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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF RESILIENCE

#### A typology of approaches for the study of Citizen Collective Responses in Hard Economic Times

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**ABSTRACT:** A variety of theoretical and conceptual perspectives have been applied to studying collective citizen initiatives arising in response to hard economic times, such as solidarity-based exchanges and networks, cooperative structures, barter clubs, credit unions, ethical banks, time banks, alternative social currency, citizens' self-help groups, neighbourhood assemblies and social enterprises. Since the global financial crisis of 2008, scholarly attention on novel, alternative, resilient structures has increased, especially in regions that have been most affected. A comprehensive literature review is therefore needed on these initiatives which usually aim to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, health and education at the community level, or build and envision autonomous communities. This paper has four aims. First, it proposes a new, all-encompassing conceptual framework, *alternative forms of resilience*, to embrace all issues and groups related to such initiatives, during the new millennium and its economic and political challenges, while taking into account the impact of the 2008 crisis. Secondly, it offers a comprehensive literature review on collective citizen initiatives studied through different theoretical, methodological and conceptual understandings. Thirdly, it provides a new typology of several approaches on novel, collective and solidarity-oriented critical resilience initiatives which take into account political issues, be they policy or social-movement related. Finally, it points to future research areas which would aim to systematically address the political and non-political features of citizen-collective responses.

**KEYWORDS:** alternative economy, solidarity economy, resilience, social innovation, economic crisis, social movements, policy, social economy, third sector, degrowth

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## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Collective citizen responses to economic and political threats (Almeida 2007, Kousis and Tilly 2005), during the recent global crisis, have varied. In this paper we concentrate on those collective responses in the public sphere which are manifested in alternative (to dominant) forms of economic and noneconomic activities by citizen initiatives and community-based groups confronting hard economic times and dwindling rights. Even though most of the activities under study could be considered to be part of the substantive economy in the Polanyian sense, we would like to distinguish the non-economic from the economic activities, so as to highlight the political and social aspects which are usually set at the forefront of these initiatives such as civic participation and empowerment, governance and advocacy.

These community practices, which address a multitude of existential and governance problems, have been on the rise during the past decade in European regions, due to policy changes leading to increases in unemployment and precarity, cuts in social provisions, a decrease in credit access, changes in consuming practices and gloomy prospects for the future of their children. They are even more noticeable where the 2008 global crisis - the first economic crisis of the 21<sup>st</sup> century comparable to the Great Depression of 1929 (Ross 2016) - impacted more heavily on citizens in Southern European countries (LIVEWHAT 2014a, 2014b, Norman and Uba 2015; Cruz et al this issue, Baumgarten this issue, Papadaki and Kalogeraki this issue, Andretta and Giudi this issue).

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Hard economic times and parallel governance challenges have led to transformations in citizens' practices - from adaptive and alternative to autonomous - aimed towards their future survival (Conill, Castells, Cardenas and Servon 2012: 210, 222-229, Kousis, Kalogeraki and Mexi 2015, Kousis, Kalogeraki, Papadaki, Loukakis, and Velonaki 2015). Through a wide variety of solidarity practices, citizens have collectively responded to these challenges during the past decade through: solidarity bartering (Fernández 2009), Local Exchange Trading Schemes, LETS (Granger et al 2010), local currencies (North 2013, Seyfang and Longhurst 2013, Schroeder 2013, Sahakian 2014), ethical banks (Cowton 2006, San-Jose et al 2011, Tischer 2013, Cornee and Szafarz 2013), local market cooperatives (Phillips 2012), cooperatives for the supply of social services, especially in health and education (Costa et al, 2012), alternative forms of production (Corrado 2010), critical consumption (Fonte 2013), housing and anti-eviction citizen initiatives (Nez 2014, Fonimaya and Jimenez 2014, Romanos 2014, de Andrés et al 2015), spontaneous actions of resistance and reclaim (Dalakoglou 2012) and the reproduction of cultural knowledge via oral and artistic expression (Barkin 2012, Lamont et al 2013).

Most studies aim to portray and understand these initiatives through an array of conceptual tools and theoretical frameworks on direct action, community solidarity, reciprocity, citizenship and agency issues, or their intersections, in exploratory and descriptive rather than comparative and explanatory works. As the number of studies on these alternative citizen initiatives increases, so does the number of theoretical approaches which scholars apply to study them.

The purpose of this paper is four fold. First, it introduces the rich and encompassing concept of Alternative Forms of Resilience (AFR), which is needed to embrace the diversity of collective citizen initiatives aiming to respond to, bounce back from and confront hard economic times that have existed before, but also since the new millennium with its rising inequalities and the impact of the global financial crisis of 2008. Second, it offers a broad, all-encompassing overview of the field to highlight its main development in the current period, as well as the key features of these collective solidarity initiatives that remain understudied. Third, it proposes a typology of the different conceptual and theoretical approaches that have been used for the study of collective responses to hard economic times and governance problems in order to show the rich diversity, not only in economic practices, but also in political orientation and aims. Fourth, the paper points to future research issues aimed to further understand AFR practices, imaginaries and approaches.

### *What are Alternative Forms of Resilience?*

Resilience is a contested concept stimulating a wide variety of interpretations and theoretical perspectives by social scientists, from pro-governmental to critical ones. In the case of family resilience, it has been defined “as the ability to withstand and rebound from serious life challenges. Resilience involves dynamic processes that foster positive adaptation in the context of significant adversity.” (Walsh 2015, 4). Critical works focusing on the concept of resilience and its use in policy and academic fields claim that it shifts responsibility away from the public sphere, while highlighting people’s ability to ‘bounce back’ and downplaying the related costs (e.g. Harrison 2013). Following the 2008 crisis, however, resilience studies have moved beyond the level of the individual and the family, to that of collective resilience aimed to confront the failing social policies and social rights, to foster participatory democracy and collaboration, and to develop empowerment, common purpose and collective wisdom (Murray and Zautra 2012, 340). Thus, recent studies on crisis and resilience reflect public sphere issues and concerns, while they centre on groups and communities, as well as regions or countries, pointing out: ways in which collaborative processes can lead to resilience through building trust and interdependence (Goldstein 2012); the critical role of relatives, friends and mutual solidarity groups in 17 developing nations (Heltberg, Hossain, Reva and Turk 2013); the importance of manufacturing employment in shaping regional resilience (Davies 2011); and the resilience of engagement and participation in poor, disadvantaged communities (Hancock, Mooney and Neal 2012).

Thus, resilience has not only become a major concept illuminating policy frameworks and addressing problems in different policy and other fields (Chandler 2014), but has also recently attracted the attention of social scientists studying collective solidarity initiatives. In social change fields, the concept of “critical resilience” emerged out of the utilization of ideology from a feminist critical perspective (Anzaldúa 1999; Collins 2000; Villenas et. al 2006) and focuses on the complexity of race, class, gender and age for the negotiation of power and the navigations of the those-in-need within structures which do not privilege them (Campa 2010, 432). Community critical resilience has also been viewed as a driving force of empowerment and common goals (Juntunen and Hyvonen 2014, Murray and Zautra 2012, Berkes and Ross 2013), be they in developed or developing regions facing hard economic times. Rarer still are resilience studies addressing solidarity groups (Heltberg et al 2013), which include recent ones focused on grassroots direct actions during the crisis years (D’Alisa, Forno and Maurano 2015) that also engage in social movement participation (Papadaki and Kalogeraki this

volume), based on the post-2008 experience of Southern European regions. Such initiatives include urban squats as resistance and resilience to capitalist relations in Barcelona and Rome (Cattaneo and Engel-Di Mauro 2015); resilient urban gardening movements in Barcelona (Camps-Calvet, Langemeyer, Calvet-Mir, Gómez-Baggethun, and March 2015); and resilient Italian Solidarity Purchase Groups under crisis and austerity (Giudi and Andretta 2015). Following Keck and Sakdapolrak (2013), D'Alisa, Forno and Maurano (2015, 334, 338) view these initiatives as “social resilience”, a “dynamic process which describes the ability of embedded social actors to foster collective transformation through a process of social learning and participative decision-making”; they point to studies highlighting the capacity to build “socially resilient systems” to confront the threats of neo-liberal policies at the grassroots level, in Southern European regions.

Aiming to contribute in this area of work, we propose the new concept of *Alternative Forms of Resilience*, inspired by, a) the increasing use of ‘resilience’ by scholars studying direct actions of citizen empowerment, collectiveness, solidarity and resistance in hard economic times, b) the potential high-capacity of the concept of AFR which incorporates not only previous social and solidary economy initiatives, but also the more recent multitude of alternative imaginaries by citizens who confront new millennium challenges posed by falling rights and increasing, multiple and compound inequalities, within and beyond the nation state, and c) recent comparative research illustrating the wide array and aims of AFR practices across nine European countries<sup>2</sup>. The concept of Alternative Forms of Resilience simultaneously embraces the entire array of the conceptual and theoretical perspectives and citizen practices.

*Alternative Forms of Resilience (AFR)* comprise diverse repertoires of citizen direct solidarity actions and aims, with economic as well as a socio-political transformative capacity, which are alternative to the mainstream/dominant capitalist economy, or aim at building autonomous communities. They usually flourish during hard economic times marked by austerity policies, multiple, compound inequalities, governance problems, the weakening of social policies, as well as the depletion of labour and social welfare rights. Our definition takes into consideration the paradigm of comprehensive alternative economy or free, constructed (not inherited), democratic (not philanthropic/charity) solidarity (Laville 2006: 609-610 in Ould Ahmed 2014), which is based on six main criteria: non-economic concerns of economic practices (related to the environment, health, and other social justice and welfare issues); rejection of

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<sup>2</sup> LIVEWHAT Integrated report on alternative forms of resilience in times of crises (2016) D6.4, [http://www.livewhat.unige.ch/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/LIVEWHAT\\_D6.4.pdf](http://www.livewhat.unige.ch/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/LIVEWHAT_D6.4.pdf)

competitive individualism of capitalist societies; promotion of self-management of production; economic empowerment of the excluded/disadvantaged groups; political and economic equality; freedom of choice in solidarity action participation (Ould Ahmed 2014, 5). In addition, however, our definition of AFR points out divergence in their orientations. These citizen initiatives may be critical when they are formed by ideologically committed participants aiming to construct autonomous communities with collective identities (see Tilly 1994 on communitarian movements), or they may be reformist, seeking policy changes at the state or EU level (Kousis, Kalogeraki and Mexi, 2015).

As citizen-created strategic initiatives in the public sphere, AFR offer alternative ways of enduring day-to-day difficulties and challenges under hard economic times, related mainly to urgent needs (housing, food, health, clothing, education), the economy, culture, energy and the environment, alternative consumption, food sovereignty, communications, self-organized spaces, reclaimed spaces, and others. Organized by formal or informal groups, AFR tend to rise from bottom up solidarity initiatives, formed by mutual help groups or by networks offering support between groups as reflected in direct actions created to help others, or themselves (LIVEWHAT Integrated Report D6.4, 2016).

AFR are not always directly related to citizens facing hard economic times, but also to the pursuit of cultural alternatives and empowering lifestyles, as culture has been shaken in the past two decades and during the current economic crisis (Conill et al 2012). These alternative economic and noneconomic transformative direct actions (Bosi and Zamponi 2015) aim to address a multitude of existential and governance problems in a resilient manner that allows their survival and/or building of autonomous communities covering needs linked to food, housing, health, clothes, childcare, education and other needs, which have either not been satisfied (or inadequately so), or are no longer covered by the respective social policies.

AFR are reflected in social strategies of building community bonds, local knowledge systems and new networks of social interaction. Collective capacities contribute to the ways in which inherited cultural knowledge promotes community wellbeing and the protection of ecosystems, and delineates an alternative path of sustainable local development (Barkin 2012). New relationships rise among producers, consumers, and organizations with the aim of re-qualifying food as a common good instead of a commodity (Corrado 2010). Furthermore, the crisis of democracy, participatory and representative, gave impetus to the emergence of new political imaginaries and forms of political participation as seen in the more intense experiences in countries hard hit by the crisis, such as Greece (Kaika and Karaliotas 2014).

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AFR initiatives, therefore, carve out a new type of politics through the creation of bottom-up participatory initiatives promoting a 'solidarity economy', as seen in countries confronting crises in the past. They include new expressions of engagement, in a wide repertoire of citizen-run, non-capitalist practices, which facilitate their survival through reciprocity and networking with other communities facing similar problems. More importantly, however, AFR may simultaneously foster and facilitate a new form of political engagement/participation aimed to strengthen open, democratic forms of governance. They may stem from social movements, labour unions, or other associative structures.

As they have done in the past, AFR by community and collective citizen practices illustrate the changing interactions between citizen groups and policies, especially over the past two decades and since the global financial crisis of 2008. The subsequent Eurozone crisis, whose impacts have been severe for Southern European citizens, created conditions leading to the flourishing of local currencies and barter networks in Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain. In these crisis-hit regions, resilience is reflected in the strengthening of social networks and community practices to foster solidarity in the face of crises, changes of lifestyles towards more sustainable forms of consumption and production, and/or developing new artistic expression (LIVEWHAT Integrated Report D6.4, 2016).

The paper offers a review of the streams of scholarly interest in the various forms of citizen collective responses in hard economic times. By utilizing the term *Alternative Forms of Resilience*, it is our intention to begin a dialogue on different disciplinary approaches and theoretical conceptualizations all of which contribute to the understanding of multifarious citizen collective actions, of their dynamics and transformative societal potential. It is, in particular, the new millennium and the current context of the economic crisis which reinforces and broadens the scope of such actions, while attracting academic interest. It is envisaged that Alternative Forms of Resilience will contribute to moving the social and solidary economy a step forward, where the political dimension of such actions will be further highlighted for the benefit of future research.

## 2. From Social and Solidarity Economy to Alternative Forms of Resilience

A rich literature<sup>3</sup>, in French, Spanish and English, has been developing on the 'social economy', 'human economy', 'third sector' and 'solidarity economy' over different time periods across global regions. One of the widely used concepts, solidarity economy, was coined by Chilean professor of philosophy Luis Razeto and used by one of the oldest of such movements in Latin America (Ould Ahmed 2014). Although these concepts aptly describe their pluriactive character in times of crisis, AFR is a more fitting term to encompass the richness and dynamism of such initiatives not only in the past, but even more so during the new millennium and its new order of hard conditions which citizens increasingly confront due to austerity policies and shrinking/subsiding social policies, especially since the global financial crisis of 2008, as was the case in previous waves of economic crises in global regions.

Three years before the onset of the current economic crisis, Moulaert and Ailenei (2005) traced these alternative practices as far back as their ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman roots (citing Defourny and Develtere 1997, Demoustier 2001). Concentrating on the period since the medieval times, given the rich associative life in Europe, but also in Byzantium, the Muslim countries, India, Africa and America (Moulaert and Ailenei 2005,2038), they proposed that,

... each epoch has its own socioeconomic conditions bringing subsequent opportunities and challenges to the lien solidaire (solidarity bond) which it produced...when the economic growth engine starts to stutter, formal distribution mechanisms begin to fail and new social forces develop and give rise to alternative institutions and mechanisms of solidarity and redistribution as a means of addressing the failures of the institutions of the socioeconomic movements to guarantee solidarity among economic agents. (Moulaert and Ailenei, 2005, 2038).

Thus, reflecting a concern comparable to that of political opportunities and threats by political process scholars studying social movements (e.g. Goldstone and Tilly 2001), Moulaert and Ailenei (2005) offer a promising historically-based perspective to the study of collective citizens' initiatives, pointing to the importance of structural economic threats. Waves of 'economie sociale' and solidarity practices have emerged

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<sup>3</sup> See journals such as *Revue internationale de l'économie sociale (RECMA)* founded in 1921 - <http://www.recma.org/>



and re-emerged, especially since the industrial revolution/19th century, in reaction to economic threats, exploitative relations and poverty faced by considerable segments of populations (Moulaert and Ailenei 2005). The associations, co-operatives and other alternative/social economy structures that arose across Europe and were subsequently institutionalized at the close of the 19th/start of 20th century were simultaneously influenced by 18th and 19th utopian socialism, Christian socialism, and the liberal movement – reflecting also the importance of cultural factors (Defourny and Develtere 1997).

Three generations of social economy structures have been linked to the three large pre-WWII crises (Moulaert and Ailenei 2005), while a new generation of similar solidarity structures are linked to increasing inequalities in the new millennium and the global financial crisis of 2008. The first generation refers to “those of the 1840s-1850s transition from the old regulation (via craftsmen corporations) to competitive regulation, leading to mutual support organisations (mutuelles) as a form of resistance of craftsmen workers” (Moulaert and Ailenei 2005, 2041). The second generation is comprised of the agricultural and savings cooperatives that rose in response to the crisis (1873–95) of the extensive regime of accumulation with heavy investments in agriculture and natural resources. The third generation sprang “from the economic collapse of 1929–32 and was mostly a product of the crisis in competitive regulation. The consumption cooperatives for food and housing supported workers and unemployed people, allowing them to secure goods and services at prices they could afford” (Moulaert and Ailenei 2005, 2041).

The post-war period witnessed new reactions of a fourth wave, this time to the crisis of the mass-production system in the 1970s with the rise of an alternative movement incorporating the rise of co-operative and ecological actions, as well as the ‘small is beautiful’ local development schemes, offering alternatives to state services encouraging social bond strengthening within communities. The social and solidary economy movements of the post-war period first flourished in France and Latin America. The UK, US, Africa and Asia have followed their own trajectories of solidarity movements while developing strong links and networks among them - e.g. with the British human economy movement - but not yet with those in the US (Ould Ahmed 2014). Scientific networks on AFR initiatives were established especially in francophone, south American and African regions; such as EMES (Emergence des Entreprises Sociales en Europe), RILESS (Red de Investigadores Latinoamericanos de Economia Social y Solidaria), CRISES (Centre de Recherche sur les Innovations Sociales in Quebec), PSES3 (Pôle de Socio-économie Solidaire) and REMESS (Réseau Marocain d’Economie Sociale et Solidaire), (Ould Ahmed 2014, 2-3). International conferences and forums were also organized worldwide; they include the Globalisation of Solidarity

(Lima 1997; Québec 2001), which became RIPESS (Réseau Intercontinental de Promotion de l'Economie Sociale et Solidaire) (Dakar 2005, Luxembourg 2009); the World Social Forum, Brazil 2001–2003, India 2004, Kenya 2007, and other cities; and FBES (Forum Brésilien de l'Economie Solidaire), active in most Brazilian cities (Laville et al 2005 in Ould Ahmed 2014, 2-3).

Overall, during the 1980s and 1990s, high unemployment, public finance crisis and decreasing welfare state provisions facilitated the creation of alternative structures such as enterprises d'insertion and worker-owned cooperatives and reactions against neo-liberal and individualistic ideology (Moulaert and Ailenei 2005, 2041). The South American economic crisis of the late nineties triggered interest in studying Argentina and Brazil (Fernández 2009, Primavera 2010). The nineties also witnessed a rise in a wide variety of alternative consumer-producer practices and direct action initiatives, under the influence of the Global Justice Movement, mostly in Europe and the US (Forno and Graziano 2014, Bosi and Zamponi 2015).

**A new fifth wave of solidarity structures** and alternative actions have attracted the attention of scholars during the new millennium, especially since the global crisis of 2008 - also called the Great Recession - and the rising inequalities (Piketty 2015) which are multiple and compound. As recent work has emphasized, direct social actions aimed at social change are not new but (re)surface under hard economic times (Bosi and Zamponi 2015). The more recent solidarity structures since the 2008 crisis period have been studied as resilient actions (e.g. D'Alisa et al 2015, Giudi and Andretta 2015, Camps-Calvet et al 2015) aiming towards non-capitalist and political imaginaries. During the last five years, there has been a rise of such actions and related studies, especially in Southern European countries, where the impacts of the crisis were deeper: i.e. Greece (Dalakoglou 2012, Sotiropoulou 2012, Pautz and Komninou 2013, Petropoulou 2013, Papadaki 2015, Papadaki and Kalogeraki this issue); Spain (Conill et al 2012, Calvo and Morales 2014, de Armino 2014, de Andres et al 2015, Nez 2014, Cruz, Martinez and Blanco this issue); Portugal (Parente et al 2012, Baumgarten, this issue); and Italy (Costa et al 2012, Fonte 2013, Forno and Graziano 2014, Bosi and Zamboni 2015, Andretta and Giudi 2015). Using case studies, secondary data, as well as online sources through quantitative and qualitative methods, these cover either specific issues and initiatives, or local level case studies.

The focus of most studies during this period is either on the non-capitalist/post-capitalist, or on the political features of solidarity practices. Concerning the *economy-related traits*, studies focus on non-capitalist aspects, or on post-capitalist/degrowth initiatives. A considerable number of studies focus on the enhancement of the local economy, cooperatives, mutual companies, or social enterprises (e.g. Neamtan 2009;

Nassioulas 2012a, 2012b, Buckingham and Teasdale 2013). Studies on, or including the South European experience link alternative forms of resilience to hard economic times and the recent Eurozone crisis. For example, alternative currencies have been studied together with exchange networks, free bazaars and several sui generis schemes of solidarity action in Greece (Sotiropoulou 2012), different contexts of alternative currency adoption have been compared across Germany, UK and the USA (North 2014), and complementary currencies have been studied across Argentina, Japan and Switzerland (Sahakian 2014). Regional social cooperatives and their role in terms of economic and financial performance have attracted the attention of scholars (Costa et al 2012), while local community cooperative structures across various sectors, from food production and energy to ecotourism and handicrafts, have caught the attention of other scholars (Barkin 2012). Ethical banks and how they differentiate from other credit institutions are the focus of another group of studies (San-Jose Retolaza and Gutierrez-Goiria 2009, 2011). The forms of action and the issues addressed by citizen collective actions of resilience are simultaneously closely related to their physical environments. For example, actions which are developed in rural environments address issues of resource management and agricultural production (Barkin 2012, Corrado 2010), seed networks of alternative agro-food systems (Corrado 2010), or consumer networks which support buying products directly from producers on ethical and/or solidarity grounds (Fonte 2013). Major dissatisfaction with capitalism and its obstacles, as well as a wide repertoire of non-capitalist economic practices based on altruism, non-monetary exchange and cooperation are the focus of other scholars (e.g. Conill et al 2012).

Although economic factors have been a sustained issue for scholars of collective reactions by citizens in Latin America and India (Uba 2005, Almeida 2007, 2010), during the past two decades these factors have been neglected in the collective action literature and have only recently appeared in social movement discussions (Kousis and Tilly 2005, Goodwin and Hetland 2009, Kousis 2014, Kriesi 2014) due to economic threats posed by hard economic times and increasing multiple inequalities.

Focusing on political traits of solidarity practices in the new millennium, especially since the 2008 crisis, scholars point to the political delegitimation of existing institutions and parties in power and their impact on citizens' lives. Especially in the European periphery, the combination of austerity and neoliberal policies of privatization and deregulation have led to the inability of governments to address citizens' demands to safeguard democracy and their rights (della Porta, Andretta, Fernandes, Romanos, O'Connor and Vogiatzoglou 2017). In this context, studies have connected alternative forms of resilience with the politics of the crisis, i.e. with issues of public resistance to austerity and collective tactics of recovery, offering, however,

limited systematic empirical data. Some highlight the relationship to social movements, such as the movement of the squares or the Indignados movement (e.g. Nez 2014, Kaika and Karaliotas 2014). Others record the influx of human resources into projects of alternative actions of public reclaim at the grassroots level such as guerrilla gardening initiatives (Vradis and Dalakoglou 2011), or more confrontational forms of actions such as collective supermarkets/expropriation as a symbolic means of wealth re-distribution (Pautz and Komninou 2013), or actions of reclaim (Dalakoglou 2012). Grassroots solidarity towards resilience building is also expressed by the movement against the evictions in Spain, which adopts both contentious and conventional action (Romanos 2014) and a protest tactic (*escrache*) transnationally transmitted from another protest site (Fominaya and Jimenez 2014).

Furthermore, scholarly engagement (scientific activism) in the broad field of AFR also contributes through participatory action research in which the researcher is involved in critical, reflective and deliberately political modes of participation (Gibson-Graham 2006, Chatterton and Pickerill 2010, Cornwell 2012, Arampatzi 2016, Darby 2016). Since the mid 90s scholars in human geography and social anthropology around the globe have comprised the research community of diverse economies who attempted via means of action research “to counter the ingrained belief that capitalist economic relations are the only driving economic force [and to] ... reclaim the economy as a site of ethical decision-making and practice” (Graham and Roelvink 2010, 329-330). This stream of research invites the researcher into a ‘performative epistemology’, in which academic production generates possibilities where none existed, and into an experimental orientation to research ‘hybrid research collectives’, where researchers view themselves as co-participants in the making of new worlds (Gibson-Graham 2008, 628).

Fresh empirical data on AFR, based on a random sample of 4,297 alternative action organizations (AAOs) focused on solidarity practices from 2007 to 2016, across nine European countries, illustrate the wide repertoire of actions, aims and groups which reflect both creativity as well as resilience (LIVEWHAT Integrated report on Alternative Forms of Resilience, D6.4, 2016). High peaks are visible during the crisis period for countries more deeply affected by hard economic times – including almost half or more than half of the AAOs found in Spain, Greece, France, Italy, and Poland. By contrast, AAOs in the countries not significantly affected by the crisis are relatively older and more institutionalized, since most of them were founded in the ‘80s and ‘90s – with a noticeable rise in Germany in the late nineties. Furthermore, AAOs founded prior to the global economic crisis show a higher frequency of rights-based values (e.g. equality, civil rights, human rights, social justice, peace and safety) and economic issues

(e.g. economic prosperity, accountability, professionalism). In stark contrast, AAOs created after the economic crisis show the highest frequency of empowerment and participation values, as well as embracing diversity and sustainability values (LIVEWHAT Integrated report on Alternative Forms of Resilience, D6.4, 2016).

All the above contributions illustrate that the political and economic threats and opportunities in the past two decades intensified, broadened and brought to the surface resilient citizen collective participation in direct actions of civic empowerment, solidarity, strengthening of community bonds and democratization. While Social and Solidarity Economy provides a satisfactory framework for the understanding of a wide repertoire of actions for the 20<sup>th</sup> century, given the rapid developments of the new millennium, especially the global financial crisis and widening pervasive inequalities across global regions, AFR offers an integrated, encompassing framework that brings together the diverse solidarity activities and treats them as distinct manifestations striving towards resilience, while they diverge in terms of their economic and political imaginaries.

### **3. A Typology of Approaches for the study of AFR: Conceptual, Theoretical and Political Orientations**

Following the presentation of the transition from social and solidarity economy to alternative forms of resilience, this section provides an encompassing typology of AFR, embracing the different conceptual and theoretical approaches, while highlighting the main features of citizen initiatives in relation to their economic and political traits.

To recap, *Alternative Forms of Resilience* are conceptualised as nonmainstream/-capitalist economic and noneconomic activities through which citizens build community resilience when confronted with hard economic times, austerity policies, decreasing social welfare policies and threatened economic and social rights. AFR cover a broad spectrum of actions, which address existential and governance issues, draw on values of solidarity, establish reciprocal relations and aim at civic empowerment or new autonomous communities, by introducing alternative structures of economic exchange and lifestyles, as well as new forms of political participation. By operationalizing “resilience” in our conceptualization of these citizen collective actions, we emphasize the capacity to adapt and transform at the economic and political level.

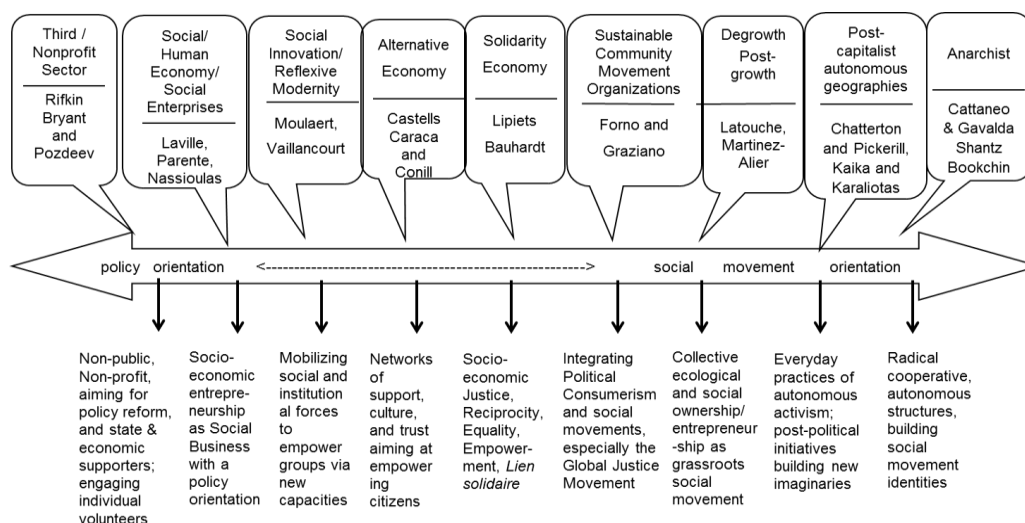
AFR simultaneously constitute an inclusive theoretical framework, extending and including that of “Social and Solidarity Economy” (Moulaert and Ailenei 2005), which embraces perspectives focused on the transformative potential of such actions in the

economy, as well as those which bring to the fore the political elements of the alternativeness which these resilient initiatives promote. As seen in Figure 1 our proposed typology extends and incorporates the three approaches of Moulaert and Ailenei's (2005) basic typology: Social Economy, Third Sector and Solidarity Economy. Reflecting concerns related to the current crisis and 21<sup>st</sup> century hard economic times, deepening inequalities, governance and environmental issues, Figure 1 offers a wider typology scheme that includes more recent types of AFR which have appeared in the past decade, especially through South European studies and perspectives. It also denotes the policy or social movement orientation of the initiatives studied.

Overall, the proposed typology distinguishes between nine, key theoretical approaches, ranging from more reformist to radical or autonomous ones, engaged in understanding and interpreting older as well as more recent waves of alternative economic and noneconomic action organizations and groups, before and during the 2008 global crisis. Even though, due to the hybrid and similar nature of many alternative initiatives, overlaps between these approaches do exist, each of the approaches tends to focus on, or emphasize specific types of alternative citizen structures and actions, especially when approaching the two contrasting poles.

The term '**Third Sector**' was especially promoted by Rifkin in the mid-nineties, referring to all non-public and non-profit oriented activities (Moulaert and Ailenei 2005), while following the recent crisis, it has been supported by Stiglitz (2009). It constitutes an Anglo-American conception, which places emphasis on the voluntary and non-statutory sector and the role of individual volunteers (Bryant and Pozdeev 2014), thereby diverging from continental European and Latin American perspectives which also include co-operative and mutual support organizations (Moulaert and Ailenei 2005, 2043, Ould Ahmed 2014, 3). Studies illustrate the links with sponsors and state agencies and the importance of individual volunteering, usually in third sector organizations and initiatives. Recent works focus on the changing "austere relations" between the market, the state and the third sector, as the latter is called to fill in the gaps in welfare provision to cover citizen needs (Bennett et al 2015, 100, Macmillan 2015). Supporters such as Giddens (2008) emphasize the important role of NGOs under neoliberalism, with more recent scholars pointing also to the impact of austerity on the third sector (Milbourne 2013, Bennett Langmead and Archer 2015, 100, Macmillan 2015, Clarke, Huliaras and Sotiropoulos 2015).

Figure 1. A typology of AFR: from reformist to autonomous



According to Moulaert and Ailenei (2005, 2044-2046) **Social Economy** is a hybrid concept, yet, it could be defined as “the more restricted economy of co-operatives and *mutuelles*” illustrated by “firms with social objectives or socially inspired work organizations” where members are shareholders among whom profits are distributed. This approach also includes studies on Human Economy or Social Enterprises. Scholars addressing these concepts have also paid more attention to their relationship with national and EU agencies and policies aiming to assist these socio-economic entrepreneurs or Social Businesses, especially during hard economic times (Nassioulas 2012b, Parente et al 2012, Chavez and Monzon 2012, Sabatii, Modena, and Tortia 2014, Borzaga, Bodini, Carini, Depedri, Galera and Salvatori 2014, Poledrini 2015). Recognizing the importance of Social Economy, states such as Brazil, Germany, Italy, Spain and Greece have established social economy laws and agencies. Social Economy introduces a wide array of innovations to the market, with a social purpose (e.g. impact investment, socially responsible investment, social banking), which differ from bottom-up, community based groups engaging in solidarity activities, like cooperatives, community currencies and time banks (Neamtan 2009). EU institutions have also recently launched a variety of initiatives and official documents (more than 170 since 2000) that support social and work integration policies and recognize the importance of contribution towards social inclusion, quality jobs creation,

entrepreneurship promotion, access to social services, social and environmental innovation, the European Social model and social cohesion (Kousis, Kalogeraki and Mexi 2015).

During the past decade, a **Social Innovation** approach has developed, making a notable contribution to the literature on alternative economy studies, especially by Moulaert and his co-authors (e.g. Moulaert et al 2007, Moulaert et al 2010, Cruz et al, this issue). In a series of publications, such scholars promote bottom-up social innovation as the outcome of social and institutional mobilization covering social needs and empowering social groups towards open governance systems (Moulaert et al 2013). “Social innovation occurs when the mobilisation of social and institutional forces succeeds in bringing about the satisfaction of previously alienated human needs, the relative empowerment of previously silent or excluded social groups through the creation of new ‘capabilities’ and ultimately, changes in the existing social –and power–relations towards a more inclusive and democratic governance system” (González et al, 2010, 54). Within the Social Innovation perspective “socio-political transformation” is also promoted (Swyngedouw, Moulaert and Rodriguez 2003) reflecting the momentum built by social innovation initiatives for a more effective community empowerment and the democratization of state apparatus (Miquel, Cabeza, and Anglada 2013, Haddock 2013). Vaillancourt (2009) adopts a similar approach, focused on reflexive modernity issues and on the ways in which the Social Economy can contribute to the democratization of the state and public policy through the processes of co-production and co-construction. Favouring a ‘solidarity-based’ model in the context of an open-governance state, Vaillancourt finds that in the case of housing policy in Canada and Quebec, Social Economy initiatives produced social innovations that improved the related public policy.

Culture shapes the economy argue Castells, Caraca and Cardoso (2012,11-12) and thus trust - build in networks by social support and personal contact - is vital for engaging in non-profit **Alternative Economy** practices (Conill et al 2012, 210, 222-229) that include cooperative, barter and agricultural networks, social currencies, and self-management initiatives. Following the 2008 crisis in the US and the EU, these alternative economic cultures are born into social movements which are rising in hard economic times across the globe. They are based on different values concerning the meaning of everyday life, and are one of four different layers of the economy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Solidarity Economy** approaches highlight the plethora of bottom-up alternative initiatives and practices based on cooperation and reciprocity and stressing of *lien social* (Moulaert and Allenei 2005), not involving profits. For example, the importance



of solidarity and people-centred cooperatives beyond the current structural dominance of capital is highlighted by Satgar (2007). The term *economie solidaire* is used by continental Europeans and Latin Americans to refer to a new generation of more recent, social economy practices. Yet, European and South American approaches are both distinct and complementary to each other (Ould Ahmed 2014, 3-4). Those actions and initiatives, which follow solidarity economy principles, are mainly devoted to covering urgent needs, as well as fostering self-determination and cooperation (Bauhardt 2014).

A most recent approach has surfaced highlighting an important but understudied dimension of alternative initiatives, i.e. the relationship of AFR to social movements. Forno and Graziano (2014) make a vital contribution with their work that integrates political consumerism and social movement theories and points out the importance of **Sustainable Community Movement Organizations** (SCMOs). These involve collective initiatives which empower consumer and producer networks, on a smaller scale, to confront hard economic times. Related studies pay close attention to critical consumer practices and the links of SCMOs with the Global Justice Movement (e.g. D'Alisa, Forno and Maurano 2015, Giudi and Andretta 2015, Bosi and Zamponi 2015, Andretta and Giudi this issue, Papadaki and Kalogeraki this issue, Baumgarten this issue).

Departing from the above approaches, the last three (degrowth, post-capitalist and anarchist) tend to be more autonomous and communitarian oriented, aiming to build autonomous communities by ideologically committed participants (Tilly 1994). “**Degrowth/décroissance**” has been mainly a 21<sup>st</sup> century initiative towards a more radical alternative economy pursued on a voluntary basis, which confronts dominant economic paradigms with grassroots strategies centring on building autonomous collective alternatives outside of mainstream economic institutions, especially at the local level (Martinez Alier 2012, Demaria, Schneider, Sekulova and Martinez-Alier 2013). One such example is Italy's Reti de Economic Solidale (Solidarity Economy Networks) consisting of more than twenty Solidarity Economy districts with hundreds of small enterprises focused on socio-ecological objectives (Demaria et al 2013). The ‘**Post-growth**’ approach is also similar to Degrowth. It prioritizes people and the planet over capitalism (D'Alisa, Demaria and Kallis 2014), as advocated by Joan Martinez-Alier, Serge Latouche, the New Economic Forum and others. The focus here is on emerging forms of collective ownership by ecological and social entrepreneurs in Western Europe (e.g. Kunze and Becker 2014). One such example is that of the cooperative Som Energia, established recently by Girona University of Catalonia staff and students (Kunze and Becker 2014). This theoretical perspective is inspired by the **Commons** approach, influenced by Ostrom (1990) and the Global Justice Movement. According to De Angelis (2014, 2003, 1), “Commons suggest alternative, noncom-

modified means to fulfill social needs... Commons are necessarily created and sustained by communities, i.e. by social networks of mutual aid, solidarity, and practices of human exchange that are not reduced to the market form.” The approach has also been adopted in recent work on Southern Europe (D’Alisa et al 2015).

From a **post-capitalist/post-foundational** perspective, the emphasis is placed on the everyday practices of autonomous activism, thus problematizing political activism beyond the idea of the militant subject towards the establishment of ‘autonomous geographies’ (Chatterton and Pickerill 2010). Allegedly ‘post-political’ initiatives such as the Syntagma Square gatherings in Athens are seen as materializing “*alternative ways of being, doing and saying in common [...]nurturing a nomadic re-territorialisation of democratic politics*” (Kaika and Karaliotas 2014, 256). In a similar vein, grassroots conflicts under crisis generate practices of solidarity-making and new forms of self-organization which cultivate a philosophy of praxis for forging an alternative hegemony against austerity (Calvário, Velegrakis and Kaika 2016).

Finally, other most critical approaches in the AFR continuum are those of anarchist initiatives. Eco-anarchist approaches, such as social ecology (Bookchin 1986) and bioregionalism have a long history of bottom-up alternative and autonomous community building. In the past decade, works following **Anarchism**, which offer an alternative participatory economy perspective, have linked values of solidarity, diversity, equity, with self-management anarchist ideology (e.g. Albert 2013). Alternative agro-food networks are also inspired by critical, anarchist, and ecological thinking (Corrado 2010). Anarchists are involved in popular social movements, neighbourhood committees, or rank-and-file union organizing (Shantz 2013). Green anarchists have largely supported the British LETS system for adopting an alternative economy lifestyle (North 2007, 92). Anarchist thought has also influenced the squatting phenomenon as a practice of alternative economic and socio-spatial relations (Cattaneo and Gavalda 2010, 582). Finally, the tactic of collective expropriation as an action of resistance towards crisis policies is an anarchist expression with connotations of redistribution and state power derogation (Pautz and Komninou 2013).

### ***AFR Approaches: From Reformist to Autonomous***

The approaches in Figure 1 are not presented in a strict scaling manner, but as a more general ordering that takes into account the overall political orientation of the initiatives, and illustrates the ways in which they diverge, in order to construct research questions for future works on the political aspects of AFRs. More specifically, according to our typology of AFR approaches, although most citizen initiatives have social

movement links, Figure 1 reveals two major orientations based on the types of initiatives covered. Listed towards the right axis are *autonomous AFR*, those that tend to centre on mutual help and communitarian values at the grassroots level, with strong social movement identities and imaginaries, while located towards the left axis are *reformist AFR*, that tend to seek either state or supra-state policies and collaborations, i.e. tend to be more policy oriented, with less critical orientations.

Intensified by the economic and governance challenges of the past two decades, particularly during the harsh crisis period, scholarly interest in these two distinct types of resilient practices (reformist vs autonomous), has underlined the need to recognize the political orientation or disposition of citizen collective initiatives of resilience, or AFR, as a critical factor in the formulation of research questions for their study.

These two research stream tendencies – supportive, corrective or remedial to conventional state and institutionalized structures, or autonomous, rejecting the former - are vividly reflected in resilient citizen practices. For example, recent calls by solidarity activists (Hart, Laville, and Cattani 2010, 11) point to the need to strengthen alliances of grassroots groups, to harness not only voluntary reciprocity but public policy, while *Alliance 21* takes a more developmental path, stressing the need for measuring and assessing SSE activities, being politically recognized, establishing an international lobby at UNDP, and pressuring national and international authorities such as UNO, WTO, towards policies of intervention that incorporate SSE as an integral part of sustainable development (Fraisie et al in Ould Ahmed 2014,8). In Brazil, a National Secretariat for Solidarity Economy was established under the Ministry of Labour and Employment, inspired by the thousands of “barter clubs” (clubes de trueque) created in Argentina as a strategy to cope with the crisis (Primavera 2010).

The relationship of SSE and EU policies has been highlighted in a group of solidarity and social economy works (e.g. Defourny and Nyssens 2012, Alix 1993, Alix 2012, European Parliament 2011, Kousis, Kalogeraki and Mexi 2015, Mendell and Alain 2015). This is an outcome of the European Commission’s acknowledgement of social economy as a sector and a specific form of governance based on cooperation during the nineties (Alix and Baudet 2013). Scientific activists often propose a renewal of the solidarity and social economy perspective through a ‘Commons approach’ following Ostrom (2010) (Alix 2012). Such initiatives have trickled down to country level, as seen in the 2011 Spanish Law on Social Economy and EU’s Small Business Act (Julia and Chaves 2012) as well as the recent social economy initiatives (Nassioulas 2012a), and the new law in Greece on social economy, Law 4430/2016, under SYRIZA’s government.

At the same time, over the past decade, AFR scholars have shifted towards the study of political issues, brought into the field by the Social Innovation approach (Moulaert et

al 2013, Cruz, Martinez and Blanco this issue) as well as Alternative Economy, Sustainable Community Movement Organizations, Degrowth, Postgrowth, Post-capitalist and Anarchist approaches (e.g. Castels et al 2012, Forno and Graziano 2014, D'Alisa et al 2015, D'Alisa, Demaria and Kallis 2014, De Angelis 2014, Cattaneo and Gavalda 2010, Andretta and Giudi this issue). While the former highlights issues of empowerment and governance, the latter are especially attentive to the links with social movements and action strategies. Although these studies are limited, the political and economic context within which they arise, and the issues they point to, contribute to a new research agenda for scholars of the area.

The contribution of the five recent approaches - Alternative Economy, Sustainable Community Movement Organizations, Degrowth, Postgrowth, Post-capitalist/post-foundational and Anarchist - is especially important as it reflects the political-economic opportunities and threats of the past two decades and the recent crisis, and sheds light on the relationship between alternative socio-economic practices and social movement organizations.

Scholarly interest in the two poles of resilience (reformist vs autonomous), as intensified in the new millennium and particularly during the harsh crisis period, underlines the need to recognize the political orientation or disposition of AFR as a critical factor in the formulation of research hypotheses for future study. Reformist resilient alternative actions are oriented towards policy, seek collaboration or partnerships with state and economic actors, and are supportive or remedial to existing and conventional structures, while critical resilience initiatives have strong ties to social movements, are autonomous and dismissive of the latter.

#### **4. Conclusion: reflections and areas of research for future studies of AFR**

By proposing the encompassing concept of AFR, this paper first brought together the multitude of studies and approaches on the expanding repertoire of collective and resilient citizen initiatives confronting economic threats and governance challenges in the new millennium. In so doing, it has also pointed to the diverging political orientations and the links to social movements.

The development and creation of AFR has been influenced significantly by state policies, mainly in the form of major economic threats to larger segments of populations. This has been manifested either through the imposition of harsh austerity policies, or through the dismantling or withdrawal, gradual or sudden, of social policies

supporting economic and social rights. Therefore, AFR arise as alternative - to the mainstream capitalist economy - and resilient citizen created initiatives, or they flourish during hard economic times marked by austerity policies, the weakening of social policies, as well as the depletion of labour and social welfare rights. Given significant cuts in social policies, future research should examine: *the extent to which alternative activities are aimed at survival/basic needs oriented resilience i.e. at covering urgent and basic needs related to food, housing and health, as well as the types of participating/recipient-beneficiary groups it involves (such as families, children, women and migrant groups).*

As witnessed during the global financial crisis of 2008, economic change and variation also affect AFR, either by shaping citizen responses to political and economic threats and opportunities, or by constituting themselves significant threats and opportunities (Kousis and Tilly 2005, 7). Consequently, future research could *centre on the economic and political opportunities and threats which constrain or facilitate the organizing of AFR by citizens confronting hard economic times as well as governance challenges*. Through comparative studies offering systematic data beyond the local level, such research would lead to an examination of AFR cycles, the open or closed nature of institutionalized political economy structures, access to resources and the elite allies of AFR.

By applying AFR as a conceptual framework, we offer an overview of the basic theoretical and empirical approaches on citizen organized or community based groups, as well as the main issues they address, drawing also on the recent European experience during the crisis period. All of the approaches studying AFR face the challenge of a multi-faceted and complex social phenomenon with cultural, economic, and political dimensions, which tend to involve social movement activism. Additionally, the typology also depicts the variance in political orientation, from reformist to autonomous. Although our typology illustrates that in general AFR citizen organizations and groups tend to have a social movement orientation, they nevertheless portray divergent political aims, from seeking to influence and collaborate on state policies, to establishing autonomous, independent communities with strong social movement identities. For example, AFR initiatives that tend to be policy orientated and seek collaboration or partnerships with state and economic actors, are becoming more visible, as seen for example, in the case of the new 2016 law on social economy in Greece. This leads to a third research question for future works: *What are the main features of action repertoires and political partners, collaborators or networks, across the wide array of citizen groups and organizations, especially for reformist and autonomous organizations and groups?*

Based on the undertaken review, there has been a lack of systematic cross-national research facilitating comparative analysis on the political character of alternative socio-economic practices, including the profile, frames and aims of the participants and alternative organizational structures, the collaborations and links to informal networks, formal institutions and associations, as well as to social movement organizations. Systematically researching the social movements' dimension of AFR would facilitate bringing together different strands of literature as well as understanding the opportunities and threats related to the survival of formal organizations (e.g. cooperatives) including community-based, mutual help groups, or networks of groups supporting each other. This can be done using social movement oriented theories and methods, such as political process theory and a new methodological approach specifically created for the study of AFR, i.e. Alternative Action Organization analysis (Kousis, Giugni and Lahusen 2016). This leads to a fourth research question for future works: What are the AFR's mobilizing structures, claims and framing processes (diagnostic, prognostic frames), as well as their imaginaries (aims and proposed routes to resolve the challenges they confront)? Furthermore, following recent work by Cruz et al, on this issue, a fifth research question is: *What are the impacts of the spatial features of AFR over the past decade? How and why do regions and their respective socio-political-economic structures matter in the rise and development of AFR?*

Finally, although recent research is in progress, there have been a very limited number of systematic, cross-national, multi-methods empirical studies on AFR. Such research could offer valuable knowledge on cross-country differences and similarities, especially on the political aspects and their major determining factors. Alternatively, in-depth studies could focus on new political arenas of AFR, bringing to light new political spaces beyond the local, national and supra-national, as well as novel issues through open methodologies founded on an epistemology of plurality, yet grounded in communitarian justice imaginaries.

Thus, inspired by the path of recent work on citizens' alternative and resilient, collective responses to economic and governance challenges, as well as a partial convergence between alternative resilient citizens' reactions and citizens' collective resistance, this paper proposes the adoption of elements from social movement related theoretical and methodological approaches to study AFR. This would enable future research to enrich our understanding of the increasingly important Alternative Forms of Resilience.

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