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SPECIAL SECTION/ EDITORIAL

ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF RESILIENCE CONFRONTING HARD ECONOMIC TIMES:
A South European Perspective[1]

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ABSTRACT: The aim of this special issue is to contribute to the study of alternative forms of resilience, visible in the economic and noneconomic activities of citizens confronting hard economic times and falling rights in Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal, since the global financial crisis of 2008. It does so through a set of recent empirical studies which adopt recent theoretical approaches, such as Social Innovation or Sustainable Community Movement Organizations, and offer new evidence on solidarity oriented practices, including their links to social movement activism. The authors of this special issue contribute to the existing recent debates by highlighting key features of alternative forms of resilience, their links to social movements and theoretical orientations influenced by social movement and resilience studies in four Southern European countries and regions.

[1]This special issue draws from four papers presented in Panel P232 "Alternative Forms of Resilience in Times of Crisis" (chaired by M. Kousis) of Section S007 Citizens' Resilience in Times of Crisis (chaired by M Giugni and M Grasso), at the 2014 ECPR General Conference. Britta Baumgarten was invited to contribute with a paper on Portugal at a later stage. Even though only the article by Kousis and Paschou was funded by the LIVEWHAT project, the special issue as a whole has been produced in the context of the project "Living with Hard Times: How Citizens React to Economic Crises and Their Social and Political Consequences" (LIVEWHAT), and more specifically Work Package 6. The project was funded by the European Commission under the 7th Framework Programme (grant agreement no. 613237). Constructive comments and suggestions by Francesca Forno, editor of PaCo, are gratefully acknowledged. Special thanks to Marco Giugni, coordinator of the project, for his sustained support throughout this process.

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1. Introduction

This special issue aims to contribute to the study of alternative forms of economic and noneconomic activities by citizens confronting hard economic times and falling rights in Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal, since the global financial crisis of 2008. It will do so through a set of recent empirical studies offering new evidence on these solidarity-oriented practices, including their links to social movement activism. Expanding across global regions, collective responses to economic hardship under neoliberal policies tend to cover basic and urgent needs related to food, shelter, health, childcare and education, as well as echoing a quest towards alternative economic models. These citizen collective actions and initiatives of resilience include solidarity-based exchanges and networks, cooperative structures, barter clubs and networks, credit unions, ethical banks, time banks, anti-eviction initiatives, alternative social currency, citizens' self-help groups and social enterprises.

As seen in recent works on South European grassroots activism confronting the impacts of the 2008 economic crisis (e.g. D'Alisa, Forno and Maurano 2015, Rakopoulos 2016), these alternative practices attest to a new kind of politics including the creation of bottom-up participatory practices promoting an alternative economy. During hard economic times, they are in part products of policies aimed at reducing state spending through cuts and austerity measures (Kousis, Kalogeraki and Mexi 2015). Thus, the existing literature centres on solidarity and social economy practices, especially visible during the economic crisis in Argentina and other Latin American regions (e.g. Fernández 2009, Lamont et al 2013, Primavera 2010), but also before the recent crisis in European regions. Examples include the SOL social currency Project in France; regional currencies support by NGOs in Germany aiming to support local economies; the alternative cashless production and exchange systems Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS) in the UK; and, ethical banks promoting ethical commitment, ideology and principles. Recent works have focused on sustainable community consumption practices (Forno and Graziano 2014), direct actions (Bosi and Zamponi 2015) and more encompassing social innovation oriented practices and initiatives across the globe (Moulaert et al 2013).

However, although since the nineties, and especially the recent crisis period, a plethora of such initiatives flourish in Southern Eurozone countries, there has been a lack of systematic research on these novel collective responses in the form of alternative economic and noneconomic activities in Southern Europe. A limited, albeit rising number of studies exist on the south European experience (e.g. D'Alisa, Forno and Maurano 2015), such as works on consumer-producer networks, or initiatives confronting the current crisis and neo-liberal policies in Italy (e.g. Costa et al, 2012, Fonte, 2013, Forno and Graziano 2014), on austerity related initiatives in Spain (e.g. Conill et al 2012, Cruz et al this issue, Nez 2014, Fonimaya and Jimenez 2014, Camps-Calvet et al 2015), on alternative and environment related community initiatives related to the crisis in Portugal (Matos 2012, Baumgarten this issue) and on the rapid increase of solidarity initiatives in crisis-ridden Greece, (Petropoulou 2013, Sotiropoulou 2012, Rakopoulos 2014, Clarke, Huliaras and Sotoropoulos 2015, Gritzas and Kavoulakos 2015). The relationship between alternative community based practices and social movements has only recently been the focus of related works (Forno and Graziano 2014, D'Alisa, Forno and Maurano 2015, Guidi and Andretta 2015, Bosi and Zamponi 2015), especially in relation to political consumerism and the global justice movement.

New findings across nine European countries reveal that those South European countries – i.e. Greece and Spain - harder hit by the crisis witnessed higher peaks in newly created alternative organizations and groups, while at the same time, their initiatives tended to be organised more by informal and protest groups compared to those in the other countries (LIVEWHAT D6.4 2016). More specifically, the systematic, organizational website data also show that since 2008, South European countries witnessed the creation of a higher number of such initiatives centred towards covering urgent needs, compared to the non-South European countries (LIVEWHAT D6.4 2016, Kousis, Bosi and Cristancho 2016).

Considering the substantial impact of hard economic times and austerity policies across South Eurozone countries, this special issue aims to contribute to this literature and enhance our understanding on how citizens in these countries confront austerity impacts through alternative practices and initiatives which move beyond mainstream economic practices. It will do so through a collection of articulate papers with fresh data and new case studies covering a wide variety of alternative solidarity oriented practices and actions, including social innovation and solidarity-based purchase groups from Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal, focused mainly on the recent economic crisis period.

The authors of this special issue contribute to the existing recent debate by highlighting key features of alternative practices, their links to social movements and theo-

retical orientations influenced by social movement and resilience studies in four Southern European countries/regions. Furthermore, a typology is offered on the different conceptual and theoretical perspectives through which these alternative practices have been approached and examined, also building on recent works on the South European experience. Informed by the approaches of the contributors and systematic, ongoing comparative research, this special issue as a whole aims to expand our understanding of non-mainstream/alternative collective responses during hard economic times.

2. Alternative forms of resilience: definitions and theoretical orientations

Resilience is a contested notion, defined and approached through a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives, from pro-governmental to critical ones. It has become "…a central concept informing policy frameworks dealing with political, developmental, social, economic, security and environmental problems in ways that clearly transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries" (Chandler 2013, 1). However, it has also been described as "the resilience doctrine… a new form of political nihilism that forces us to accept the inevitability of the liberal politics of catastrophe" (Evans and Reid 2015, 154).

Some resilience proponents discourage active citizenship and put in danger the concept of public space, while others adopt a more critical perspective focused on community and revitalising collective citizen practices (Juntunen and Hyvonen 2014). Critical resilience scholars have focused on collective actions leading to empowerment and common goals (Wickes, Zahnow & Mazerolle 2010, Murray and Zautra 2012, Berkes and Ross 2013), in developed regions facing hard economic times, following the 2008 global economic crisis. Others also point to the importance of resources (Frankenberger et al 2014), including social resources involving groups mobilising communities (Breton, 2001), in addition to rare critical resilience works on the central role of solidarity groups (Heltberg, Hossain, Reva and Turk 2012) as well as social movement participation (Keck and Sakdapolrak 2013, D'Alisa, Forno and Maurano, 2015, 336. The authors of this special issue - Papadaki and Kalogeraki, Andretta and Guidi, Baumgarten, Cruz et al – also highlight the significance of collective resilience, as reflected in the wide variety of solidarity groups and networks in South European communities, especially since the 2008 crisis.

Following Kousis and Paschou (this issue, xx) *Alternative Forms of Resilience* (AFR) are defined as:

> …diverse repertoires of citizens' 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.

The authors in this special issue study a wide repertoire of AFR participating groups, some of which may be more reformist, aiming to influence policy actors, while others tend to be more critical and aim to construct autonomous communities of highly committed participants.

Theoretical orientations to the study of AFR

As the number of studies on AFR have increased over the past couple of decades, so have the number of different theoretical approaches. Although many scholars centre on similar alternative initiatives, they opt to use different concepts and theoretical orientations to describe and analyse them. Some, however, focus their studies on specialised alternative initiatives related, for example, to social economy, solidarity exchange, or degrowth practices. Based on the typology of AFR approaches by Kousis and Paschou (this issue, xx), below follows a brief summary of their orientation, from the more reformist and policy oriented ones to those fostering autonomous and post-capitalist communities and social movement identities.

In the more reformist approach, **the third sector** is defined as "…a sector of organised human action composed of collective actors beyond the family and distinct from the state and the market" (Viterna et al 2015, 175). These tend to focus on NGOs and volunteers under neoliberal governments, while more recent ones highlight "austere relations" between the market, the state and the third sector (Milbourne 2013, Bennett et al 2015,100, Macmillan 2015), and its important contribution to covering social needs (Stiglitz 2009, Clarke et al 2015).

Emphasis on structural and cultural aspects are reflected in the Social, Human or Solidarity Economy which emphasise cooperation, reciprocity and justice issues. Social Economy scholars focus on solidarity inspired firms (e.g. cooperatives, mutual aid associations) and social enterprises usually operating in the market. By contrast, **solidarity**

economy scholars tend to study grassroots, bottom-up initiatives with a non-market and non-monetary orientation (Moulaert and Ailenei 2005). Others, taking an "**alternative economic practices**" approach, such as Castells, Caraca and Cardoso (2012) place emphasis on the decisive role of culture, trust and networks in creating non-profit, nonmainstream economic initiatives organised by social community based groups.

Concerned with reflexive modernity's empowerment and governance issues, Moulaert et al (2010) centre their work on **social innovation**, i.e. the outcome of social and institutional mobilisation covering social needs and empower social groups towards open governance systems (Moulaert et al 2013). Through a social innovation approach, Cruz, Martinez and Ismael (this issue) show that these practices are unevenly distributed in Catalonia's urban areas, concentrating mainly on middle-income neighbourhoods, but not on the disadvantaged ones.

Integrating political consumerism and social movement theory, more recent studies highlight the importance of **Sustainable Community Movement Organizations** (SCMOs), which encompass a variety of citizens and other alternative collective initiatives empowering consumer and producer networks on a smaller scale, at the local level, to confront hard economic times (e.g. Forno and Graziano 2014, D'Alisa, Forno and Maurano 2015). They pay close attention to critical consumer practices and the links of SCMOs with the Global Justice movement (e.g. Bosi and Zamponi 2015). Three of the papers in this issue adopt this approach (Papadaki and Kalogeraki, Andretta and Guidi, Baumgarten).

Close to yet different from the SCMOs approach is the one by "**Degrowth/-**décroissance" scholars, focused on an alternative economy pursued on a voluntary basis, confronting dominant economic paradigms, with a variety of action strategies including building alternatives outside of mainstream economic institutions, especially at the grassroots level (e.g. Demaria et al 2013, D'Alisa, Forno and Maurano 2015). Like the Degrowth approach, the 'post-growth' one (D'Alisa, Demaria and Kallis 2014) by scholars such as Joan Martinez-Allier, Georgios Kallis, Matthias Schmelzer, Serge Latouche and the New Economic Forum, is focused on new, collective ownership forms of ecological and social entrepreneurship, prioritising people and the planet over capitalism (Kunze & Becker 2014).

More radical still are the post-capitalist and anarchist approaches. The **post-capitalist/post-foundational** approach centres on organising new, highly committed communities and the everyday practices of autonomous activists, aimed at fostering a re-territorialisation of democratic politics (Kaika and Karaliotas 2014). Similarly, t**he Anarchist** approach relates solidarity, diversity and equity values, with self-management anarchist ideology (e.g. Albert 2013, Corrado 2010). They tend to focus on anar-

chists' contribution in popular social movements, union organising and collective expropriation (Shantz 2013, Pautz and Komninou 2013).

In adopting the above AFR typology (Kousis and Pachou this issue) the special issue sheds light on the more recent approaches of Alternative Economy, Sustainable Community Movement Organisations, Social Innovation, Degrowth/postgrowth and Postcapitalist which have surfaced, or gained strength during the crisis period, in the highly impacted crisis-hit South European countries. Embracing a social movement orientation, these approaches are portrayed as an important, more recent development to the previously established social and solidarity economy approaches, in response to the latest challenges and hard times (Kousis and Paschou this issue xx). The authors of this special issue apply these approaches and offer new evidence and findings on the relationship between alternative forms of resilience and social movement organisations in Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal.

3. Social Movement Insights[2]

In his influential work on action repertoires, Tilly (1986) has shown how the means that people have at their disposal are historically determined and that they have changed over time. In contrast to those that characterised the action repertoire of previous centuries, the strike and the mass demonstration were the two main forms of action repertoire in the 20th century. Moreover, in recent decades, the forms of contention have witnessed an expanding and multi-scalar shift, from the local, regional and national to the supra-national, through the use of new technologies (Mayer 2013).

During the past few decades, contentious as well as direct and solidarity actions have (re)appeared in response to hard economic times across global regions - such as Latin America - and have especially flourished in Southern Europe since the economic crisis of 2008. Alternative forms of resilience such as solidarity-based exchanges and networks, cooperative structures, barter clubs and networks, credit unions, ethical banks, time banks, alternative social currency, citizens' self-help groups, social enterprises, and still others are now part of the repertoire of popular activism. These direct actions, therefore, have extended the action repertoire of social movements, and citizens can "draw" from a wider "toolkit" (Tilly 1986) to both, make their claims and deal with the hardships of crisis periods.

[2] I am grateful to Margo Giugni for his input in this section.

What is important to point out, however, in these alternative forms of resilience is that they may be seen as crosscutting the political and non-political realms. They do so by distinguishing themselves from both electoral and non-electoral channels of political participation as we usually understand them. First, they attest to an alternative kind of politics involving the creation of bottom-up, resilient participatory initiatives promoting an alternative, solidarity economy. They organise direct actions (Bosi and Zamponi 2015) and practices whereby people participate in actions offering support to others in a direct manner – instead of asking others to act and solve the problems they face. Ten main types of alternative solidarity activities have recently been documented, based on systematic evidence from nine European countries. They include activities related to basic and urgent needs (related to food, shelter, medical services, clothing, free legal advice and anti-eviction initiatives), economy-related activities (involving alternative coins, barter clubs, financial support, products and service provision on low prices, fundraising activities, second-hand shops and bazaars), alternative consumption activities (such as producer-consumer actions, community gardens, boycotts and buycotts, and energy and environmental actions), as well as interest group advocacy, self-organised spaces, and civic media (LIVEWHAT D6.4 2016). At the same time, these new forms of "doing politics" can be seen as being, in a way, infra-political, or at least having an infra-political dimension.

Secondly, in contrast to mainstream ways of doing politics, they tend not to explicitly target political actors or focus their actions on sensitising the public opinion to a given issue. Recent research findings, nevertheless, show that in addition to the alternative actions, they also organise, albeit to a limited extent, parallel actions, including social movement, promotional, legal and parliament-related ones. Although they are not as frequent, these supplementary actions aim to create, promote, support, and/or participate in their direct solidarity activities (LIVEWHAT D6.4 2016). Fresh data on nine European countries, including Greece, Italy and Spain show that higher prevalence for conventional/soft protest actions (13.3%) (e.g. launching of public initiative collection of signatures for initiative or referendum, participation in committees, consultations, or negotiations, campaigning, closed-doors meetings, and other conventional/soft protest actions) as well as demonstrative protest actions (e.g. public referendum, demonstration, public protest, public rally, symbolic demonstrative actions, public/neighbourhood/square assemblies, and other demonstrative actions). Lower in frequency (5.1%) are confrontational actions, such as strikes, occupations of public buildings, squares (e.g. 15M, Indignados, Occupy). Both demonstrative and confrontational supplementary actions show higher frequencies in Spain, Italy and Greece, when compared to the other six European countries (LIVEWHAT D6.4 2016, 78-80).

4. The Papers in this Issue

Overall, the repertoire of alternative actions in Southern Europe since the nineties ranges from social movement led political consumerism to solidarity direct actions aimed at improving the conditions faced by citizens instead of, or in addition to demanding them from the state, especially during hard economic times (Bosi and Zamponi 2015), including anti-eviction and other direct actions led by the Indignados (Nez 2014, Kaika and Karaliotas 2014). Related to social movement organisations, but also to citizen initiatives are actions by solidarity purchase groups that promote fairness and justice for producers and consumers and the capacity to face periods of crises (Andretta and Guidi in this issue), as well as Social Support Actions (Papadaki and Kalogeraki in this issue), in which local social movement groups invite the public to solidarity initiatives in relation to the deep impacts of the crisis in Greece.

The papers included in this issue offer a diversity of theoretical and methodological approaches in their explorations, description and explanation of AFR. They are mostly written by scholars who specialise in social movement research in South European regions and thus tend to focus on issues related to their organising structure, framing processes, and socio-economic and political milieus. As we have seen earlier, alternative forms of resilience can be – and have been – studied from different theoretical perspectives. They can also be investigated by means of different methodological approaches, bearing on the micro-, meso- and macro-levels of analysis. Indeed, the papers in this special issue attest to the methodological versatility of the still small but rising literature on recent alternative forms of resilience following the global economic crisis of 2008.

The first paper offers a broader view on the subject matter. The paper by Maria Kousis and Maria Paschou provides an overview of the variety of conceptual and theoretical approaches, from more reformist to radical ones, which have engaged in the understanding and interpreting of alternative forms of resilience. Their comprehensive literature review on novel, collective and solidarity oriented resilience before and after the 2008 economic crisis shows the great variety of approaches to the subject matter. These range from the study of the third/non-profit sector and policy reforms to that of post-capitalist and anarchist structures and ideologies, and include the use of different methodologies which, combined, show the richness of the field. Based on a partial convergence between innovative citizens' reactions and citizens' collective resistance, their paper proposes the adoption of elements from social movements' theoretical and methodological approaches – especially the political process approach – to the study of alternative forms of resilience.

The paper by Britta Baumgartner deals with the Portuguese case. She studies the impact of the economic crisis on alternative projects such as self-organised cultural centres, urban gardening groups, and solidarity based exchange networks in Portugal, both in urban and rural areas. As found in other studies also, her analysis suggests that resilience strategies have become more important in Portugal during the last decade. Most importantly, she finds that the socioeconomic crisis, although it is not the main reason for the emergence of such projects, impinges in important ways upon the day-to-day work of the groups, both positively and negatively. More specifically, respondents to a small survey she has conducted report changes in financial, personal and time resources as well as in people's attitudes since the start of the crisis. However, the motives behind such developments relate to ideals of sustainability, alternative forms of production, quality of food, and the search for more personal systems of distribution and consumption of goods rather than to the necessity to create alternatives in order to meet basic needs. Britta Baumgartner shows one way to do so in her paper for this issue. She has prepared a questionnaire which she distributed amongst projects of *Rede Convergir*, a recent and fast growing project to build a network of projects related to resilience in Portugal, in order to study the impact of the socio-economic crisis on them. . This approach provides first-hand information on these kinds of alternative practices which cannot be obtained from existing general survey data. Moreover, it can be aimed both at obtaining information at the micro, individual level, and at grasping the meso level, that is, concerning the initiatives and organisations themselves rather than the individuals involved in them.

The three remaining papers all focus on specific case studies, i.e. Chania in the island of Crete, Barcelona and Tuscany, thus offering important insights into how alternative forms of resilience work at the local level and how they relate to the economic crisis. The paper by Marina Papadaki and Stefania Kalogeraki applies a community resilience framework to explore social support activities in Chania, Greece. Their analysis, based on quantitative data derived through content analysis of announcement/calls on social support actions, underlines the critical role of social movement organisations as the most active social support agency in that urban setting during the crisis period under study. The dynamic presence of social movement organisations helps to alleviate the impact of the economic crisis on socio-economically disadvantaged individuals in terms of food, clothes, basic needs, and healthcare. More broadly speaking, their findings highlight the extent and significance of 'general call' actions organised by local collectivities and their dynamic presence in the public arena promoting community members' active engagement in the process of resilience building. At the same time, they also stress that, despite their active role in the overall social support activity, local col-

lectivities are characterised by limited supportive interactions and collaborative networking with other agencies.

Helena Cruz, Ruben Martinez and Ismael Blanco examine the contribution of social innovation to the capacity of disadvantaged communities to resist the effects of the crisis in Catalonia using a multi-method approach that combines a statistical analysis of urban segregation dynamics, a mapping of social innovation practices, and a comparison of six case studies. Their analysis shows that social innovation practices do not concentrate on the most disadvantaged communities, but rather observe middle-income areas with a tradition of social mobilisation. They further show that community resilience in disadvantaged urban areas is largely dependent on the capacity of governmental and non-governmental actors to work jointly to face the challenges of communities. More generally, their paper warns against the risks of transferring to social innovation the responsibility for social cohesion in cities and highlights the need of multi-scalar policies with redistributive effects between municipalities and urban areas. A multi-method approach is fruitfully adopted in the paper by Cruz, Martínez and Ismael, in this issue. More specifically, they combine statistical analysis of urban segregation dynamics, mapping social innovation practices, and case-study comparison in order to ascertain the contribution of social innovation to the capacity of the disadvantaged.

Massimiliano Andretta and Riccardo Guidi examine a specific form of political consumerism, namely solidarity purchase groups, in Italy and more specifically in Tuscany, in the context of the economic crisis and how the latter has influenced them. They apply a mixed-methods approach by combining a questionnaire administered to coordinators of solidarity purchase groups in the Italian Tuscany region with semi-structured and in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. This methodological blend allows them to have a more accurate picture of these local alternative consumerism practices supported by organized citizens. In addition, they make use of online sources to map such practices. Based on their findings, they argue that, while the spread of postmaterialist values may have triggered individual involvement in political consumerism, once the latter gets organised, it resists further social and economic changes, adapting to the new environment through organisational mechanisms. Thus, in an adverse context, local alternative consumerism practices can develop alternative resilience processes through social-movements-linked, civic food networks (re)discover radical forms of democracy. Furthermore, their analysis of a specific local campaign suggests that the crisis has also been used as a legitimising frame to explore innovative and radical co-production processes, thus providing a sense of agency to the people involved in the campaign.

The authors of this special issue illustrate the involvement of Southern Europe not only in the wide array of alternative forms of resilience, but also in their links to social movements, since the economic crisis of 2008. Given the limited space and number of contributions, they can only scratch the surface of why and how alternative forms of resilience confronting austerity and the crisis in Southern Europe are changing the ways of doing politics. Whether this is a temporary phenomenon or bears witness to a more durable shift in the repertoires of contention, will remain an open question.

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