures of civil society instead of devoting effort to the transformation of institutions and their policies.

Every day, the place where they cook is a different one but always outside. In this way, places of commons and 'commoning' can as well be temporal and fluctuant. With various people joining the cooking and eating, a temporal community is built, the square changes and becomes a part of the urban commons. They take over responsibility for the urban commons by creating this place of solidarity every day. They claim their rights to the city to transform a transitory space and use it as a space to web social interactions and to enforce social justice.

However, if hegemony is coerced through the state, as stated by political economists like Cox, for instance, subordinated groups are marginalized and are solely able to organise themselves in the only space available for them, which is civil society (Katz 2006:336). Therefore, one could assert as well that Social Kitchen is using the public space, as this is the only place they can gather and organise themselves.

4.3.5 Creative Spaces

To understand the phenomenon of gentrification, it helps to look at the roots of the discourse on urban commons. Garret Hardin's essay on the 'Tragedy of the Commons' (1968) was the starting point for the debate on commons. Scientists opposed his idea of the privatisation of natural resources and their regulation through the governments to prevent exploitation. Elinor Ostrom is one of his most famous opposer offering alternatives. She suggests to manage common goods (natural resources etc.) by local communities and to declare them as common property (Brunn 2015:156). In the 1990ties, the debate widened and the terminology concerning commons broadened. Knowledge, intellectual, cultural, social and urban commons were discussed.

These definitions were mainly opposed to the concepts of neoliberalism, privatisation, marketisation etc. For Brunn, the right to the city and the urban commons are a matter of securing access to public spaces and life in the city (Brunn 2015:157). Susser and Tonnelat (2013) assert that labour, social services, housing, transportation and consumption are regarded as commons which should be used and controlled collectively (Hojer Brunn 2015:157). "Susser and Tonnelat refer to collective urban visions, art and creative endeavours like the community garden movement as commons because, they can transgress boundaries and transform people's perception of their city" (Brunn 2015:157).

Communitism shows how community building and production of art can be combined:

"In Greece right now the situation it is not that there is a lack of creativity it is the lack of the way to express our creativity. So, we wanted to combine the fact that there are a lot of abundant buildings and people that want to be creative that can. like make them their habitat. And we want to create a methodology for other buildings like this and other creative collective" (Communitism 2018).

They developed a creative space which is also seen as a safe space, using art as a method of communication and a method of healing. Spaces to express creativity are essential in connecting people and building communities. The abandoned buildings are the imaginative crippled body of Greek's civil society. With people engaging and expressing their thoughts/feelings and connecting with other people, these spaces for creativity can have a healing effect after or during the crisis. The interviewees said that everyone came here to heal something within themselves (Communtism 2018). Curing through the action of creating art, building a community and helping others, seems to be an important factor in Communitism.

For Gramsci, civil society is the space where leadership and movements can arise and a counter hegemonic bloc can be formed. Katz adds: "It is the creative space, where subaltern

group, encouraged by intellectuals, can coalesce, form a historic bloc, and engage in a counter-hegemonic war of position to alter society" (Katz 2006:336). Even though the word 'war' is questionable and not transferable to the situation of the initiative Communitism, their endeavour is to change conceptions and their way of life. If a so-called historic bloc is formed, as Gramsci and Polanyi predict, remains to be seen. However, creative spaces as a hub for social innovative ideas being expressed through art opens up the possibilities for civil society to develop new concepts and, in the words of Gramsci, to form a counter-hegemonic bloc.

Regarding the creation of new commons: deserted houses which are taken over by a community can be described as new urban commons because, in the case of Communitism, their idea is to make this building accessible and open to the public. At the time of the interviews (2018) the building was in possession of a lessor. Yet, by forming this creative space and not claiming its ownership or exclusive utilisation but letting interference happen, a new space of commons evolves. The practice of 'commoning' develops, as Harvey states, collectively and non-commodified (Harvey 2012:73).

4.3.6 Opposing gentrification?

Nevertheless, the process of changing an abandoned building into an art space should not be romanticised. Certain challenges are to be faced. The process of 'commoning' and implementing a creative space can be the harbingers of gentrification. The initiative Communitism is situated in the neighbourhood Metaxourgeio. Revitalisations of buildings, the redesign of the Avdi square and the many bars that can be found there, give a hint of gentrification processes. Rising real estate prices and rents and city planning that focuses on evicting certain groups, result in the exchange of people. Artists and creative individuals often contribute unintentionally to this process, as they draw attention to the district and might attract people with higher incomes.

"A community group that struggles to maintain ethnic diversity in its neighbourhood and protect against gentrification may suddenly find its property prices (and taxes) rising as real estate agents market the "character" of their neighborhood to the wealthy as multicultural, street-lively, and diverse. By the time the market has done its destructive work, not only have the original residents been dispossessed of that common which they had created (often being forced out by rising rents and property taxes), but the common itself becomes so debased as to be unrecognizable" (Harvey 2012:78).

The members of Communitism are aware of the developments within their neighbourhood. Yet, the members of Communitism are certain to be able to hinder these

processes. One of their antidotes is to actively encourage community building and the inclusion of the neighbourhood. Organic growth and urban renewal are their goals and with these measures they try to stop being part of gentrification. Creating an open space which involves the neighbourhood transforms the abandoned buildings into urban commons. Another idea would be to buy the building: "If we had the money to buy the building then we are not part of this gentrification process. We have ownership. Ownership and being able to establish a methodology of participatory governance, is one of the key goals" (Communitism 2018). This reflects the struggles around ownership and gentrification. If they succeed in realising their counter-gentrification aspirations and efforts, remains to be seen.

One member of Pocket Garden also objects the reproach for stimulating gentrification. He states that middle class capital is needed to initiate gentrification. As most Greeks do not have an abundant amount of money, especially after the crisis, Thessaloniki is not prone to gentrification. Still, foreigners could invest their capital in housing in Greece. The austerity measures also earmark privatisation which should attract external capital investors. So far, for instance, the harbour of Piraeus (<https://www.cnbc.com/2019/11/15/china-wants-to-turn-greece-piraeus-port-into-europe-biggest.html>. 20.1.2020) or the airport Hellenikon in Athens have been sold (Telegraph. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/greece/articles/abandoned-athens-airport-become-greeces-biggest-coastal-resort/>. 20.01.2020).

Another aspect is the architectural urban pattern in which gentrification happens. Post-industrial areas or buildings built in the 19th century are more likely to be transformed into hip gentrified districts. In Thessaloniki, however, most buildings were built in the 1960ties or later. With the design being less alluring than for example Wilhelminian architecture, the member of Pocket Garden rather doubts that gentrification will happen in Thessaloniki.

Yet, vertical gentrification is still likely in his opinion (Pocket Garden 2018). Enlarging the houses and transforming rooftops into luxurious apartments can have similar effects on a neighbourhood.

Nevertheless, not everyone rejects the idea of gentrification. The enterprise Impact Hub would welcome this process, as a population group with a higher income would come into the city. The new target group could purchase different products at a higher price (Impact Hub 2018). However, the member of Impact Hub also doubts that gentrification will happen soon.

4.3.7 Community gardens and urban framing

Another example of the creation of new urban commons through the practice of commoning are the two initiatives Kipos³ and Pocket Garden, both located in Thessaloniki. The community gardens have the aim to develop a space of togetherness and experiencing new forms of urban commons through gardening (mainly). The ideas for the initiatives were developed by scientists who wanted to put their methodologies into practice. Even though their concepts had a theoretical background, the initiators emphasised that they still were still adapting and creating new methods during the creation of the community gardens: "The methodology is action research. [...] Action research is a dynamic approach. Everybody in the group is a researcher, a potential researcher that contributes to the process of knowledge" (Pocket Garden 2018). The initiative/movement 'Perka' is situated in Thessaloniki and supports urban farming. They frame their methodology as "laboratory research" (Interzones Playground. <http://interzones-playground.net/perka-urban-garden-thessaloniki/>. 21.01.20).

In the case of Pocket Garden and Kipos³ the framework of creating community gardens was adopted from Germany (Kipos³) and Spain (Pocket Garden). One of the founders of Kipos³ was inspired by a trip to Berlin:

"[...] I had the opportunity to visit some urban gardens there. Tempelhof, the Prinzessinnen Gärten, the Gärtnerei and Himmelbeet. I realized then that an urban garden can be totally different from city to city, from neighbourhood to neighbourhood. It can be more like a municipal initiative, it can be more like a grassroots movement, it can be a social enterprise creating profit with maybe a restaurant inside. Sell food or sell seeds. It can be a manifestation, like Tempelhof against the top down interventions. All these different options" (Kipos³ 2018).

The founding member of Pocket Garden was and still is organising neighbourhood dinners on the street in Thessaloniki. The inspiration came from similar practices in Spain:

"I knew already about the new collective neighbourhood fiestas in Spain. And the practice of putting tables in the street and share a meal together. Sharing food on the neighbourhood level despite class, gender, ethnic, religion, whatever. Just sharing food with the unknown other. And I send a photo of a collective dinner in Gràcia, Barcelona. So, I send this picture to my father and I told him that this would never happen in Greece. But my father said no let's do it and we organised the first dinner in 2014" (Pocket Garden 2018).

Adopting the insights of other countries can be a sign of cultural production and transfer. Transposing these concepts and fitting them into the Greek context can even bring the original idea to a new level. However, having the idea first and creating a group later in order to realise this project has its downsides as well.

The first attempts to engage people to create a community garden turned out to be more complicated than expected. One of the founders of Kipos³ reports a rather similar experience: "They were asking us, why create an urban garden in the city, why cultivate vegetables? Why not create a playground or plant flowers" (Kipos³ 2018). Introducing their concept proved to be difficult as the neighbours either had different ideas or they generally had their doubts about the project. Each initiative can emerge variously, and many methods and methodologies can prosper. Nevertheless, a grassroot movement and a bottom-up project is rather initiated by a group of people wanting to realise their plans or give their ideologies a material component, and not so much by an initial concept seeking to gather a group around it.

Creating a social park is the main idea. The second goal is to transform a free meadow into a productive space. In the debate on having the possibility of and the autonomy over food production, supply chains prepare the ground for reconnecting with food production and engaging in urban farming. Food sufficiency and the price of production became a hot topic during and after the crisis as the income of many decreased. "In a smaller scale, the "rural" appears also in "pockets" as a recent urban activists' manifestation of the last hopes for green commons, new collectives and a kind of self-sufficiency (e.g. former military training ground in the west)" (Krzysztofik, Dymitrow; Biegńska et.al 2017:37).

Urban farming questions the role of spaces in the city as well, and the initiatives active in this field demand their right to use the land to cultivate food. It is not the question of ownership but the question of access and possibilities again which they fight for. Individual and collective actions are combined, and the products are not cultivated to make profit. They reject the idea of commodifying such a crucial product as food. Therefore, they exclude their actions from any capitalistic logic. Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that urban farming is just one of the goals all these community parks have in common. Creating a social space for interactions and building communities is always part of their concepts. However, the trend to set up community parks is not yet as popular as in other parts of Europe: "In Thessaloniki, there is not this dynamic on initiatives and interventions in public space with a cultural approach, I think. For example, Perka is fighting for the sufficiency of food. But there are more important meanings to create social space but with a cultural dimension" (Kipos³ 2018). The interviewees generally hoped for more interventions and groups who would engage in shaping the future and the city.

4.3.8 State and the spatial conflict

Grassroot movements cannot, realistically, exclude themselves from any institutional system, and the initiatives which were interviewed do not count themselves to anarchistic groups anyways. Hence, they have to determine their attitude towards administrative bodies. In this section the different approaches of the initiatives Vio Me, Pocket Garden and Kipos³ will be demonstrated. Moreover, these examples will be theoretically embedded in the ideas of Fran Tonkiss (2013) who investigated different actions by city administrations in the United States of America in times of crisis.

Forming pressure groups is one similarity between the initiatives. Vio Me pressures the city administration and politicians of Thessaloniki by gathering a massive number of supporters who operate as a pressure group. With Vio Me being respected and encouraged by civil society, politicians are forced to handle the case with special care as they don't want to lose their voters (Vio Me 2018). One of the founders of Pocket Garden initiated several discussions with the city administration. As there are hardly any administrative frameworks regarding the use of the urban commons, the neighbour group occupied the streets without permission by the police. However, they could not be sued, as it was a collective action by the habitants of the quarter (Pocket Garden 2018). They negotiate their rights through testing and challenging the use and production of the urban space. This practice seems to be an emancipatory and alternative way of testing and demanding the right to the city. Ideally, the city administration afterwards allows certain civil society actions.

Kipos³, on the other hand, chose a different approach to communicate with the municipality to revitalise a wasteland in the city of Thessaloniki. They asked the administrative body for the permission to take care of a meadow that was not used at that time. The idea behind this project, which they call, unlike the other initiatives, an experiment, is to generate a guideline or an example of resilient urban planning (Kipos³ 2018). This project turned into a role model for urban engagement and reactivation and therefore, the possibility that the municipality will allow more of these projects is high.

Looking at the process of urban planning from the institutional side, Tonkiss describes four stages of state intervention: the positive model, proscription, the permissive model and abandonment (Tonkiss 2013:313ff.).

The former is a model where the state creates conditions for informal or temporary groups to be able to use parts of the city. Policy measures acquire this process. If the

municipality in Thessaloniki appreciates the work of the bottom-up neighbourhood groups, it could grant them more freedom or even stimulate the development of further groups by legislating new policies.

Proscription is used when a municipality is focused on securing public order and private property instead of promoting creative bottom-up initiatives. This can be detected in the city of Athens. Even though squatting is partially accepted by public authorities, the homeless or drug addicts are usually rather evicted and no support networks are built up. Also, their accepting and enforcing gentrification can be another example of this proscription (Karakatsanis 2015:196).

The fact that the municipalities of Athens and of Thessaloniki allow urban squatting and some level of self-organisation or improvised spatial solutions, hints towards the permissive model of Tonkiss. However, this does not have to be a positive signal. The municipalities' inability to offer social security measures or systems might lead to a laissez-faire attitude.

The last stage of ineffective state management is abandonment. At this point the public institutions do not intervene in anything anymore and fully relinquish the city, not even holding up basic infrastructure. Tonkiss gives some examples of cities in the USA that have been abandoned due to austerity measures (Tonkiss 2015:314f.).

How the city intervenes or defines its role in the process of innovative urban transformation is up to the public authorities. Arguing from the perspective of bottom-up initiatives, the allowance to use urban spaces is essential in creating a vivid, innovative atmosphere for urban creation processes by neighbourhood groups. In my opinion and concerning the right to the city, it is not only the duty of the citizens to enforce their rights, but it is also the duty of municipalities to put their hopes and trust in the citizens by allowing and stimulating civil engagement.

4.4 ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

This chapter gives a short overview of the economic endeavours of seven initiatives which were interviewed during the fieldtrip in 2018. First, these initiatives will be again described shortly to indicate how they fit into the concept of social solidarity economy. Afterwards, their similarities and differences will be explained, and their actions will be interrelated with concepts of the right to the city, the productive commons and the political economy of counter-hegemony and Marxist ideas. The initiative Vio Me will therefore be described in more detail, as it is the only initiative that combines all these concepts. However, to show the diversity of cooperatives, the others will not be left aside. The codes 'member', 'profit', 'radical', 'property', 'cooperative' and 'resistance' are integrated in this text. The terms 'member' and 'cooperative' will be analysed separately, as they help to understand the concepts of social solidarity economy.

When talking about social transformations after a period of crisis, the economic side is often forgotten. For instance, the agents of the New Social Movement Theory are less likely to focus on economic matters. However, especially in times of massive unemployment and economic deprivation, it is the economic engagement which might support or even release individuals from their deleterious circumstances.

One of the interviewees was Theodoros Karyotis, who was very active in the social movements himself and works as an independent researcher, describes the relation of civil society and economics in the following way:

"So, we say that it's not the powerful who make history, it's the people who make history. Because always whatever designs of the powerful, there is gonna be counterpower. So, the powerful are always gonna adapt their designs and change their plans in order to outsmart this counterpower. The counterpower always tries to be one step ahead and tries to resist in smarter ways. It's never a view from above. It's both sides. It's just that the economic part is predominant in this way. Because it's the nature of all bondage let's say. Our bondage is economy. We are not slaves. We are economic slaves" (Theodoros Karyotis 2018).

The economic endeavours and how they are trying to evade their status as economic slaves will be the topic of this chapter.

4.4.1 Social Solidarity Economy

Some interviewees involved in economic actions allocated his or her initiative to the branch of 'social solidarity economy'. Vio Me spoke of the workers-economy, but, as I take their actions, they also identify themselves to this economic movement, even though they are well connected in the global workers movement on which they focus. It is important for the interviewees that their form of economy is not only called solidarity economy but to add the word social. They strongly focus on people's needs and not only the transformation of economy, but also on emphasising that the social and the economic sphere are inevitably intertwined. It can be interpreted as a direct answer and a linguistic form of protest against the austerity measures.

"Not the classical cooperative, these are new types. Cooperatives belonging to the social solidarity economy. Means that they don't work for profit, they work only to create jobs and they are not workers outside the cooperative but only members. Only a member can work. So, the worker is not an employee. There are no bosses. [...] In the new type of cooperatives we don't try only to avoid capital, we also try to avoid the salary workers. He has an income for his work which is decided collectively. And if the cooperative makes a lot of money and has a lot of income, that doesn't mean that the workers will take much money. They will take up to certain point, after that this money has to be for the creation of new jobs, or it has to be returned to the society. Because it belongs to the society, so it's their product. [...] I have another job. I have an income and I am all ok. And I am working for the idea. Because I see the cooperatives movement and the social solidarity economy movement and the commons movement; it's a part of the social transformation" (K136 2018).

Vathakou Eugenia (2015) defines the social solidarity economy as a non-market economy. Production and distribution are under the control of society and not the market. The aim is not to make profit, but to meet the needs of the people, respecting human work and the environment (Vathakou 2015:170). Monetary profit should not be used to enrich oneself. Instead, the profit is either split among the members, used to support other cooperatives which are in need or reinvest in society through different ways (Bios Coop, Vio Me, European Village, K136: 2018).

Moreover, implementing ways of direct democracy and a non-hierarchical organisation within the cooperatives are important characteristics in social solidarity economy. Growth is not the aim, however, to create a world of stable working conditions resonating with nature and society. The political, ecological, social and the economic sphere are one and cannot be de-connected from one another. The following sections will describe how the initiatives visited

during the field trip implement the framework of social solidarity economy. At first, an overview of the initiatives will be provided.

Greece has a long history and tradition of cooperatives. Since the 19th century various forms of consolidation of workers characterised the Greek economic landscape. The main indicator that differentiated the businesses from social enterprises emerged from the distinction of moral companies, the social ones, from others underlying the market economy (Nasioulas 2012:143). There is one time in history, however, that was mentioned repeatedly during the interviews, which is the time after the military dictatorship (1974). When it came to restoring the economic, political and social environment after years of state patronage, the first ones who mobilised their resources and networks were agricultural cooperatives (Nasioulas 2012:149). Policies accompanied these cooperatives endeavours.

“Such policies applied eventually led to devastating consequences for the cooperative movement and agricultural production: cooperatives began to be extremely politicized, through the expansion of the patronage and clientele system into their operations, many non-viable investments were made, a negative interlink of the State into cooperative issues was imposed and the total overdue debt of cooperatives towards the Agricultural Bank led to the eventual demise of the agricultural cooperative system in Greece” (Nasioulas 2012:149).

The reforms in the 1990ties did not fundamentally change the overall situation. The political influence on those huge agricultural cooperatives or networks destroyed the trust in this form of economy. The interviewees reported that the mistrust towards cooperatives derives from that time. Therefore, efforts to create new cooperatives are often regarded critically.

In 2016, the Greek government passed a law on social solidarity economy. This law has the number 4430/2016. The older version was the law 4019/2011 “which regulated the Social Cooperative Enterprises (SoCE) as a particular form of civil cooperative with an explicit social purpose” (Kornilakis 2017:206). The old law aimed at providing a legal framework to cooperatives that are active in the field of employing vulnerable groups; these included enterprises that offer goods and services to vulnerable groups or that are active in the field of culture, environment and education (Kornilakis 2017:206).

Greece has a long history and tradition of cooperatives. Since the 19th century various forms of consolidation of workers characterised the Greek economic landscape. The main indicator that differentiated the businesses from social enterprises emerged from the distinction of moral companies, the social ones, from others underlying the market economy (Nasioulas 2012:143). There is one time in history, however, that was mentioned repeatedly

during the interviews, which is the time after the military dictatorship (1974). When it came to restoring the economic, political and social environment after years of state patronage, the first ones who mobilised their resources and networks were agricultural cooperatives (Nasioulas 2012:149). Policies accompanied these cooperatives endeavours.

“Such policies applied eventually led to devastating consequences for the cooperative movement and agricultural production: cooperatives began to be extremely politicized, through the expansion of the patronage and clientele system into their operations, many non-viable investments were made, a negative interlink of the State into cooperative issues was imposed and the total overdue debt of cooperatives towards the Agricultural Bank led to the eventual demise of the agricultural cooperative system in Greece” (Nasioulas 2012:149).

The reforms in the 1990ties did not fundamentally change the overall situation. The political influence on those huge agricultural cooperatives or networks destroyed the trust in this form of economy. The interviewees reported that the mistrust towards cooperatives derives from that time. Therefore, efforts to create new cooperatives are often regarded critically.

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4.4.2 Classification of the initiatives - economic perspective

Initiative	Social Codes				Economic Codes						
	Political	Community-oriented	Self-managed	Spatial articulation	Health	Refugee	Food	Art	Capitalistic	Inbetween	Radical
Anti-Violence Network	✓	✓			✓						
Bios Coop			✓	✓			✓			✓	
Campfire Innovation						✓			✓		
Communitism		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			
European Village	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓
Impact Hub									✓		
K136	✓	✓	✓								✓
Khora			✓	✓	✓	✓					
Ktops ³		✓	✓	✓							
Pocket Garden	✓	✓	✓	✓							
Rediviva Cucina Povera			✓				✓				✓
Social Kitchen	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				
Vio Me	✓		✓	✓	✓						✓

Table 1: Classification of organisations

Bios Coop

The cooperative defines itself as a consumer cooperative. The idea derived from the discussion during the Square Movement in 2011. Self-management, food sovereignty and direct democracy are the underlying concepts the initiators wanted to integrate into Bios Coop. With supporting small and local producers and skipping the intermediates, their main goal is quality food at affordable prices.

Campfire Innovation

This enterprise tries to make monetary profit through counselling grassroots movements on their way to become financially independent or stable. They are closely working together with the city of Athens. They offer free counselling as well, however, their business model is similar to a social start-up, not integrating the codes of conduct of a social solidarity initiative.

European Village

Their monetary inflows are divers. On the one hand, their café which is organised collectively generates money. On the other hand, European funds are used to pay their members a minimum wage and to make student exchange programmes possible. Their goal is not to reinforce capital and they follow the principles of social solidarity economy.

Impact Hub

The Impact Hub in Athens is a subsidiary company of the Impact Hub in Europe and worldwide. Their goal is to offer space and network possibilities to start-ups. Even though the Impact Hub in Athens strongly supports social businesses, they have not implemented certain criteria regarding social solidarity economy.

K136

This amalgamation of collectives hindered and stopped the privatisation of the water in Thessaloniki in 2014. The question of the right to use and to own the water is of economic interest. This process has already been described in the chapter 'collective political engagement' but will again be shortly mentioned when it comes to property rights in this chapter.

Rediviva Cucina Povera

By opening a restaurant which is managed collectively and by trying to integrate the ideas of social solidarity economy, people who had lost their jobs due to the crisis found a way out of unemployment. The law 4430_2016 on social enterprises in Greece plays a role and will be shortly elaborated in this chapter.

Vio Me

In 2013 the factory, which produce materials used for construction in the outskirts of Thessaloniki, was abandoned by its former owner. Since then it is owned by the state. However, the workers, who were left without payment or job overnight, decided to collectively start working again without a boss and occupied the building. Now they produce natural detergents and soaps. The building is used for many other activities related to social solidarity economy.

4.4.3 The right to productive commons

“The right to use that common must surely then be accorded to all those who have had a part in producing it. This is, of course, the basis for the claim to the right to the city on the part of the collective laborers who have made it. The struggle for the right to the city is against the powers of capital that ruthlessly feed upon and extract rents from the common life that others have produced” (Harvey 2012:78).

The right to the city includes the right to the production and use of the productive commons. The only example of an initiative in Greece insisting and fighting for their right to work and use the factory is Vio Me. The former owner left the workers and the factory behind. With the crisis reducing the possibilities to obtain a new permanent job, the workers organised themselves collectively and without hierarchies and started to produce again. As they wanted to produce useful and affordable products for everyone, they decided to focus on detergents and soaps. As the property was in the possession of the state at the moment of the interview (2018), they squatted the building. Their goal is to free themselves from waged labour and to self-manage their business. They gained massive support from civil society all over Greece and even worldwide from other workers movements (Vio Me: <http://www.viome.org/search/label/English>. 06.02.20).

As already stated in the chapter of spatial articulation, one striking problem is the possession of the ground on which the initiatives operate. The example of Communitism showed that only buying the building would secure their activities, even though this would probably have little effect on the gentrification process. In the case of Vio Me, the attempts to

sell the building have not been successful yet (2018), as no buyer applied for it. As Lila Leontidou (2015) states: “[...] squatting was tacitly accepted by the state as a shock absorber of poverty, homelessness and social discontent” (Leontidou 2015:92). Moreover, massive support by civil society hinders politicians to violently evict the workers from the factory site. When exploring the streets of Athens on the ‘Alternative Tour Athens’, the implicit acceptance of squatting in public buildings is still perceptible. Even though the situation for the workers of Vio Me is more than challenging, these special circumstances provide a window of opportunity to try and set the Marxist ideas of workers’ self-management into practice. The interviewee of Vio Me proposes another solution which could help workers movements and collectives to become active: “If there is a law that gives the opportunity and allows workers to enter an abandoned factory, restaurant, hotel and work without a boss, then a lot of other self-managed ventures will take place” (Vio Me 2018).

Every single collective shares the opinion that the main challenge is to still be a part of the capitalistic system, especially when producing and selling their products. In Greece the density of alternative anti-capitalistic initiatives, especially cafés, community spaces of any kind etc., is high. They support one another by trading their products. As they are aware that only national support might not be sufficient to survive as the ‘market’ is rather small, and as they want to support other worker collectives around the world, they organise and attend European or global networking events (Vio Me: <http://www.viome.org/2017/11/viome-at-transnational-social-strike.html>. 06.02.20). The aim is to establish transnational logistic and solidarity networks (Vio Me 2018).

Relating this to the theory of global civil society, which was also mentioned in the theory chapter of this thesis, it is reminiscent of the ideas of Cox arguing that counter-hegemony can only be raised under the patronage of a global civil society (Katz 2006:336). According to Katz, in order to tame neoliberal globalisation and to set up the preconditions for hegemonic change, three preconditions should be fulfilled: organisation (coalition of disadvantaged groups), action (intellectual and political struggle on different levels, locally and globally) and ideology (counter the neoliberal agenda) (Katz 2006:336). Vio Me meets these criteria. As a subordinate group within civil society, they collaborate not only nation-wide, but even across borders with, for example, Argentinian or French collectives (Vio Me 2018; Vogiatzoglou 2015; Zamponi, Bosi 2018). They fight politically for their right to use the productive space and turn

this factory site into a productive common. And last but not least, due to their strong will to enforce their ideology, they do not forsake their dream to establish a social solidarity collective.

4.4.4 Defining debt – an example from below

Arrighi analyses that the capitalist elite shift their investments from production to finance (Van der Zwan 2014:104). The Vio Me collective can be seen as a countermovement to this trend as they still focus on the production of everyday goods and shift their investment with this in mind but without converging to a non-financial enterprise. One aspect why corporations have to incur debts is for instance to finance investments to open up trade opportunities or expand their market. For the collective Vio Me, getting the product to the consumer through different ways of distribution is one of their main challenges. To receive additional money and extra support the collective built up a new network with Latin American collectives in Argentina and Mexico. The idea is to set up a fund on their own, finance their activities through this fund which is not connected to financial flows and options by international banks. A trade network could be built up on top of this merger.

On a political level public debt audits would be a reasonable way to manage and survey financial flows. In Greece the possibility to set up a public debt audit is very restricted; however, upcoming democratic opinion-building and decision-making processes can be an indicator for a bottom-up process of developing governmental control through the population. Huge assemblies were introduced during the protests against the austerity measures in 2011. Those democratic negotiations were as well implemented on a smaller scale, in collective assemblies for example. If these collectives gained more power they could claim for debt and governmental audits controlled by the public.

How is it possible to be more independent from debt on a personal level? By looking at debt from a different perspective might be a start. According to David Graeber the distinction between 'value' (in the economic sense) and 'values' (in the social sense) is essential (Graeber 2009:107). The question if labour is commodified and how profit differentiates a capitalistic enterprise from a collaborative that acts according to social solidarity economy. Vio Me included actions, for instance, like food markets without intermediates, education programmes for kids and health check-ups. The producing branch is, therefore, only one field of action in the corporation. Labour and value in the economic sense are intrinsically linked with the production of social values. As individuals in Greece are often highly indebted or

unable to access the health system or are excluded from consumption markets due to high prices, the actions of Vio Me and their work guarantee access to those domains and disconnect those people from their debt level on a primary base. It can be seen that the division between 'society' and 'individual' and the interwoven obligations connected to debt are being more and more eroded. The 'market' is connected to social values which are not monetarised but seen as an implacable entity of the collective.

4.4.5 Reorganising labour and profit

In their explanation of the term 'Social Solidarity Economy', in 2016, the government widened the definition of economic actions and included alternative economic forms. Social Enterprises and Workers Cooperatives were now recognised as legal entities. Six conditions need to be fulfilled to count as one of those cooperatives and as a result, access to the Social Economy Fund and other public benefits are granted. Article 2 of the law 4430/2016 provides a general definition which is subsumed under the term Social Solidarity Economy:

"Social and Solidarity Economy" means all economic activities based on an alternative form of organization of production, distribution, consumption and reinvestment relations, based on the principles of democracy, equality, solidarity, cooperation and cooperation. respect for man and the environment" (E-Nomothesia: <https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/kat-oikonomia/nomos-4430-2016.html>. 05.02.20).

While in 2011 the term Social Economy was used, in 2016 the word 'Solidarity' was added and given more meaning. The keywords 'collective and social benefit', 'social innovation', 'sustainable development', 'social services of general interest', 'social inclusion', 'vulnerable', 'social impact', and 'social impact measurement tool' complete the definition. The legal framework continues with listing restrictions and benefits. It should be kept in mind that other countries such as Italy have similar legislation regarding cooperatives. It should also be mentioned that in Europe and all over the world the concepts and historical roots differ a lot. If similar laws regarding cooperatives in the field of social solidarity economy want to be passed, the Greek legislation can be used as a good framework. The law was a reaction of the government, mainly the newly elected party SYRIZA which positioned itself as a party rooting in these civil society organisations. The law was and is widely endorsed. The members of the initiatives who were interviewed were all aware of that law.

However, due to the historical negative connotation of cooperatives in the last century, civil society actors are still sceptical about this form of enterprise. "Institutionalized livestock cooperatives have been widespread throughout the last centuries in many areas of Greece,

under the Greek appellations '*syntehnies*', '*synafia*', '*tseligata*', '*mitata*', '*sempries*'" (Nasioulas 2012:146). As a consequence, the social movements emerging during the Square protest in 2011 were searching for a different vocabulary to clearly distinguish the old concept of collaborative from the new one. The activist and researcher Theodoros Karyotis recounted the striving for a new terminology. As there is no exact English translation of the Greek word for that new kind of cooperatives, he explained the parts of the words. The Greek word `εταιρεία – *etaireía*´ is similar to the word company. Opposed to this is the new `συνεργατική – *synergatiki*´ which means `collaborative´. In a word, the part `εταιρεία´ means that there can be waged labourers/employees. Collaboratives, however, entail the part `σνγ´ which means `together´ or `co-´. Because of this, the emphasis is on the collaboration of the workers (Theodoros Karyotis 2018). Hence, in this thesis the word collaborative will mainly be used. During the interviews the word cooperative was used more often. This could be due to the difficulties in translation. Therefore, in this thesis the words cooperative and collaborative will be used in the same way, meaning collaborative companies without employees. Further characteristics of these collaboratives will be examined in the following section.

Collaboratives dedicate their work to the society. The goal is not to generate (capitalist) growth or financial profits. The internal organisation of the collaboratives differs from the usual concept of salary workers:

"I, as a chemical engineer, take the same amount of money like electricians or another one. We are all equal. And also, we are equal to our obligations. Everyone participates that concerns. Not only concerning inside the factory, but also in terms that are outside the factory and all this" (Vio Me 2018).

The example of the factory Vio Me helps to understand the concept of `member´. Decisions are taken collectively. Furthermore, duties are switched regularly (if possible) to share knowledge - which should not be treated as a resource for personal enrichment, reserved for only a few people - and experience and thus, to be able to agree collectively on every single issue. Their wide-spread solidarity actions are a key element when it comes to social solidarity economy. Solidarity is pursued even outside their business interests. What is more, they try to be politically and financially independent from the state. Basic democratic decision-making and appreciating social capital more than financial capital defines the collaboratives. The obtained surplus is either reinvested in the own company, or split amongst the members and

supporters, or given back to society by donating the money to other collaboratives, for instance.

Of course, collaborative projects are encompassed by risks or negative side effects. The law 4430/2016 on social cooperative enterprises might only be used by some due to the financial benefits granted by the state. The interviewees reported that when certain cooperatives obtain a surplus it is often not redistributed to civil society but used for the purpose of self-enrichment (Rediviva Cucina Povera 2018). Another difference is the absence of hierarchies. The different communication methods and workflows need to be negotiated by the workers and members. Obviously, this process takes more time than hierarchically communicated orders. Another important aspect is that the law 4430/2016 embraces all kinds of social enterprises. However, the cooperatives do not have to consequently follow the moral code of conduct which should apply for social solidarity collaboratives. And even if they comply with the code, some might still not realise the special importance of their engagement and that it helps to bring about a social change and transformation:

"If they had consciousness about what they are doing, the eurozone must be different. But it is not. Why? Even the members of the cooperatives in Europe. Doesn't mean that they have their mind to social change etc. [...] We have a big growth of alternative social movements. But it doesn't mean we have the corresponding ideological background. We have to work on that" (K136 2018).

5. CONCLUSION

When protests end and social movements die down, one could have the feeling that everyone goes back to normal, that everyone is accepting their fate, agreeing to the old or new politicians in power. Media and national/international institutions promote the end of the crisis. But is this the reality for civil society actors? How do they perceive the crisis and what does their daily live look like when returning to 'normality'?

The following research questions guided me through the process of coding (Grounded Theory) while analysing the interviews: what transformative potential did the anti-austerity protest release and how did civil society actors continue to articulate their claims – politically and spatially? How did levels of trust in civil society change (as a reaction to the recession)?

My research was conducted in Greece and I tried to find answers during a field trip in March 2018. The bottom-up initiatives that were interviewed are all active in the field of social transformation. By analysing the conversations, four categories ignited by the Square Movements in 2011 turned out to be essential, which describe their values, goals and field of actions: Collective political engagement, creating communities, spatial articulation/challenging the urban and productive commons and economic transformation. The main similarity between those is their aspiration to build new social, political and economic models, to broaden people's perspective and to promote social solidarity. "Critical protest is oriented towards the future; it identifies possibilities within existing society that help to improve the situation of mankind and to reach a higher and progressive level of societal organization" (Fuchs 2005:130).

Even though the interviewees denied that civil society in Greece is generally political, I was left with a rather different impression. As the movement K136 showed, alternative systems for organising and securing commons, such as water, are made possible by collective engagement. In their assemblies they try out the methods of direct democracy. Experimenting with these methods, they gain knowledge about profound on direct democracy.

Almost all initiatives in this thesis agreed that 2011 was the starting point for their engagement in social change. The Square Movements, on the one hand, were perceived as brutal, as the police violently tried to dissolve the protest. The fact that they had to riot, fighting for their basic rights as citizens, harmed their trust in the Greek democratic system. The protests in 2011 and their experience during that time reduced their hopes in the political system and made them push for different democratic methods, such as direct democracy and participation.

These methods were applied in the Square Movement and spread and applied in their own initiatives.

Socially, the austerity measures hit the Greek population in a ruthless way. Basic needs were not covered. The protest movements and the political handling of the crisis left deep psychological scars. Social trust within society and in the political system in Greece was or still is shattered. To fix this mistrust, the creation of communities the gathering of people for certain purposes can be detected. Generally, switching the roles in society and becoming an active part of civil society creates a feeling of belonging which is very important for the individuals. The ongoing negative incidences experienced by a majority of led to an internal organisation within civil society.

‘Fixing something inside’ was a reoccurring topic in the interviews. Moreover, new bonds are created. However, the process of defining a group is accompanied by the process of excluding and othering. Although the initiatives do not want to exclude any individual, the formulation of values and codes of conduct have the potential to be mechanisms of exclusion and should be reflected upon critically. Social skills are (re-)built by activity in non-hierarchical groups. “We are not used to work together in such a manner and it’s a challenge and it’s the future anyways. It’s not possible to do it in another way” (Rediviva Cucina Povera 2018). One of the main outcomes for the individuals is learning how to collaborate and communicate: “But OK, there is some change! Some people change mentality, they are engaging, but I think they are very few. But that would be awesome, people’s will to engage and the people’s patience and will to collaborate. Because people are not used to collaborate and making the decisions together” (Bios Coop 2018).

The third important revelation was the joint aim to spatially articulate their hopes and dreams. The call for the creation of new urban commons is well described by Gidwani and Baviskar:

“[...] [T]he ongoing diminution of urban commons is cause for concern because they are critical to economic production in cities, to cultural vibrancy and the cement of community, to ‘learning’ how to do democracy through practices of creating, governing and defending collective resources, to regenerating the sense of place that forms communities and, ultimately, to the reproduction of urban populations and ecosystems” (Gidwani, Baviskar 2011).

Designing new urban gardens, creative spaces, occupying buildings or initiating temporal actions make the projects visible and give their hopes a material component. The places have different values for the members and the participants: educational and communicational values, forming new social bonds and building up trust, etc. "Under the crisis there is a new need for public space, different of the previous one. [...] There is a need to express that there are active citizens. The idea of the citizenship and people can change the landscape. Especially when there are no plans for big transformations" (Kipos³ 2018). Municipalities could support citizen actions in the urban space by implementing new laws on the use of the commons. Nevertheless, gentrification should not be forgotten as a negative side effect of the uprising of community initiatives. "My city is a good city to deconstruct and criticise constantly. But I am tired to criticise, I prefer to construct rather than deconstruct. Deconstruction doesn't construct" (Pocket Garden 2018).

The fourth important field of engagement is economics. Following the concepts of hegemony by Antonio Gramsci and 'double movement' by Karl Polanyi, civil society is the sphere where hegemony is carried out (Birchfield 2011:41). Even though overthrowing capitalism will not be achieved in the foreseeable future, ideas emerging from civil society give an insight into what a world of social solidarity economy could look like. Non-hierarchical collectives or collaboratives do not only operate in their area of interest. They are often politically active, spread knowledge, are concerned with their workers' life, set up new systems of health care (Vio Me) or help other collectives to start their collaborative. Their main goal is not to generate money, but to offer a decent work and life to everyone, connecting social needs to economic endeavours. National and transnational networks with other collectives that operate in a similar section can be interpreted as being a sign of a growing global civil society.

There are several opinions that were shared by all interviewees. One is that change has to come from civil society by bottom-up initiatives: "The only way to change things is from bottom-up to the top. Here. There is no other way" (Anti Violence Network 2018).

Moreover, the intrinsic motivation and a change of view is the starting point for becoming an empowered individual: "So, at least the purpose is how to think differently and to do new things in new innovative ways, constantly. This is the purpose of radical thought. A

radical person is the one who can fight himself. He can break down his own boundaries constantly" (Pocket Garden 2018).

Growth is not the goal of the initiatives. However, motivating other people to start their own initiative which transforms society, and spreading the ideas on social solidarity economy is important for them:

"It's important for spaces to integrate more people, no matter where they come from or how poor or rich they are, younger older, educated or not. Local ideas like this, for me, are very successful. Because they have the goal inside the action. Everyone can fight for democracy whatever political ideas. But in the end, it is what you do every day that makes you. Not what you want or wish to happen. And it has the end inside" (Kipos³ 2018).

When 'we' is uttered more often than 'I' (in the interviews), then collective engagement can take place. Social transformation manifests in their use of language. "In other words, solidarity bazaars, kitchens, schools and alternative economy structures pave the way to a new model of political, economic and social relation" (Vathakou 2015:176).

Nevertheless, the struggles of the initiatives should not be romanticised. Although the number of social solidarity groups is increasing, it is not the majority of companies in Greece that define themselves as a social solidarity enterprise or a workers cooperative. Being trapped in a system of neoliberalism, there are numerous constraints and innovative ideas are needed to fulfil their endeavours of social change. But the will of the initiatives seems to be unbreakable. One statement of the member of Vio me on their struggles to stay in their occupied factory can be transferred to the other initiatives as well: "Of course, not we would not give in. The only sure thing is that we stay here. We will fight until the end. Until the cops take us outside. But so far that hasn't happened. It's because we had a lot of support from the society" (Vio Me 2018).

Fighting for their basic needs, challenging the urban and productive commons is their daily activity. Through trying and putting their ideas into practice, they gain knowledge of how social transformation can happen. The interviewees want to inspire other people. Sharing their experience, their struggles and ideas, making knowledge accessible and putting academic knowledge into practice is essential for them. Their goal is to empower more people to become engaged citizens. As they are the ones who work towards the internal and external transformation every day, I want to leave the last sentence to them:

**“ORGANISE IN YOUR WORKPLACE, YOUR
NEIGHBOURHOOD, YOUR TOWN!**

**PROMOTE REAL SOCIAL SELF-MANAGEMENT WITHOUT
THE NEED FOR INTERMEDIARIES, PROFESSIONAL
POLITICIANS OR BUREAUCRATS!**

**FORM COOPERATIVES AND NEIGHBOURHOOD
ASSEMBLIES, PROTECT THE COMMONS, PROMOTE A NEW
CIVILIZATION BASED ON PROXIMITY,
MUTUAL RECOGNITION AND SOLIDARITY!”**

(Vio Me: <http://www.viome.org/search/label/English>. 06.02.20)

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ANNEX

Abstract (German)

Wenn die Protestbewegungen abflauen, stellt sich die Frage, wie zivilgesellschaftliche Akteur*innen ihre sozialen, politischen und ökonomischen Forderungen weiterhin verfolgen. Während einer Exkursion im März 2018 nach Griechenland wurden dreizehn Initiativen und Kooperativen der Sozialen Solidarwirtschaft interviewt. Bei der Analyse des empirischen Materials mithilfe der 'Grounded Theory' ergaben sich vier Themenblöcke, die die Werte, Ziele und Aktionsbereiche der Initiativen beschreiben: kollektives politisches Engagement, die Herausbildung von Gemeinschaften, die Infragestellung der 'urban commons' und der Verständnisswandel von Ökonomie. Die qualitativen Daten werden um die theoretischen Konzepte von Zivilgesellschaft (in Bezug auf Staat und Markt) ergänzt. Aus dem Blickwinkel der kritischen politischen Ökonomie nach Gramsci, können die Initiativen als erster Schritt hin zur Bildung eines gegenhegemonialen Blocks interpretiert werden. Durch die Erosion des sozialen Zusammenhalts und des institutionellen Vertrauens, der durch die Austeritätspolitik von 2011 befeuert wurde, wird durch den Zusammenschluss innerhalb der Gesellschaft ersetzt, die ihre eigenen solidarischen Gesellschaftsmodelle entwickeln. Die 'urban commons' sind der Schauplatz der Kämpfe und Verhandlungen über das Recht auf Stadt und das Recht auf Arbeit.

Abstract (English)

When protest movements are dying down, the question remains how civil society actors continue to pursue their social, political and economic claims. During a field trip to Greece in March 2018, thirteen civil society initiatives and collaboratives operating in the field of social solidarity economy were interviewed. During the analysis of the empirical material, using the methodology of the 'Grounded Theory', four topics emerged which describe the values, goals and field of actions of the initiatives: collective political engagement, creation of communities, challenging the urban and productive commons and economic transformation. The qualitative data is complemented by the theoretical concepts of civil society in relation to the state and the market sphere. From the Gramscian perspective, the initiatives' undertakings can be interpreted as the first steps towards the formation of a counter-hegemonic bloc. The lack of social cohesion and institutional trust, fuelled by the austerity policies in 2011, is replaced by the consolidation of individuals developing their own models of society based on solidarity. The urban and productive commons are the venues for battles and negotiations on the right to the city and the right to work.

List of empirical data

List of interviews:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Anti Violence Network,	02.03.2018,	2h 7min.
Bios Coop,	11.03.2018,	2h 7min.
Campfire Innovation,	06.03.2018,	1h 9min.
Communitism,	01.03.2018,	1h 15min.
European Village,	05.03.2018,	2h 27min.
Impact Hub,	05.03.2018,	1h 27min.
K136,	08.03.2018,	2h 9min.
Khora,	06.03.2018,	30min.
Kipos ³ ,	11.03.2018,	1h 5 min.
Pocket Garden,	08.03.2018,	2h 10min.
Rediviva Cucina Povera,	10.03.2018,	1h 17min.
Social Kitchen,	14.03.2018,	1h 50min.
Theodoros Karyotis,	12.03.2018,	1h 33min.
Vio Me,	13.03.2018,	1h 47min.

Transcription: example of one interview

Organisation: European Village

Interviewee: One interview partner, anonymised: Interviewee

Date: 03.03.2018

Time: 2:30-3:30 p.m.

Place: Monastiriou 140, Athens

Me: How did the European village project begin?

Interviewee: This started in 2008 as an idea. Initially it was about a group of people that went this are in the park where the cafe is today, and they have a discussion there about what can we do because they were friends and they were quite into the social movements. And they also had ideas about exchanges programmes like Erasmus+ Programmes and volunteers programmes.

They wanted to do something related to social transition of towns, permaculture, environment about relationships how we build them on horizontal level and such interesting things and when they had the discussion in the park they saw that this space had an ad promoting people could rent it. So, it came as an idea at that moment and they did it. So, they rent the place. IN the beginning this place was only used for workshops and presentations and discussions and assembly. It didn't have food or drinks it was basic. It was only about community and discussions.

Me: Was the neighbourhood involved there?

Interviewee: it was big from the beginning. They really liked the idea. They were coming to all these events helped with decoration, helped in some work. The involvement of the neighbourhood was very important and very necessary for this to happen. Also, they financially helped. Because in order to buy this equipment for the cafe neo. They did a lot of celebrations to create these funds and the funds were from people who were coming from the neighbourhood. In a way the neighbourhood played an important role to the sustainability of

this place in the beginning of cafe neo. And, there was this spirit of cooperation. This specific neighbourhood 10 years ago it was a full of drugs, criminality full of very poor people, working and lower working-class people. The park was not accessible because it was very dangerous to pass it. The fact that we started operating there plus other groups that also worked there, this helped to transform the neighbourhood from a very dodgy place to a very friendly open space for family's kids' animals.

Me: Why did you pick this park?

Interviewee: It was by chance. Maybe one or two of the initial group, I wasn't in the initial group, they were local people, so they used to live in the neighbourhood. So, they knew it. The rest they weren't. It wasn't planned when they met in the park that they going to rent the space. It happened physically. The first idea wasn't even such a serious idea. It was more about how we can have a space to do what we like and how can we travel. How can we raise money for travelling? And socialise and love. So, in the beginning it was quite a hippie happy thing but of course it had a lot of political background as well. And initially we did the workshops and the European programmes. We did a lot of Erasmus+, volunteering. It was about collaboration with other organisations, partners from Europe. Writing proposals and we were taking funds for implementing travels and exchange experience with other countries. For example, visiting eco communities, in other countries. And social solidarity economy was a very important sector of our philosophy generally. And not only the economical aspect also the human aspect was important for the workshops. How we can communicate. Nonviolent communication self-improvement, spirituality, social change, transition of a town and environment. It was a holistic thing. And then a lot of people were coming, and it was very successfully and other people from other neighbourhood and the park and the history of the park. You know the history?

Me: No

Interviewee: It is the Plato's academy. Plato the philosopher. Plato used to teach there. The academy of Plato was in this park. And it came to a point when we said why don't we provide nice quality food and cooperate with small producers. It started not in a very organised way. Every day different things and from the ingredients that we have. And then we also included

drinks. Traditional drinks. Not big brands. Like wine from Greece. Organic. Raki and beer. As well Greek. And we became a coffee shop that also includes events and presentations and workshops. And we also put the fun part like music theatre workshops for kids. The idea of the coffee shops was to use the money from the cafe to pay the rent that we would be more sustainable. Not to raise money for us. It was all about not to have problems holding this space. We were able to be more sustainable. In the beginning when it was all about workshops, we had some issues. And all the members are volunteers and still are. But one point we saw that volunteering didn't work, now we are volunteers but now there is a small, symbolic amount of money a person that works there takes. Which is not enough it is not a proper salary but it is something that we give back also we ate for free we drink for free so somehow this becomes fairer. Right now, we are in a kind of transition moment where we are thinking of how we can be more sustainable and how can we use the space. Because on the one hand from this workshop space we became a coffee shop.

11.08

From this workshop space we became a coffee shop. And we lost some ingredients of the past that we think is needed. So, at the moment we are in this reflection period of rethinking what are we going to do with this space. We are 30 people in the assembly of course not all of them are active. Some of them are not in Athens. So, I can say that the active people are around 15. And within these 15 people we have three groups right now subgroups. One is the working group of cafe neo. The other group is about the European programmes. And the third group is the nomadic kitchen. It started like that: the people who cooked initially in cafe neo. And then they thought oh what about we want to be more sustainable personally. Because they wanted to be able to live from it. And they created this nomadic kitchen which is a part of European village but also independent somehow. In the sense that they have a separate legal form, they have a space which they use for cooking because it is a kind of alternative vegetarian catering. But they are very close to us in the way that before they started having their own space, they used our space and they still are members all of them. And, the cook for our events they help us somehow.

These three groups are the main groups. In our philosophy and vision which is very concrete, so our vision includes a project that we somehow connect what we are doing with a place that is outside Athens. This is something that didn't happen yet. We are looking for places. And

people from our organisation could stay and work there. The purpose of that is to be able to experiment on all the things that we want to try related to food, energy, any kind of experimentation, and we could use this space for workshops for outside the city. And, production of food that we are cooking. So, the next step of our vision is this. But we are not really in rush for this.

Me: Are you in some way coordinated with the municipality of Athens somehow? And the funds for the exchange programmes are European funds?

Interviewee: First question: No. And yes, those are European funds. All the money that we get as funds are being used for the journeys. I am saying that because most of the other organisations who are getting these funds it is all about money for them. For us it is not all about money! When we do those programmes, we give all the money to the participants! We are very let's say ethical about how we use the programmes. Of course, the coordinators take some money because it is a lot of work. BUT we always give to the organisation something back. Like I will get paid but 50% will go to the European village to be sustainable and have a backup. Because we face a crisis here a lot of spaces face serious issues. And we want to create an as safe environment as possible. Which is not easy. Because we also face a lot of financial crisis. But we managed somehow with the help and solidarity to be able to exist. We don't take any funds from the state we don't have any collaboration with banks *laughs*.

We take very little for ourselves. But I have to tell you this sometimes doesn't help. Because people come and give a lot of time and energy and work as volunteers but there is a point they burn. And then you need new blood. People that have new energy. So, in a way this system has its problems. Because if you are a volunteer you have a limit on how many hours and time you can really give and how committed you are. For example, when you say you come at 6. Will you come at 6 if you are a volunteer? Now we have this little payment that helps to be committed but still it is not enough.

That's why I said we are in this phase of transition and see how we are going to develop our model. It will be fair and easy for all to participate.

It is not easy because it is like a school, we learn stuff we develop ourselves. We started and we see it didn't work so we changed it. All the time we are in this.

Me: Where does the name come from? Why village? Why not city?

Interviewee: hmmm? I am not sure, but I think it has to do something related to the community part of a neighbourhood. Like this part of the city is a village. Because of the European programmes it is European village.

Me: because you mentioned before that in some ways you are radical and, in some ways, not. In which would that be?

Interviewee: First of all, we have a legal form. This takes away a part of radicality *laughs*. The second reason is that we try to include everyone. We are not anarchists we are everything. Some of us are anarchists, some of us are lefts some other hippies some are not political at all. It is a combination of different people of different backgrounds. But all these people agree to this specific philosophy of the space. If you ask people from Exarchia "what is your opinion about European village" it very common to tell you "they are hippies," or "they are very good, but it is very thing there". For me this is a very positive thing. Because I never liked groups where it is all about one ideology. I think this is very narrow minded

For me it is more interesting when I am in a mix of people. But in the opinion of the radical people this maybe creates this not radical face. And, the fact that the neighbourhood that we are based is a one that have a different background. More conservative people, working class people, poor people. Not super poor but it is a working-class area. So, the people here are very different and sometimes very very narrow minded. We want to change the neighbourhood and I think we did that somehow, we helped. But in the same time, we want to respect the people who are there and sometimes we must be careful of how we do things. Like we cannot party all the time there. Which is in the radical space is what happens all the time. It is all about freedom and we do whatever we want. We cannot do that there. We want to respect the neighbourhood and be part of it and find the balance of how we can inspire them to think differently and be more progressive in the way they think but at the same time respect the

limitation that exist. If you want to count how radical we are I would say we are 60% radical. Because radicality here is about anarchism.

Me: Do your organisation want to offer a small solution to society or do you have a picture for a bigger part of the society?

Interviewee: In our philosophy it is more about local selves of change. And this local small thing be connected. So, we don't have the dream to be something big. No. But we want to be able to inspire others in other neighbourhoods with similar projects and somehow connect and cooperate. And that's why social solidarity economy and our relationship to other groups in Greece and participation in festivals and projects is very important. The part of connection and dissemination is very important. I believe the EV through this period is one of the spaces that are important for the social movement and important for social solidarity economy, as a concept because we are from the first that really talked about it in Greece. It is the cooperative coffee shop, I think, that opened in Athens. And the first stage that talked about this concept and transitioning as a concept. There is this incubator thing going on, there are many people involved in other projects like me. There is a strong bonding with other cooperatives like every year there is a festival that is happening. It is a grassroots festival. Not funded by anyone. It happens without money. And it is called festival for solidarity and cooperated economy. And the first festival happened in 2012. And the time bank of Athens and Iospouri and EV were the first 3 groups that had the idea and organised a festival and include and invite a lot of other groups because it was with an assembly. It was all about how we work together and promote what we do. And inspire the society. This self-organised festival is all about connection between actors and groups of social change. And we still do. The next will happen next year. There were 6 or 7 festivals so far. This year we had a break since a long time because we had a lot of other projects.

Me: do you see the movements/groups change a lot?

Interviewee: We see that slowly the society recognises more the rest of the world. Before 2009 there was really nothing. We saw that in a very small period of time groups were emerging. Cooperatives, alternative way of thinking, economy, how can we exchange things without

money, it was the money part but also the non-money part, the solidarity, all these issues we saw there was an increase. Before that if you asked anyone "ah do you know this eco community"? "eco-community? What is this". But now people begin to understand. Now more people recognise these terms. Social solidarity economy. That's why the state now tries with a law to do something about it. They create these hubs these spots all over Greece that give counselling to people that want to start a kinsep.

Look SYRIZA before was very much involved in social movements. Of course, there was a disappointment from a very big part of people that believed that SYRIZA would do very radical stuff but it didn't happen. But still. My personal opinion. I was never a member of SYRIZA, but I voted for them for the first time. But I am as well very disappointed, and I had very serious issues with friends that were in SYRIZA and left the party and now how we can work now together because there is this stigma, they have but what I say is. It is a government that has its agenda. And they try to do small things, not big things that really make a difference, no not very radical. But they do things so the society will recognise it, accept it and will see it as an alternative way of behaving, working and living. I don't believe this would have happened under the previous government. But generally, I am very disappointed.

Me: Solidarity for all was a subgroup of SYRIZA wasn't it?

Interviewee: it started before SYRIZA was elected and a lot my friends were working there. And I believe that they did an amazing job because ok they were using funds coming from SYRIZA. But they were independent and free to use the money as they wanted. They had their assembly, so they had horizontal relationships between them, and they were honest and transparent. Some people trusted them others didn't because of the political party behind. After SYRIZA got elected, they majority of people that I knew and appreciated left. Because they didn't like how SYRIZA behaved. So now there are new people that I don't really know. I don't know what they are doing I don't have a relation to them anymore.

Me: Did they want to get in contact with this or other grassroots movements?

Interviewee: no. In the past. The previous group that existed. We collaborated in some things not always. If the project was very radical, we wouldn't cooperate. Although I respect them as

individuals. And I was never alone. I was always a part of a group. So, we had to take an assembly over the decision and the majority was like no we should not cooperate with them. If they are not radical, we do cooperate like we did in the congress on social solidarity economy.

It was a European congress where European groups came. And with them we cooperated. So `Solidarity for all` was a good group but at the moment I don't know what they are doing.

Me: In Vienna the urban gardening "movement" get stronger. Does that happen here as well?

Interviewee: Yes. I told you about the three groups that we have there are other groups that use our space for doing their assembly. We have a strong connection. Almost like they are a part of us. One group is called the transition of the academy of Plato. It is about gardening, use the energy from the sun. How we can use the space in the balconies and roofs. However, it is not so common and big than in the rest of Europe. It is in very initial steps. Here it is not so organised. It's small groups. That try to inspire others. There is another group using our space. The focus on how they can preserve traditional seeds and distribute them and do not lose the old culture of the production process. They do a lot against TTIP. They do events to inform adults and kids about this.

All the groups that work in cafe neo we connect and help each other. The product that we use comes from small producers that use traditional seeds and have relationship that I just told you. So, there is always is a circle between all the groups. But we are not so organised so that we could create a BIG movement. It's still small.

Me: what's your experience. Are some people or age groups more active than others?

Interviewee: my personal opinion is this: I think the very young people are thinking of other stuff. And this is normal somehow. If I think of myself how I became socially aware of what's going on maybe I was very late. I was always thinking about humanity. But I was a little bit hippy. I didn't know the concepts. I started knowing the concepts in 2011. For me the Syntagma Square and the protests that happened then was a very important moment for myself and my activist path started there. Before that I was in an anarchist/feminist group but I didn't go for

the ideology I went because of a friend of mine was there as well. Then I went to study abroad and I didn't participate in any groups there. Because the university was business related, they didn't have any. They didn't give me any inspiration to really be part the political. It was not such thing in London. I used to go to protest in irk and whatever. But not really involved. And when I came back. Nothing I was working here. And syntagma square the protests in 2011 really it was for me the "click moment" when I went the first time in the square I was like "wow the world will change". I saw the spirit of change. And I met other cool people and I started a group there who had the same idea the time bank. The time bank of Athens was the first initiative that I was very active, and I am still. And through the time bank I met people from European village and then we collaborated and so on. And we kind of become one. All of us. A lot of people and a lot of groups 2011 and Syntagma square was a very crucial moment. For change, participation, involvement, different way of thinking, going into depths when you protest. Why you protest?! Not just going there. A lot of discussions. Except from the big assembly that was a general assembly it was an all-day people all the grass talking about something. Either economic, laws, alternative economy, art.

Art played for me the most important role. If art wouldn't have been there the square wouldn't have last for so long. Because we stayed almost 2 month there. Occupying the square. It was big. If we didn't have artists to make us feel safe and better there, if we wouldn't have artist to play music if we didn't have artist to perform theatre or doing events. The police and the violence would have been worse. And trust me, Tascha, we experienced war there. Art made us feel united, not be afraid, stay there and do stuff there. I have a lot of memories from there. It was about art about discussions about democracy about direct democracy. The concept of direct democracy of course existed theoretically long ago and stems from Greece. But to think about it again and consider it and use it. IT was there it happened. Meeting people connect this people and create this trust. Because there were issues with trust. When you have to deals with thousands at some point millions of people that have different backgrounds and occupying the place which is against the law then you have issues of trust. In the beginning we didn't know each other. It was process for us to stared talking and trust each other. How can I trust your intentions? How do I know that you really want to help and be part of it or maybe you are police? But then after the Square and this is the amazing thing. We didn't stay there 2 month and then disappeared and disconnected. We left the square, but we found other ways to cooperate and creating this bonding and trust. In the square we met, it was an amazing

moment and for me it was a historical moment but then we threw the seeds there and then the flowers somehow flourished around in many ways.

Every time I speak about this, I feel a bit emotional because it's like it happened yesterday. And many people who didn't experience that say "ah tell me what happened there. I wish I was there". I cannot really describe it. There are a lot of documentaries about that. It was magic. And it had positive and negative sides. As I told you we faced A LOT of violence. For the first time in my life I felt that where I live there is no democracy. This democracy is fake. That I don't have freedom. To realize that is a shock. When I talked to journalists and other people they said: "Why you say that? We do not have a dictatorship!" Yes it's not a dictatorship I can go to the square "fuck you government I can say that " But What we have is worse. Because when we had a dictatorship, we knew that this is a dictatorship. And this realization made people start a revolution against dictatorship. Because we had one in the 1979. Now. What we have is oligarchy somehow. 52:17

And bank and financial institutions in kind of a game that people vote, but vote for what? For people who don't have any power or any intention to change something. And they have the protection of the police. When people want to protest or go against the law the send the police to attract. So, this is not democracy. I had to hide. To protect myself in 2011. When I was hidden inside the cupboard because the police were upstairs, and I had to go in a shop. And the shop owner rescued us. Because the shop owner said to us come inside and hide. And we were 10 people inside the closet. That moment when I was inside there I said, "this is not democracy". If I have to run and hide because otherwise, I would be arrested. And if I, as an individual, as a citizen of this country and I pay taxes so that the police or any kind of police will somehow protect the society by what? By criminality? I don't pay them to hit me! I pay them to arrest criminals. People who do bad things not people that protest! Somehow the whole system collapsed in there. I knew of course before that that the police plays this role, always, but the whole thing of me running for my life and hide it remind me of stories that my father used to tell me when he was young back then in dictatorship and it reminded me of that moment. I remember a month after the square when we stopped there. I used to listen to the sound of motorbikes, and I was afraid. Because the police used to have motorbikes and hit people. This left me psychologically shocked. Recently we saw a documentary about the square and we

were filmed back then as well I started crying. I feel the emotions of it. It never left me. Positively and negatively as I told you. It is the most radical act that I have ever done. A lot of teargas. I wonder how it will influence us who were there in the future. Health issues I mean. It was like war.

I remember musicians which an important role they played! One night we were a lot of people in the square. There was one band rock, Greek rock, and that moment when he played suddenly the police attacked around from all the sides suddenly with teargas and I could see the clouds. It was a cloud of teargas. And we were in the middle. And this guy who was in the middle didn't stop. He continued playing the music. The people were there the artists were there the police was there. But because of the artist we stayed there. We weren't afraid. And the police couldn't attack. Because the artists were very famous people. In the way they saved us. But the could us there. It was surreal this whole thing.

The guy who played the Crete music is Stephanos. I saw him there. It was very emotional. Stephanos I saw him, I met him in the square and then when I went to European village, it turned out he is from this neighbourhood. And there is another association, a cultural association, that Stephanos is doing lessons for traditional music and dance. And it was very emotional when I met him in European Village because I remember him from the square. This is how all of this is connected. There is a progress in how we connect with each other and we know each other and trust each other.

Imagine people with white faces. It was a moment when the police really wanted to take us out. And they weren't a lot of people because it was early, early in the afternoon. People used to come after 6 or 7 o'clock. And I remember we were not many people and they attacked and Stephanos took the liar and started to play Cretan music and there were people that started dancing and we were all dancing and we stayed. The police were very close but when they saw we were dancing, and we were like that for some reasons they stopped. There were other times they didn't stop. They came in the square we had to go out and then we came back. It was like a game. They used to come we leave, we came back. At one point we knew the time when they would come. Ah it is 9 o'clock they probably will come now. Yeah because it was a kind of pattern that they had. And we had a lot of secret police inside. That's why there was this problem with trust.

Me: I want to know how transformation starts. And to whom and why in which context and how we can it be spread.

Interviewee: People still believes, and I also include my friends and family, the majority still believes that this is democracy. Why you say that? We are free to say whatever we want. Yes, you are free to say what you want but that is not enough. What you do?! How are you involved in the decisions?! How much involvement do you have in decision making?! This is democracy! Democracy is not I can say to Tsipras Fuck off. Democracy would have been to be able to vote for a group that represents me. But this representation is not that gives the right to anything. No! If you don't do things that you said you do or if you don't act for our benefit for our collective benefit. I should have to right to kick you out any moment. Because there you are to represent us. Not yourself, not the interest of someone else. In the sense still after so many years of crisis people still believe unfortunately that what we have is democracy. And the fact that SYRIZA is in the government is positive and negative. Positive in the sense that SYRIZA has a more humanistic approach in my opinion, but it is negative because of this "felt" face you see a decrease in the participation and protests, a decrease in groups and how the social movements right now act. And how strong the area. We were stronger, the social movements were stronger in Athens, in Greece before SYRIZA got elected.

Me: Why?

Interviewee: Because of disappointment some of them because right now more serious issues related to sustainability. I used to have a lot of friends that were very active before and now they can't because they have to survive. They don't have the time they used to have before, and they don't have the energy like before. So, it is about time and energy. And there is the other part that voted for SYRIZA for the wrong reasons, not because they wanted to see what they going to do. There is this decline because we have a left government. When we have a right government, people are fighting more. Maybe the enemy is clearer and more open, and you have it Infront of you. If a new democracy wouldn't have been in power I believe that more people would have been dead in the sea. I believe that the camps would have been worse. Because I saw, I know the politics of the right party. They don't give a shit about human life.

Human rights. They don't care. They care about money and only money. So somehow, I feel happy that we have this government but on the other hand I feel disappointed. I don't think I will vote for SYRIZA again but at the time what if the other come? What about refugees what about social benefits? But I don't know. It is weird the whole thing.

And why do you think Austria is so right or conservative?

Me: (explaining politics in Austria. Not transcribed, as it is not interesting for the research outcome)

Interviewee: I didn't answer you the question about ages. It is mostly not very young people. Very young they still prefer to go for a coffee and just chat and go out and have fun. I think the Greek family plays a very important role in the sense. ok we have the crisis we suffer, but we have very strong family bonds. Which means parents still pay and help kids. For a long time. Here the family structure is completely different than the one from the north. Like I remember when I used to live with my parents, because I couldn't support myself alone financially. People would say "you are so old and live with your parents?!" This was also before the crisis. Family in Greece support for a long time. You are 30 years old and they still support. Psychological, financial, and the reason why you don't see this crisis in Athens, people living outside in the streets so much, is because of family. So, youngster under 25 still have this attitude of having fun. I don't believe in politics, I don't believe in anything. And the people who participate in are between 30 and 40 and older. We see younger people as well, but they are the minority in what we do. Which for me is a disappointing thing to be honest. And I am always thinking how we could inspire younger people to participate because younger people have energy and we need this energy. I am 39. That's why education is one very important part now and we want to strengthen the relationship towards younger people.

It's not easy. We'll see how effective we can be in the future.

I am interested in feedback and the most important thing. Because I spoke with many people from universities, journalists etc. Not only write something but try to disseminate it. Somehow try to do something with it. One is giving it back to us to see and maybe get some ideas or see what we can do. The other is organise an event and try to make it public! Otherwise it will always stay a master thesis in a university context. Science plays a very important role. If it is

related to technology for sure. *laughs* Science like design. I am very interested in design. How we use space, how we use them with other people and how we can transform neighbourhoods. The difference here and there it is all about funding, all the groups are funded by the state or the municipality. But still I took ideas from them. If you are planning to do something in Austria to present this, I would be happy to come. I like this. How can we help you there! How can we inspire people! I have done these 2 times. One in berlin and one in Barcelona. They invited me to present. A conference and a meeting. I believe it is very important to talk to spread to.