"Alternative Networks of Collectivities" and "Solidarity-Cooperative Economy" in Greek cities: Exploring their theoretical origins.

Abstract:
This paper aims to explore the theoretical roots of some contemporary networks of creative social resistance that contribute to local development through solidarity-cooperative economy. In the beginning, the concepts underlying the research and the historical origins of solidarity-cooperative economy are presented, and a brief historical overview is made. Then, the research methodology is presented, and self-representations of collectives are explored through discourse, that is, how these collectives are represented through the analysis of texts and participant observation with informal interviews. It is found that daily practice is strongly grounded in their respective and most pressing needs of people at times of crisis. The need that generates these movements (as expressed through their own texts) is both material (production and reproduction of life) and poetic (creation of new everyday life relations). However, most interviews reveal that the interviewees seem to deny or, at least, seem not to want to link their activity in the present time with any dream about future change of the social system and any earlier corresponding historical effort (except for certain collectives inspired by Latin American movements). In fact, the new feature of these movements can be condensed in the statement: "we all together want to begin to plan the dream today". Eventually (in order to be effective in modern political-economic relations) modern ventures of solidarity economy should be firstly and foremost social and solidary, and combine the dream with daily practice.

Keywords: solidarity and cooperative economy, urban social movements, degrowth, Greece, utopias.

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1. Introduction

This research is ongoing, focuses on collectives trying to change each moment in their daily life collectively and self-organized, thus promoting local development. Many of them state clearly that they have been inspired by utopias or theories that have set a target to change the world, so there is no exploitation of human beings by human beings and destruction of the natural environment. Some others do not state such a similar inspiration; it rather becomes conspicuous from the study of their texts. Besides, most of the examined collectives are the offspring of a collective need and not of some theoretical strictly political affiliation.

In this paper, there are initially presented some useful ecological, social and economic concepts underlying the research and the historical origins of solidarity - cooperative economy. There is also a short historical overview of key joint ventures of solidarity-cooperative economy in Greece. Then, the research methodology is presented and explores self-representation as reflected on discourse of collectivities that are selected through the analysis of their texts and participant observation.

2. Theoretical Framework

"… Thus the old view, in which the human being appears as the aim of production, regardless of his limited national, religious, political character, seems to be very lofty when contrasted to the modern world, where production appears as the aim of mankind and wealth as the aim of production….»

(Carl Marx, 1858/1964, The Grundrisse, NOTEBOOK V)

This paper is based on the idea that the place is a point of intersection and a special moment in the intersection of multiple social relationships, networks of which have been established over time, have interacted, have been deconstructed and renewed (Massey, 1994 and 2005). Thus, "the identities associated with the place are multiple and often contradictory, since different groups invent their own traditions and take a different position in the interweaving of local and wider relations associated with a particular place" (Vaiou, Hadjimichalis, 2012: 188-189)[2] Therefore, this work does not use the concept of local development from the perspective of R. Putnam's traditional theory of local social capital, but it is rather interested in exploring the glocal characteristics of collectives and investigates their contribution to places with which they are engaged. In this direction, the work is interested in the potential contribution of the examined collectives to local development of all areas to which they relate, not only to the areas where they have their headquarters.

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[2] As Massey (1994: 120), Vaiou, Hadjimichalis (2012: 188-189) note, dominance of one or another identity in space is the result of conflict, that "it is neither to be taken for granted in advance nor it is stable over time".

In this text, the term "local development" is used from the view of social political ecology (Bookchin, 2002), especially regarding the relationship between humanity and nature.[3] The term development is not used in the sense of continuous economical growth. The text, as lots of other collectives that are examined, has a critical stand towards this concept (Illich, 2003), and have a positive look at the theory of degrowth (décroissance) (Latouche, 2006, Taibo, 2009).

The research focuses specifically on alternative networks of collectives as part of the broader concept of social networks and solidarity economy as part of the broader concept of social economy (see many cases of collectivities in Amin A., 2009). In the present study, participants in social networks are not individuals but rather collectivities. Therefore, it is about Networks of Collectivities and, since they act independently and under direct democracy[4], we call them alternative networks of collectives.

Lots of these networks operate in an institutional or extra-institutional manner within the context of an alternative and solidarity economy which is embedded in the broader concept of social economy. Social economy is defined as a non-market economy: production and distribution are under the control of society, not of the market. "In economy, the production area of social life, direct democracy is linked with social economy that develops along with the economy of capital" (Kotsakis, 2012b). It is formally divided into the concept of exchange (barter economy) and that of gift (economy of grace). The latter also includes the concept of "sharing" that is the base of the solidarity - cooperative economy in contemporary postmodern terms, since it does not require the quantification of employment relations and the products derived from employment.

Social economy includes: Organizations of Mutual Aid, Cooperatives and social Clubs (non-profit associations, voluntary organizations, etc.), with some of which this research is concerned.[5] The "pioneering partnership of the fair city of Rochdale", which was established in England in 1844 and was based on the ideas of Robert Owen and William King, has been a milestone for the cooperative history, practice and theory. Co-operatives and other social economy groups have by their nature local character, as opposed to private enterprises /

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[3] In 2000, Clark states: that the eco-centrism requires the human being to put his/her welfare in the service of the planet improvement and change his/her logic into a global logic..

[4] "Social networks follow certain principles that have contrasted the networks from organizations -this contrast is critical for the existence of direct democracy - and are sufficient to define themselves" (Kotsakis, 2012a).

[5] According to the decisions of the World Congress of the International Cooperative Alliance (1995) "Cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through their participatory and democratically controlled enterprise. "Cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, justice, solidarity. The members of cooperatives rely on the ethical values of: honesty, transparency, openness, social responsibility and caring for others" (ICA, 1995: 3).

companies that choose their location to maximize profit. Their capital is invested in the region and thus contributes to local development.[6]

In Western Europe, social economy has got a long history from the early 19th century onwards, and is considered a forerunner of the welfare state in the early 1930s. Gibson-Graham (1996, 2006) - in their work on the "diverse" economy (whose part is social economy) - consider this economy involves "other" possibilities that either they have already been or can be the subject of an imaginary creation of a non-capitalist future. They also believe that local communities should determine / record their own needs and resources, aiming to highlight the possibilities that can be further developed and exploitative structures that should be challenged. Within this context, it is proposed (Miller, 2011) the creation of a new ontology of regional development (Gritzas & Kavoulakos, 2012). At the local level, another type of development based on economic degrowth and has in its center the humanity and nature (and not profit) may rely heavily on social solidarity, especially on - cooperative economy. But how? In order for self-managed communities and cooperatives to be effective in the modern era of "biopolitical capitalism" of a new "empire" (Foucault 2001, Hardt & Negri, 2004), they must maintain their self-management and their relationship to the place through creative projects that contradict dominant relationships, and by being socially-networked and standing in solidarity with trust relationships among them (Varkarolis, 2012).

In conditions of modern politico-economic crisis, reproduction of capital has entered / adopted a neo-colonial logic of "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey, 2007 and 2010). The welfare state is being systematically weakened and wherever it is weak, it collapses ... More specifically, in Latin America the welfare state collapsed after the Washington Agreement and the IMF interventions in crisis situations[7] decade after the 1980s. Thus, the term "solidarity economy" has spread much in Latin America even by official government agencies; see the SOLIDARIDAD programme in Mexico in the early 1990s. Because there is such great experience of movements in Latin America (Zibechi, 2011), there is a serious criticism arguing that such movements organized around economic solidarity, whereas they were developed as resistances against the dominant political and economic system, they eventually played a major role in sociopolitical integration of large segments of society in the

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[6] According to UN estimates for 1994 the living standards of about 3 billion people or half the world's population improved through cooperative enterprises (Lieros, 2012, ICA Network K, 2012). According to a survey based on historical dictionary by Shaffer J., 1999, in Greece in the early 21st century, almost 10% of the population was involved in cooperatives while in countries like Ireland, the USA, Sweden, participation exceeded 50% of population (Zeuli and Cropp, 2004).

[7] "In Europe, social economy has managed the weakening of the state, but has not faced its collapse. In Latin America, it has faced more this issue ... It does not only assume functions of the welfare state but it is confused with subsistence economy and informal economy in which population segments live which are majority in many countries" (Lieros, 2012).

existing system, ultimately removing from many popular walks their potentially revolutionary capability (Ramos Wellen, 2009).

According to a widespread approach, "solidarity economy is another area of economic activity beyond the competitive economy and can complement employment and tackle unemployment and hardship of those who have too little income" (IMKO, 2012). This approach is very close to most of the broader concept of social economy, highlighting strategies to humanize capitalist economy by creating community safety nets. The Institute of Studies of Social Economy, specializing in topics of social economy and green business many NGOs and many studies are in this direction.

Another more radical approach sees solidarity economy as a daily process of change in the practice of economic activity "in order to reject capitalism and oppressive relations that it supports and encourages" (Varkarolis, 2012). According to this view, solidarity economy is a vehicle of / for post-capitalist and autonomous societies. *"This view* approaches economy as an inseparable part of social life and not as its autonomized ruler" (Ziogas, 2012 in Varkarolis, 2012). In other words, there is another approach to the opportunities given to solidarity economy starting from another approach to capitalism. It believes that "we can develop anti-capitalist economic relations with pre-imaginative content alongside the capitalist ones" (Varkarolis, 2012). Finally, it is very close to Holoway's approaches (2010) to the prospect that might have the so-called "cracks in capitalism."

Collectives that were examined in this study better determine the terms "alternative, solidarity and cooperative economy" rather than "social economy" that is much broader. Besides, the concept of social economy – which is particularly used by the wider political ecology in Greece - as seen above, it contains several sub-cases that are more related to state policies to support vulnerable groups and many Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) funded by (sometimes profit) organizations. As revealed by this investigation in many official documents in "Clarity" and websites that refer to the social economy (search by keywords), this concept is particularly used by public services to meet needs in the areas of mental health, prevention and social policy and issues of "social work".

Nevertheless, the concept of social economy is also used by some business people to conceal unpaid or seasonal work: there are as many cases of "hiring employees" who have been employed by NGOs to work in social economy and end up working seasonally with lower wages for private businesses. The same concept is also used in some cases of volunteerism advocating fascist ideas. As a result, there is confusion surrounding the use of the term "social economy", being removed from its initial direction.

On the contrary, the concept of solidarity - collaborative economy refers more to networks of collectives that operate in terms of participatory democracy and regardless of party subsidies and global economic, governmental or private organizations. Seventeen (17) collectives have recently organized the First "Festival of Solidarity and Alternative Cooperative Economy" in the former American Base, where the Greek Cultural Center now stands on 19-21 October 2012. The importance of the place / location where the meeting took place is special / particular, because there is the seat of one of the oldest and most important movements of resistance to the privatization of public spaces that recently joined the so-called Medium-term of Fiscal Strategy under Law 3985/2011 and 3986/2011. As the collectives themselves note: "The space ... is connected, in general, with the struggles against the selling off of the pub*lic land and public property. The ... "Alternative Festival" stands by and* supports the City of Argyroupolis – Ellinikou and the "Fight Committee for the Metropolitan Park in Elliniko", considering it necessary to coordinate our actions to regain ownership of the facilities and the former airport, highlighting "structures that would provide a concrete example for building relationships of solidarity, cooperativeness and mutual help".

Solidarity - cooperative economy is not confined to one place, as some may support. Contrary to modern conditions where different scales interweave, cooperative and solidarity economy connects communities and takes glocal features. Vishwas Satgar (2007), from a neo-Gramscian perspective, explains the role that cooperative forms of solidarity economy can play into world economy as opposed to theories that try to convince people that there is no other path than the dominant globalized economy of multinational companies. He also raises a concern in relation to the dynamics that can be given by the expansion of the cooperative movement with several solidarity forms developed in the labour movement toward a direction of "development of anti-hegemonic policies in the struggle against neo-liberalism". Indeed, as the collectives that participated in the Festival of solidarity and cooperative economy (19-21/10/2012) noted in their text: "The action and participation in these collectives has shown to all of us that another world is not just possible but real. A world in which market laws and the current economic system of exploitation of human labour for profit collapse, and in which human relationships become meaningful again. Misery and marginalization imposed on us in the name of crisis and development are addressed through collective creation and solidarity".

3. Historical origins of solidarity-cooperative economy and attempts of its implementation

The roots of solidarity-cooperative economy, despite the fact that they are lost in the centuries in pre-capitalist formations that have been around the world (Luxembourg, 1976, Marx, 1964, Kropotkin, 1955, Lambos, 2012), seem to be theoretically formulated in the so-called utopias of the nineteenth century (Polanyi, 1968), which divided into those that welcomed the industrial revolution and those that were critical of it (Mumford, 2003). Two main trends have shown in utopian thinking: The one seeks the humanity's happiness through material prosperity, the immersion of human individuality within the team and the greatness of the state. The other trend, whereas it requires a certain level of material comfort, argues that happiness is a result of the free expression of the human personality and should be sacrificed neither in an arbitrary moral code nor in the interests of the state (Berneri, 1982). This thought seems to have particularly affected collectivities that are examined in this paper without however the relevant influence being a reference point by most of them.

The solidarity-collaborative economy also seems to have roots in forms of organization of social movements that prevailed after the industrial revolution in Europe and America. These movements, whereas they were launched with a strong community status, got strong working characteristics (the place rallying was the workplace and especially industry). Then, they went from the workplace to the place of the city. Some basic landmarks in this development are: the so-called experimental utopian communities and the development of the first cooperative movement after the first crisis of capitalism 1840, the Paris Commune in 1871, the communities developed after the Mexican revolution in 1910, the creation of the first Soviet of the former Soviet Union after the Bolshevik revolution in 1917, and the attempts to create many Central European collectives at work, anarchist-libertarian communities that were developed during the Spanish Revolution (1936-1939), the solidarity economic structures that were developed in Yugoslavia after World War II, revolted, and in the first phase of the revolution in China and Cuba, the solidarity structures supported by liberation theology in Latin America, the movement of Malkom X (1952-1963) and Panthers (1966-1968) in the U.S.A., the non-violence movement in India and many more. Most of these efforts of practical implementation of self-management in the city and the abolition of exploitation of the human being by other human beings were defeated but triggered off future generations to attempt anew to liberate humanity (Hobsbawm, 2011) and caused a huge debate on so-called "cracks" or creative resistance (Holloway, 2010).

In the middle of the 20th century, many post-modern projects appeared much influenced by the ideas of the 1968 riots that embraced multiple disciplines and new social movements: women's movement, the environmental movement, the movement for sexual liberation, student movement, labour movement from below according to sectoral activities, city movements, unemployed movements etc. (Psimitis, 2006). As many studies have shown (Tilly, 2004), since the 1960s alternative collectives have proliferated utilizing structures of social economy. Between 1980 and 1990, lots of these collectives were absorbed by the system through government subsidies or major sponsorships. Others kept their ideas of self-organization.

By 1995, all these movements and initiatives had not met in joint discussions, whereas some of them seemed to have had serious conflicts among them (Wallerstein, 2008). They were usually isolated in a local or thematic area, and their meetings were held at respective scales. In 1996, such a first attempt was made by the Zapatista movement, which called on the First Intergalactic Meeting in Lacandon jungle of Southeastern Mexico. The following movements emerged and followed the aforementioned movements:

- the movement against the WTO in Seattle 1999 and the subsequent anti-globalization movements (G8, World Trade Organization, etc.);

- the forums of indigenous movements in Latin America and other regions of the world (http://zeztainternazional.ezln.org.mx/);

- the global social forums and the movement for alter-globalization (http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/,); and

- the recent European "meetings of self-management" http://www.foire-autogestion.org/ and other coordination actions.

Nowadays, in conditions of capitalist globalization the role of the place through the interconnection of sites in the organization of multiple resistances now embracing all disciplines and all forms of organization worldwide is reassessed. Thus, they acquire glocal features (Koèhler & Wissen, 2003; Petropoulou, 2012a). Such movements are: the contemporary Zapatista movement (since 1994 onwards in Mexico), the MST landless people's movement in Brazil, mothers' movement and the movement of the occupied factories in Argentina, many movements in Bolivia (Cochabamba movement), in Venezuela (conversion of the so-called "missiones" into collectives, CECOSESOLA), and many other self-movements in Europe (as many "eco-communities" as well as the Christiania, the Marinaleda etc.), in the U.S.A. and worldwide and many collectivities produced by the recent movement of squares (Stavrides, 2010, Leontidou, 2012).

Eventually, the collectives that have characteristics of solidarity, cooperativeness and mutual help, resisting the exploitation of human being by human being and the domination of global capital, can be regarded as creative elements or cracks in the existing system (Holloway, 2010). "... Creative resistances are social constructs that, by interpreting in depth the social environment, try to create more opportunities for people to choose an autonomous instead of a slave life. In other words, a new, special type of sociopolitical action, a gesture with the ultimate goal of radical social transformation in line with the exit strategy" (Varkarolis, 2012).

Creative resistors have their roots not only in historical attempts to change society through everyday actions aiming to abolish exploitation of human being by human being but also in another relationship with nature that will challenge the continued upward growth process. As noted the collectives that participated in the First "Alternative Festival of Solidarity Cooperative Economy") in their text: "We know that we are still at the beginning of a long journey and we will encounter forces of populism and charity that try to exploit the poverty and misery that our fellow citizens have already experienced by cultivating illusions ... We also know that we are living in the last moments of a world based on exploitation, *injustice and an illusion of eternal abundance. This world is falling apart, and it's up to us* now to highlight the structures that will not only replace the existing impasse, but will be a tangible example to build relationships of solidarity and cooperativeness and mutual help!".

Most of the collectives that have been examined in this work, despite the fact that they participate in meetings organized at the local level, do not participate in international meetings in which their members however participate.

4. Attempts of community liberation ventures and the cooperative movement in Greece (since the 18th century onwards)

In Greece, wherever there was a long tradition of rebellion and self-organization (Damianakos, 2003 and Lambos, 2012) around the 18th century, there were the first collaborative forms: of Thrace, those of Aigina's sponge, the Thessalian companions of Ampelakia - Tirnavos - Agia - Zagora etc and sailors cooperatives of the islands of Hydra, Spetses, Psara, Symi, Santorini and maritime cities such as: Messimvria, Galaxidi and Kranidi. A lot of the first cooperatives were based on the principle of equal participation, while others were not (that is, their participation was based rather on their individual economic contribution). The latter cannot be regarded as cooperatives of solidarity economy. More particularly, the cooperative Ambelakia, the "Common Company", flourished in the late

18th and early 19th century during the Ottoman Empire. It was a Cooperative Company located in the Community of Ampelakia, which consisted of 22 small villages (6,000 members with equal participation). Another example is the Association of Agricultural Cooperatives of Naxos, which was founded in 1926 by a group of small producers to make cheese out of small quantities of milk and organize small milk producers against the large ones.

Despite the prohibition on their political action, cooperatives seem to have flourished particularly in the 1930s assisted by the protectionist policy of local products due to the global crisis. Thus there was developed a range of specialized agricultural cooperatives mainly of products, but those cooperatives were forced to run into debt in banks putting mortgage their land. At the same time, cooperatives were set up, such as the "Association of Mastic Producers" in 1938, which later became mandatory. Finally, however, the Metaxas dictatorship of the "4th of August 1936" broke most of the progressive cooperative movement despite the opposition there was. Later - during the period of German Occupation and through the National and Rural Banks, lots of cooperatives were used to pillage the countryside (Gavrielides, 1944/1981). At the same time, those co-operatives which tried to keep their autonomy helped to tackle hunger in the most difficult times of World War II (Tsouparopoulos, 1989).

Between 1941 and 1946, the EAM (: National Liberation Front, the main Greek resistance organization) played a leading part in a great campaign of social work which had been done by organizations in war conditions within or without institutional settings. In free Greece, where the role of women and youth of EPON (: United Panhellenic Organization of Youth, the youth wing of the EAM) was special; many forms of self-organization and self-management of cooperatives were developed and contributed to the creation of schools, health centers, infrastructure, vendor partnerships and strengthened the autonomy of production, particularly of rural cooperatives by special legislation (Texts of National Resistance in KKE, 1981:11, 388-393).

In postwar Greece cooperatives continued to be a way of collective organization of the poor against the mega-producers. Nevertheless, due to the gradual shift of the economy of Greece to more consumer models, thus the political importance of the cooperative organization flagged. The associated with the cooperative phenomenon intense legislative activity of the last century (1,176 bills were passed between 1915 and 1994) has actually contributed to the fragmentation of social economy and the slowdown in development (Klimis 1985, Lambropoulou - Demetriadou, 1995, Tsobanoglou, 2012). At the same time, there was however a serious tradition of mutiny from the so-called dangerous classes, such as those of

thieves, rebetes[8] etc (Damianakos, 2003), which - as seen from various descriptions – practices solidarity-cooperative economy. Simultaneously, social economy has been booming as a social network among families and friends in a lot of traditional (mountainous or island) communities. The same happened in the first popular self-construction neighbourhoods in big cities, since the establishment of the state - nation of Greece onwards (Leontidou, 2010). A lot of structures of solidarity and collaborative economy seem to have been created in suburban areas of big cities, the so-called traditional slums, such as: the collective popular self-construction in areas like Perama and Chrysoupoli in Athens (Leontidou 2010; Petropoulou 2011) – or Meteora in Thessaloniki (Chastaoglou , 2008), solidarity economy between inhabitants of urban and rural areas of Greece (where those families that had settled in big cities had come from), and some forms of family-frame work and informal economy that kept features of collective management and solidarity.

The collaborative approach, the concept of partnership and solidarity, self-management and solidarity-cooperative economy have, therefore, got a long history in Greece that is not limited only what has been consolidated institutionally. Their institutional consolidation might have assimilated the actions of collectives, or it might have made them dangerous for the future of the capitalist system in Greece. When cooperatives were established in the 1980s, most were quickly incorporated in customer relationships and were finally disbanded. They had no real support framework, and most did not rely on participatory but rather on representative democracy. Nowadays, many of these cooperatives have been driven again (as before) to forced bankruptcy through their dependence on the loan banking system.

Today, there are some very dynamic cooperatives in areas where the mandatory participation of producers of specific products (gum, saffron, etc.) was institutionalized in 1990. There are also such dynamic cooperatives in other areas where the residents as a whole have decided upon this activity (cooperative Athena in Kozani, cooperatives in Lesvos, Naxos, etc.) as well as a great number of women's cooperatives that contribute decisively to the woman's emancipation. As Vavritsa (2010) notes, mandatory associations seem to be more robust than others. It should however be noted that a large part of the cooperative movement was largely manipulated by the dominant political parties, using cooperatives as vehicles for networking party customer relationships. Many times party-cooperative linkages have involved serious financial irregularities, thus leading several cooperatives to their collapse. Sometimes that ending was exploited by some members of the former cooperative

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[8] Rebetes : persons who embody aspects of character, dress, behavior, music, songs, morals and ethics associated with a particular subculture in Greece

administration to create large private enterprises which eventually replaced them (i.e. the given cooperatives). So, a lot of modern farmers' memory is highly negatively charged by the idea of the cooperative (as shown from interviews conducted in northern and central Greece and on some Aegean islands). Similarly, in cities, much of the so-called consumer cooperative movement appears to be related more to covered illegal "out of urban plan" construction of primarily middle-class strata (i.e. to lawyers, artists, engineers, bankers, judges, etc.) rather than the support of everyday life of the broad popular strata (Petropoulou, 2011). In contrast, in regions of big cities - in the so-called traditional slums, a lot of structures of solidarity and collaborative economy seem to be created. As Tsobanoglou, (2012) note "The field of social economy remains hidden and is associated with the underground economy of needs that operates because the official (economy) for profit services seem to define the order of the day".

In the recent years, there have been developed a lot of modern cooperatives and collectives of solidarity-cooperative economy which are public-spirited (health, education, nutrition, social welfare, etc.), without receiving grants from private or public institutions; there are, however, some receiving subsidies social work they do (social welfare) from the EU. A lot of rural cooperatives continue to operate without, however, representing a large part of agricultural production.

Since the 1990s, there have been several thematic collectives on issues such as: claiming urban space, or gender, environment, neighbourhoods associations, youth centers and the first counter-power squats later turned into social centers. Meanwhile, squatting of derelict buildings or fields has increased. What is to be noted here is that, while in the past that squatting occurred only because people wanted to put their heads under a roof (1834 - 1975), from 1975 to 2012, squatting takes place for social, cultural and environmental reasons, something that is not impossible to change in the coming years due to high pressure that is exerted on the cities by the homeless.

Especially after the students' uprising in December 2008 (Petropoulou, 2010a) and big congregations and protestations in squares in 2011, there has begun to develop a network of collectives focusing on local assemblies in neighbourhoods (Petropoulou, 2012a). At the same time, various networks of collectives that have no permanent members have been developing. The crisis seems to reinforce their presence and deepen their role. As a political ecological collectivity notes, "To the lack of money we are responding with solidarity exchange without money and gratuitous bazaars. To the lack of food we are responding with self-cultivation, self-managed gardens and conservation of traditional seeds. To unemployment we are

responding with labour collectives and cooperatives, to the lack of social housing we are responding with social occupations of housing and eco-communities, whereas to the lack of camaraderie we are responding with collective kitchens. To the deficit in democracy we are responding with direct-democratic neighbourhood assemblies and take matters into our hands ... Our Utopias is the reality of tomorrow" (Iliosporoi [: Sunflowers], 2010). But are utopias something that motivates modern collectives or not? In the following pages, we are going to explore this question.

5. Methodology and discussion of results

This research seeks to explore the theoretical roots of contemporary creative resistance in Greece. It has relied, for its most part, on participatory and bibliographical research. It has been supplemented by a systematic search on the Internet over the period 2011-2012 during which blogs and other websites 550 groups in Greece were identified from: 2,233 groups which register news on the website "kinimatorama" (: lit. a movement view) and 250 more groups. Additional sites and blogs were also used to gather announcements of groups like indymedia, indy, geitonies.espiv.net, katoikoi.blogspot.com, forums of Attica, Observatory of Free Spaces, and many groups who participated in the occupation of Syntagma Square. For the purposes of this research a database of collectives was formed based on their main activity, as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Collectivities which are called here as "creative resistance" - Thematic Typology based on their primary activities

1. Neighbourhood assemblies, coordinations - nodes
2. Squats - social spaces (buildings), Open Squats in urban lots
3. Collective Fields in urban and suburban area
4. Alternative - Solidarity trade, self-organized groceries
5. Cafes - ouzo – tsipouradika (where one can drink "tsipouro") - restaurants etc. (labour collectives and self-organized cooperatives)
6. Post, communications, etc. (labour collectives and self-organized cooperatives)
7. Processing – manufactures – industries (cooperatives, collectives)
8. Health - clinics - pharmacies (cooperatives, collectives, others)
9. Welfare (cooperatives, collectives, collectivities, and others)
10. Education, Conservatories (cooperatives, collectives, collectivities, and others)
11. Publications (collectives, groups), Flyers (self-organized groups, cooperatives, collectives)
12. Agro-manufacturing associations (self-organized)
13. Time banks / exchange networks / producer-consumer links
14. Self-management in everyday life, eco-nutrition - body – well-being (a number of multiple activities)
15. Eco-communities, Autonomous ecological groups
16. Seed Exchanges – gift of seeds
17. Collective management of natural commons (water, energy, forests, beaches, etc.)

18. Cyclists, Pedestrians, Moms in the street, movements against Tolls, Movements against paying the ticket, etc.
19. Gratis bazaars and their permanent infrastructure
20. Permanent and casual kitchens
21. Alternative Financial groups
22. Alternative renewable energy sources, Natural Construction, etc.
23. Free and open code software - sharing
24. Alternative self-managed art - art groups (collectives, places and other alternative groups)
Collectivities which incorporate solidarity economy practice, but which do not focus particularly on these
25. Primary trade union (self - assembled)
26. Meetings of employees with permanent spatial status – long time strikes
27. High School Student squats - stands with permanent spatial reality
28. University Student squats - stands with permanent spatial reality
29. Associations and collectivities of immigrants
30. Associations for specific social issues (detoxication, trafficking, etc.).
31. Initiatives of Struggle with spatial reality (urban and regional movements) for:
forestry issues, aquatic ecosystems and beaches,
pollution issues,
waste management issues,
natural resources issues - their management (Acheloos, Aoos etc),
issues of large-scale mining (Chalkidiki etc.)
biodiversity and biotechnology issues,
drinkable water,
energy,
antennas and their harmfulness,
climate,
economic issues ("I don't pay", etc.),
traffic issues,
claiming parks,
housing issues, and for
homeless people

Main selection criterion of collectivities was their intermingling with actions of solidarity- collaborative economy. Then, most collectivities and groups were mapped those that they were identified and, eventually, met the following criteria coming from a combination of features offered by Castells, 1983 και 2009: Tilly, 2004; Holloway, 2010 ; Petropoulou, 2010a:

1. Autonomy from political parties, fascist organizations and SMEs (this issue is dealt with by specific groups within the movements).

2. Autonomy from support economic organizations, sponsors.

3. Meetings of the base that decide on the programme and the activities (assemblies do not necessarily have permanent members).

4. Extroverted actions in space and not just within the groups. Permanent presence in one or many areas.

5. Systematic presence through placards, posters, internet, and other media (Tilly, 2004).

6. Internal mutual help – mutual support.

7. Equal relationships with other groups, and contacts through the Internet (Castells, 2009).

8. Desire for rupture. Desire for a different world. Creation of cracks in the existing system through which dignity emerges; it emerges through a process of denial - creation (Holloway, 2010). Desire for "poetry" - creation with actions that transform the urban space and signify it differently (Petropoulou, 2010b), and, more particularly, those actions characterized by "doing" that occurs in the gaps (Holloway, 2010), and wish to create relationships that will lead to seeds of another world now, here (Carlsson and Manning, 2010).

9. More specifically, there were investigated those collectivities that involve seeds of city social movements that vary from simple city movements, in that they can change the importance of urban space (signification urbaine) (Castells, 1986: 419).

Then, from the present research a number of groups were excluded with regard to the criteria mentioned to in an earlier paper (Petropoulou 2012a). Later, there were explored the network of these collectivities and the key issues that concern them by searching the references made in each blog of other collectivities, actions and theoretical approaches, and there was a cross-reference of information with indicative interviews. The research was restricted only to 62 from those collectivities. Finally, it was investigated the identity of those 62 collectivities and their political references to historical political ventures. From those creative resistances there were selected those which have actions of collaborative and solidarity economy.

The founding declarations and basic positions that have been expressed by those collectivities have strongly different profile and multiplicity in the way they manage their issues. Nevertheless, they have commonalities that can be summarized in the texts of their self-presentation. In the following paragraphs only the first 8 groups are explored, which can finally be summarized in 5 sections.

1. Most neighbourhood assemblies are open collectivities, born or strengthened in June 2011 by the assemblies of the Syntagma Square; they are based on the principles of direct democracy, resistance, social justice and equality; they do not accept parties and factions; they are hostile to racism and fascism and are particularly involved with local issues. ... Their

actions are practical and of solidarity, such as the reconnection of cut (electical) power, interventions in IKA (: Institution of Social Security), hospitals, schools; they deny paying; they organized kitchens, health centers, courses, planning interventions as well as meetings of assemblies (Panteion University, 14/1/2012 11/2/2012, 21/4/2012 και 22/6/2012 Technical University of Athens 7 και 14/06/2012), having published the meeting minutes online.

2. Open squats seek another way of life that can change participants' everyday life. They describe characteristically: "We decided to occupy these two dissolved buildings to give them life again, to turn them into a place of cultural creation, ecological - social activities, open to the whole society. A place away from ideological rigidity and obsessive pretenses! A Free, Public and Social Space!" (Votanikos Kipos [:Botanical Garden]). Only a few operate as open collectivities. Each one has its own particular characteristics that point to different theoretical backgrounds; for example, there are those that give more emphasis on the counter-power structure of their organization, those that seem to be more influenced by the theories of "degrowth", those that make lots of references to the so-called utopias and the planning proposals of a garden city, those that are referred to in the Zapatista movement, others that are most affected by Marxist approaches as for the reproduction of labour power, and others that mention the situationist movement for leisure and the May 68 events in France. Finally, there are some small initiatives that have no theoretical references in their writings, where they refer more to the oppression they live under in the city and their need to acquire another relationship with nature. Squatting in buildings is more by traditional "classical closed" squats with its own story each squat, and they are inspired more by anarchist and broadly libertarian traditions. In contrast, social centers are open to society, and decisions are made through open assemblies and are inspired by leftist or anarchist, libertarian traditions. Squats in urban and peri-urban areas where collective field are created also have lots of differences among them: Others refer to the environmental movement of the garden city and address all residents, and other squats are closed groups that are more interested in their own processes of self-realization through processes of ecological practices.

3. Solidarity economy networks promote a different model of product distribution aiming not to profit but to meet the needs in a different way. Most of these networks consist of groups of individuals. "We call it alternative and solidarity trade, because it is not based on exploitation and anonymity that distinguishes conventional commercial channels. It is based on horizontal and human relations, cooperation, trust, sharing, autonomy" (Sporos [: Seed]).

At this point, the origins of these groups that operate as cooperatives seem to be too different; nevertheless, all refer to a common principle for the creation of cooperatives: Owen's utopia. There are still differences among those groups that focus more on social struggle - insurrectional character of cooperatives with which they co-operate (Zapatistas in Mexico, the landless movement in Brazil, Indian movements, Palestinian movement, squat of Southern Italy etc), and those that are more related to freelance producers and cooperatives in Greece. There are those groups that work with money as an exchange means (always without profit for the members of the cooperative - the profits go to social events and actions of solidarity), those groups that do not use money in their exchanges (gratuitous bazaars), those that rely on the perception of "sharing" (solidarity shared kitchens, clinics and schools, collectivity The other human being), and those groups that are based on other exchange means (time banks). The latter also have differences among them: there are those that have accepted euro as a unit of measurement of an equivalent exchange value and those that do not accept it and set prices based on working time or value in kind given by each manufacturer for his / her product.

4. Labour collectives are based on common need to solve the problem "labour". Most are groups that are trying another way of labour – a collective one, established on a relation of respect, camaraderie and solidarity. Their birth comes from collective struggles within a sector of labour (e.g. Food, typography, publishing, etc.). Then have recently been extended to the area of secondary production: "We, the workers of industrial mining make the start but do not stay like this; there will continue other factories, commercial enterprises, multinational companies! .... We'll make another economy that will be focused on people rather than on the growth of their accounts" V*IOME* (: building materials factory), 2012.

Finally, there are labour collectives born of the unemployed who had simultaneously the need to intervene politically in the workplace and convey the ideas of self-organization that knew from the Zapatistas and other Latin American movements (occupied factories in Argentina, MST of Brazil) or other collectives that have been influenced by earlier movement experiences (Spanish revolution, collectives born after 1968, Indian approaches to nonviolence and political ecology).

5. There has also developed a multifaceted activity in health issues that starts from the creation of community clinics to entire clinics targeting at the uninsured and other inhabitants of many cities, and goes up to self-management and health prevention. Creating a clinic and a pharmacy of social solidarity in Thessaloniki is perceived by all respondents as the most

successful venture. The clinic was born from the meeting doctors had with immigrants who went on hunger strike in EKTH (: Employees' Center in Thessalonik) in 2010. This is a clinic that offers free "primary healthcare across all uninsured and socially excluded, Greeks and immigrants, seeking and pushing the state to ensure for free both the secondary and tertiary care, hospitalization and rehabilitation, wherever it is necessary ". …"With the firm belief that initiatives and solidarity networks for excluded in all fields and sectors are now required to maintain our humanity, to preserver our social fabric, but especially to re-establish relationships and behaviours that rebuild collectivity and go against individualism and *exploitation of a human being by another human being in practice".* In the same direction is the multi-clinic of the Municipality of Elliniko and many other cities in Greece

Health initiatives also embrace prevention and self-management of health by groups that emerged as political projects rather than as broader social collectivities of solidarity social movements. An example is the collectivity of Petralona whose members speak of "another health" "that will subvert the role of the expert, will break the dipole of health - illness, will tackle problems holistically and will give the individual the opportunity to participate actively and have a say in decisions affecting his/her life and body" seems to have been influenced by the ideas of Ivan Illich (1975) and Michel Foucault (2001).

Another example is the collectivity "New Guinea" that not only seeks collective self-management of health and the body in Indian traditional approaches by proposing seminars yoga, massage, manufacturing herbal medicines but also extends to contemporary ecology issues such as building wind turbines and solar panels, beer production etc., thus "having as a key objective both to regain control over the necessary sustenance and self-management of our basic needs (i.e. food, energy, health, construction, clothing, etc. ..) and to diffuse the necessary knowledge so that the project can be reproduced wherever and in any way it is needed".

These collectivities are based on and create a wide and complex social network, independent from political organizations, in which the assembly's confidence eventually lies. Only a few groups and meetings call for the proliferation of initiatives in this crisis, and have become few exploratory meetings among them. When their actions are minimal and strongly locally restricted, the network and the assembly get shrunk, the same happens when one or the other political group becomes dominant (where it may get disrupted). The same can, however, happen when the assembly and its blog are consumed only in super-regional actions of resistance, thus underestimating local issues and everyday action. A good combination of rhizome and supralocality is the driving force of the most dynamic collectivities investigated.

From personal observation, it seems that they have continued to be alive despite the downturn experienced by most assemblies during the 2012 election period.

Through this process it has been revealed that there is a multifaceted reference to various social movements that animate these collectivities with special reference to the order of priority: social movements in Latin America (especially the Zapatistas), the Spanish Revolution of 1936, the French and the U.S. May in 1968, the Environmental Movement, the Indian non-violence movement, the Paris Commune (1871), whereas there have also been evident the influences of the feminist movement and left critical thinking. There are also several references to world poetry and rock music scene. At domestic historical level, references are limited to ancient Athenian democracy, the national resistance of the 1940s, the cooperative and the environmental movement, the anti-dictatorship uprising of 1973, the student "uprising" in December 2008 and the modern squares movement.

The interesting thing is that, in most interviews conducted with members of these collectivities, it is revealed that there is a systematic attempt to disengage from older political guidelines mentioned above and a mood of self-presentation as something completely new that is made exclusively for today's needs and has no roots in earlier historical ventures. Since in most of these collectives there are involved people with different political backgrounds, there is also a tendency to deny history (as having been constructed) and create a new, without however, a critical reading and qualitative evaluation of the success or failure of previous similar ventures having been made (with a few exceptions, such as VIOME, Pagaki, Syn-alois, Belleville sin patron, micropolis etc.)

Finally, there are few reports of these collectivities to the so-called utopias (of these references, they are made only to Owen), despite the fact that they have historically played a key role in creating the ideas of solidarity-collaborative economy, self-organization, self-management and participatory democracy and the very creation of the first cooperatives (only to this last item most collectivities refer to). As it is known, the so-called "utopias" were widely criticized not only by the left intelligentsia but also by other thinkers. Due to the fact that there has been such criticism, many of the collectivities we have discussed about avoid using even the term "utopia".

As Berneri notes (1982), the authoritarian utopias of the 19th century are basically to blame for many intellectuals "anti-utopian attitude", but apart from those that were plans of societies that operated mechanically, there were those that were "poets' vivid dreams". This anti-utopian stance has been encountered in some of the examined collectivities in this paper. They seem even to identify and base their refusal - in their view – on futuristic perception and

primarily on practices of parts of the left ("of a social revolution that increasingly shifted to the future") by denying any kind of "utopia" that can motivate them into today's actions (from the interview with H.K.). There is thus a denial anything that refers to the future and an attachment only to actions that can change the world today. In contrast, there are other collectivities that seem not to have embarked on such a reflection and choose the reference to utopias in a more magical - artistic way that can have even religious characteristics (from the interview with M.P.). The artistic groups are only referred in a positive way to the concept of utopia. Finally, there are some groups that refer directly to utopian philosophers without making the slightest criticism in the spirit of their theories (especially some cooperatives and networks of non-money economy).

Authoritarian utopias seem to have negatively affected the discourse of most modern creative resistances which, eventually, identify them with the concept of utopia due to their reaction to ideologies and dreams that do not correspond directly to everyday actions. In the present paper it is argued that this refusal, despite the fact that it springs from a genuine reaction to earlier ideologies, contains a high risk of bleeding from the dream of most genuine insurrectionary forces of our time, and this happens despite the recent experience of a highly poetic social movement like that of the Zapatistas and despite the strong influence this movement has had on many of these collectivities. Instead, exploring the roots of influences that have received these collectivities, we find that there are many influences from past utopias and uprisings about which when they are asked they do not recognize them as such. We would say that they have gone into the collective unconscious of social movements and constitute historical legacy of these modern creative resistances which, however, do not want to recognize this delicate imaginary part of them because they are afraid of becoming more vulnerable to the mainstream mechanisms of the system.

6. Conclusions

In the modern times of biopolitical capitalism a social movement of down-up self-organization is being reborn, which is characterized, among others, by a diverse number of creative resistances, some of which claim a "pro-pictorial" role of another society that is continually searched for. In the present paper, the number and categories of these resistances are initially investigated, focusing particularly on ventures of solidarity economy. Then, the theoretical references of these collectivities are explored investigated and because of them these has been made a brief overview of the major historical sections that played an important role in shaping their political discourse. In Greece, this movement draws ideas from the

tradition of most of the major social movements of the world, and especially the Western cooperatives, but also from history of social struggles and insurrections in Europe, Mediterranean, Latin America and India.

The concept of creative resistance of one or more collective networks may be more relevant than ever to a simple institutional repetition of the concept of association. Most examples examined concern self-organized groups of social work that can be considered as creative resistances bearing similar characteristics to those reported by Zibechi (2010) in the case of Latin American movements. They have, however, two major differences: they do not extend to the secondary productive sector (exception is the case of VIOME), and, although they have created a nifty exchange network products - services among them, have yet to embrace large number of residents in their cities. However, lots of collectivities examined seem to have a strong political reflection on and a keen interest in moving their ideas.

As Castells notes, "the society's ability to resist to institutionalized power relations is related to movements' ability to change values"; this ability can be enhanced by the power of the Internet such as was done by women's movement or the ecological movement for the climate that exerted influence on changing perceptions of these issues and introduced the main political dialogue (Castells, 2009, my trans.). In this direction, there is the imperative of creating libertarian sites of experimentation. "A society, within society finally, which is able to overturn the existing models and the collective imagination (Papi, 2004). Here, it is the functional role of creative resistance" (Varkarolis, 2012).

Creative resistances, although most are created from their members' basic needs (work, social relationships, nutrition, housing, health, cultural and educational activities, etc.) have their roots in historical attempts to change society through daily actions, aiming to abolish exploitation of human being by human being, and some of them also have strong ecological characteristics that reach up to the same criticism of the continual economic development, but most do not seem to have as their prime target this policy proposal. On the one hand, this denial, however, referring to the dream - to utopia – to revolution involves an element of risk for future integration into the existing social system. On the other hand, obsession only on utopian references or future revolutions may diminish the venture and cut it off from the modern era.

Thus, it becomes conspicuous that the need that creates these movements and puts them into action is both material (practical production and reproduction of life) and poetic (creation of new everyday life relations), as expressed through their texts. Their daily practice is strongly grounded in, ever increasingly pressing people's daily needs in times of crisis.

Nevertheless, most interviews show that their members refuse any dream and any earlier corresponding historical effort (with the exception of some political collectivities inspired by movements in Latin America and the very old Greek cooperatives). In essence, the new feature of these movements is that they want to live the present and dream of the future through their daily actions and not by being aligned with some ideology.

For this reason, lots of new theories, such as the so-called "degrowth" and Zapatism, seem to find fertile ground within these collectivities. Nevertheless, it does not happen as the same as in the earlier theories (utopian, leftist, anarchic) which they either view negatively or completely overlook. Of course, the in-advance negative attitude towards earlier currents and ventures of solidarity-collaborative economy robs them of the opportunity to benefit from the experiences of similar routes, touching paths of past successes and failures.

In conclusion, although modern collectivities draw upon the tradition of social movements and utopias many elements, their refusal to embrace a vision are not due to the lack of a strong vision to change society but rather their need to experience directly what is being born, without destroying the personal experience of its birth through a rational fury of classification and prediction, governing most scientists and many traditional movements (Zibechi, 2010). So, whereas the need that creates these movements and puts them into action is poetic, their daily practice is strongly grounded in people's everyday needs and their discourse in many interviews seems to deny any dream. The reason is simple: they want to start to plan the dream all together, today.

Antonio Machado quotes: *"Wanderer, your footsteps a*re the road, and nothing more; wanderer, there is no road, the road is made by walking. By walking one makes the road, and upon glancing behind one sees the path that never will be trod again. Wanderer, there is no road-- *Only wakes upon the sea"* (Machado, 2006) but *"*Utopia serves for that: *to walk"* (Galeano, 2012). These verses characterize in the best way all the collectives examined in this paper. Eventually (in order to be effective in modern political-economic relations) modern ventures of solidarity economy should be firstly and foremost social and solidary, and combine the dream with daily practice.

7. Bibliography
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120 blogs of neighbourhood assemblies - municipalities and other collectivities in Table 1.

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